

5

Apaṇṇaka Sutta

The Discourse on the Sure Teaching | M 60/1:400-413

Theme: Why doing good is better than not

Translated with notes by Piya Tan, 2002, rev 2003, ©2006

1 Sutta significance

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS. Like **the Kesa,puttiya Sutta** (A 3.65),¹ the Apaṇṇaka Sutta opens with the audience (here the brahmins of Sālā) complaining that they are confused by the various contradicting teachings so that they have faith in none of them. The Buddha then reassures them that he would teach them the “sure teaching” (*apaṇṇaka dhamma*) [§§1-4]. The Buddha then explains the problems with the various false views [§§4-34] and painful practices [§§35-56], and how they can be avoided.

In simple terms, **the Apaṇṇaka Sutta** (M 60) argues in a simple “logical and rational” way, why we should accept karma and rebirth, rather than reject them. More broadly, it argues that it is better to be good than otherwise, as the advantages of the former are very clear. The rejection and denial of karma and rebirth are examined from the perspective of three well known false views [2.2].

The Apaṇṇaka Sutta records the Buddha’s “sure teaching” (*apaṇṇaka dhamma*) to the brahmins at Sālā. This teaching is given in response to the brahmins’ telling the Buddha that they have no teacher in whom they could place any confidence. In the course of the instruction, the Buddha details why the doctrines of *nihilism* (materialism), *amoralism*, and *determinism* are not only false but have harmful effects personally and socially, and that *affirming karma and rebirth* has its “sure” advantages.

The Buddha then explains how our religious practice should not harm ourselves or others. This teaching clearly alludes to *the middle way* explained in such discourses as **the Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana Sutta** (S 52.5).²

The sutta concludes with arhathood as the goal to be attained by those who, in their practice, torture neither themselves nor others, but live here and now free from craving, happy and liberated, and closes with the brahmins of Sālā going for refuge [§§56-57]. The Apaṇṇaka Sutta is quoted in the Commentaries.³

1.2 APAṆṆAKA

1.2.1 MEANING. The Pali-English Dictionary (PED) takes *apaṇṇaka*⁴ as being resolved as *a* (“without”) + *paṇṇaka* (“leaves”),⁵ meaning “certain, true, absolute, leading to liberation.” Its opposite is *sa,-paṇṇaka* (“with leaves”), that is, “uncertain, untrue, not absolute.”⁶ Its abstract noun is *apaṇṇakatā*, “certainty, absoluteness” (S 4:351 f).⁷ The actual etymology of *apaṇṇaka* or its other cognates are unknown.

Buddhaghosa defines *apaṇṇaka* as “unopposedly leading to what is doubtless, holding on to certainty” (*aviruddha advejjha,gāmi ekamsa,gāhiko*, MA 3:116). The commentary on **the Apaṇṇaka Jātaka** (J 1)⁸ explains it as follows: “by *apaṇṇaka-t,ṭhāna* is meant a certain action, a means that is unopposedly good” (*apaṇṇaka-t,ṭhānaṃ ekamsika,karaṇaṃ aviruddha niyyānika,karaṇaṃ*, J 1:104).

¹ A 3.65.1-2/1:188 = SD 35.4a.

² S 56.11/5:420-424 = SD 1.1.

³ Vism 12.80/392; MA 3:228, 230.

⁴ M 1:401, 411; A 5:85, 294, 296; J 1:104, *apaṇṇaka-t,ṭhānaṃ ekamsika,karaṇaṃ aviruddha niyyānika,karaṇaṃ*).

⁵ Skt *paṇṇaka*, “with leaves.” Its semasiological process, however, is unknown.

⁶ J 1:105,19; qu at AA 2:182,12*.

⁷ For other occurrences, sv CPD & DP.

⁸ J 1/1:95, ie the very first Jātaka story.

1.2.2 ETYMOLOGY. Albrecht Weber, in his *Indische Streifen* (1868)⁹ and, following him, Ernst Kuhn, in his *Beiträge* (1875)¹⁰ derive the *apaṇṇaka* from **a-praśna-ka* (Pali, “*a-pañha-ka*, literally, “no problem,” ie, “without question”).¹¹ This is, however, only conjectural.

Edgerton, in his *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (BHSD), says that its BHS cognate is probably *āprāṇya* (there is a possibility, it is read *aprāṇya* (following the initial vowel of the Pali form), meaning “perfect,” as in *āprāṇyāṅga* (“of perfect qualities”),¹² or in Pali, *apaṇṇak’āṅga*, (“a unique or “universal factor,” DhsA 132,35, 251,2) (CPD).¹³

1.2.3 APAṆṆAKA AS USED IN THE APAṆṆAKA SUTTA. The term “the sure teaching” (*apaṇṇaka dhamma*) means that it is “unopposedly leading to what is doubtless, holding on to certainty” (*aviruddha advej-jha,gāmi ekaṃsa,gāhiko*, MA 3:116).¹⁴ The same term, clearly with the same sense, is found in three other discourses, namely,

- **Apaṇṇaka Paṭipadā Sutta** (A 3.16/1:113) = SD 74.11¹⁵ sense-restraint, moderation in food, and watchfulness, are the “sure way” (*apaṇṇaka paṭipadā*) to arhathood;
- **(Apaṇṇaka) Padhāna Sutta** (A 4.71/2:76) = SD 74.12¹⁶ being morally virtuous, greatly learned, assertive and wise: the “sure way” to arhathood;
- **Sammā Diṭṭhi Sutta** (A 4.72/2:76 f) = SD 74.13 right thought (of renunciation, non-ill will and of non-violence) and right understanding are the “sure way to arhathood.

The Visuddhi,magga, too, alludes to the “sure way” (*apaṇṇaka paṭipadā*) to awakening.¹⁷

The commentary to **the Yasoja Sutta** (U 3.3) succinctly explains that a teaching is “the only sure way due to its link with mindfulness and full awareness” (*sati,sampajañña,yogena apaṇṇaka-p.paṭipadam*, UA 182).

2 The five false views

2.1 THE FALSE VIEWS AND THEIR PROPONENTS. In very simple terms, In **the Apanṇaka Sutta** (M 60), the Buddha lists three well-known and two lesser known false views (and their upholders) of his times and rebuts them, that is,¹⁸

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) §§5-12 | nihilism | (<i>n’atthika,vāda</i>) | Ajita Kesakambali [2.3.1] |
| (2) §§13-20 | amoralism | (<i>akiriya,vāda</i>) | Pūraṇa Kassapa [2.3.2] |
| (3) §§21-28 | determinism | (<i>ahetuka,vāda</i>) | Makkhali Gosāla [2.3.3] |
| (4) §§29-31 | no formless attainments | (<i>ārappa n’atthi</i>); and | |
| (5) §§32-34 | no cessation | (<i>nirodho n’atthi</i>). | |

The first three false teachings are called “wrong views with fixed bad result” (*niyatā micchā,diṭṭhi*).¹⁹ Holding on to them prevents one from gaining heavenly rebirth and liberation.

⁹ Albrecht Weber, *Indische Streifen: eine Sammlung von bisher in Zeitschriften zerstreuten kleineren Abhandlungen von Albrecht Weber*, Berlin, 1868 3:150.

¹⁰ Ernst Kuhn, *Beiträge zur Pali-Grammatik*, Berlin, 1875:53.

¹¹ Cf R O Franke, *Pali und Sanskrit*, Strassburg, 1902:99.

¹² (Ārya)Mañjuśrī,mūla,kalpa,latā (ed Gaṇapati Śāstri, 3 vols, Trivandrum, 1920, 1922, 1925): Mmk 57.(15)-16.

¹³ Mūla,ṭīkā: “unopposing or compatible factors” (DhsMūṭ).

¹⁴ Bodhi prefers the reading *aviraddho* (“not missing, not failing”) (instead of *aviruddho*), rendering the phrase as “a teaching that is uncontradictable, free from ambiguity, definitely acceptable” (M:ÑB 1263 n620). However, in the canonical occurrences of *apaṇṇaka*, we find *aviruddha* as a rule occurring alongside.

¹⁵ See n at A:WH 1:97.

¹⁶ See n at A:WH 2:85.

¹⁷ Vism 7.92/219, 12.80/392.

¹⁸ The 5 are listed in MA 3:124.

The last two false views simply arise from the sheer ignorance and a lack of meditative experience. They are likely to be held by any of the three sectarian teachers and their followers.

2.2 THE THREE SECTARIAN TEACHERS OF THE APAṆṆAKA SUTTA (M 60).

2.2.1 Ajita Kesakambali, (Skt) Ajita Keśa,kambala. The epithet *kesa,kambala*, means “of the hair-blanket,” that is, he wore a cloak of human hair. His view of materialism and nihilism (or annihilationism) are refuted here in **Apaṇṇaka Sutta** [§§5-12].²⁰ He is listed amongst the six sectarian teachers in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2).²¹ Medhātithi, defining *haitukāḥ* at Manu 4.30,²² asserts that the *nāstikas* (who reject the established brahminical system) upheld the doctrines of *nāsti para,loko nāsti dattam nāsti hut-am iti* (“there is no hereafter [next world], no value in giving, no value in sacrifice”), which does not have the phrase, *n’atthi ayam loko*—as in the Buddhist formula.²³

2.2.2 Pūraṇa Kassapa, (Skt) Pūraṇa Kāśyapa, died ca 484 or 503 BCE. He was an Ājīvika or naked ascetic,²⁴ who taught an antinomian ethics, that is, there is neither good nor bad, and that our actions [kar-ma] have no moral conditionality (that is, karma does not exist). He is listed amongst the 6 sectarian teachers in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2).²⁵ **Bodhi** observes that

Although on first encounter the view seems to rest on materialistic premises, as the previous nihilistic view does, there is canonical evidence that Pūraṇa Kassapa subscribed to a fatalistic doctrine. Thus his antinomianism probably follows from the view that all action is predestined in ways that abrogate the ascription of moral responsibility to its agent. (M:ÑB 1264 n629)²⁶

His views are refuted here in **the Apaṇṇaka Sutta** [§§13-20], **the Karota Sutta** (S 24.6), **the Hetu Sutta** (S 24.7), **the Cha-ḷ-ābhijāti Sutta** (A 6.5).²⁷

2.2.3 Makkhali Gosāla, (Skt) Maskarin Gośāla or Gośālī,putra, who advocated the teaching of non-conditionality (*ahetuka,vāda*), the doctrine of samsaric purification (*samsāra,suddhi*, D 2.21/1:54). He was the founding leader of **the ājīvikas**,²⁸ anti-brahmanical community whose pessimistic doctrines (fatalism, determinism, denial of conditionality) are related to those of Jainism. Gosāla was believed to be a friend of Mahavira, the founder of Jainism. Gosāla denied that a man’s actions could influence rebirth, which occurred according to a rigid pattern, controlled in every way by “destiny” (*niyati*).

The *ājīvika* sect is thrice mentioned in the Asoka edicts as receiving royal gifts.²⁹ After a period of prosperity under Asoka, the sect rapidly declined, only retaining local importance in SE India, where it survived until the 14th cent. The name *ājīvika*, given to the sect by their opponents, is derived from *ājīva*, here meaning “livelihood appropriate to one’s class.” Gosāla, however, held that a mendicant’s *ājīva* was not affected by karma.

¹⁹ These are 3 of the 6 sectarian teachers. For **the 6 sectarian teachers**, see **Kutūhala S** (S 44.9) @ SD 23.15 (2).

²⁰ M 60.5-12 = 1:401-404 = SD 35.5.

²¹ D 2.21/1:55) = SD 8.10.

²² *The Principal Upaniṣads*, ed S Radhakrishnan, 1:243.

²³ For a discussion, see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1) = SD 25.1(VII) n on “no next world” in qu on Ajita Kesambala (from Sāmañña,phala S). See Jayatilleke 1963: 94, 98 f; Bodhi 1989:79-83; Jaini (1970) 2001:57-61.

²⁴ V 1:291; M 1:238; S 1:66: on Ājīvikas, see DPPN: Ājīvakā; also Jayatilleke 1963:143-145 (see index) & Jaini (1970) 2001:57-61.

²⁵ D 2.16-17/1:52 f = SD 8.10.

²⁶ See also Basham 1951:84.

²⁷ Respectively, M 60.13-20/1:404-407 = SD 35.5; S 24.6/3:208 f = SD 23.10; S 24.7/3:210 f = SD 23.6; A 6.5-7/3:383-387 = SD 23.5(1.1). See DPPN: Ājīvakā; also Jayatilleke 1963:143-145 (see index) & Jaini (1970) 2001:57-61.

²⁸ See M:C 1:293 n1 (but somewhat dated).

²⁹ E Senart, “[Les inscriptions de Piyadasi](#),” 1886 2:82, 209.

Furthermore, since Gosāla was an ascetic not for reasons of salvation, but as a livelihood (*ājīva*)—they were professionals (in the modern sense)—the name was clearly opprobrious. Makkhali’s view is refuted here in **the Apanṇaka Sutta** [§§21-28].³⁰

2.3 THE TWO FALSE VIEWS. While the first three wrong views are mainly *philosophical and speculative* in nature, the last two false views, concerning the formless states [§23] and cessation³¹ [29], are *experiential*. While the formless states can be experienced only by an accomplished meditator, cessation is only attained by the fully awakened, the arhat. In other words, we have here the choice between the experience-based testimony of the attained meditator (*lābhī*) or the speculations of a philosophical thinker (*takkā*) (MA 3:122 f).

As these two states are meditative or spiritual ones, not much useful or meaningful philosophical statements can be made about them. As such, their possible standpoints boil down to either denying them or affirming them. The wise choose to affirm them because (1) there is nothing to gain in rejecting them, and (2) there is much to gain in affirming them. Moreover, (3) these states are affirmed by the wise who have experienced them. [4.1]

3 The 4 kinds of persons in terms of tormenting

3.1 POINTLESS PAINFUL PRACTICES. Having pointed out the various false views, rebutting them, and proposing the “sure way” as a better alternative to them [2.1], the Buddha goes on to classify them, as it were, in terms of how their views and practices negatively and painfully affect them and others [§§35-43]. These four kinds of persons are as follows:

- (1) those who are intent on self-torment, [§36]
- (2) those who are intent on tormenting others, [§37]
- (3) those who are intent on tormenting themselves and tormenting others, and [§38]
- (4) those who neither torment themselves nor others. [§§39-56]

The Sutta does not state how these various persons (holding various views) fit into this typology. There are, however, detailed descriptions given of each of these four types of practitioners. Only the first three are linked with torment, and their practices, in brief, involves the following:

- (1) The self-tormentor practises self-mortification, and so hurts his own body and mind.³²
- (2) The other-tormentor is one who indulges in wrong livelihood.³³
- (3) The tormentor of self and of others is one (especially a brahmin or a kshatriya) who performs elaborate rituals that direly inconvenience the sacrificer and brutally trouble those serving them.³⁴

3.2 COLLATING THE TYPES. The three types of tormenting practices are likely to be followed and promoted by those who regard the body as evil or as a hindrance to spiritual development. Those with hedonist inclination, of course, would be excluded from this typology.³⁵ It is *highly unlikely* that any of

³⁰ M 60.21-28/1:407-411. For further details on Gosāla, see A F R Hoernle, *Uvāsagadasāo*, Calcutta, 1890:108 f & app; D: RD 1:71 n1 (sutta refs); Bodhi 1989:69-77 & A L Basham, 1951:224-239 (chs 12-13); D:W 544 nn102-109. See Jayatilleke, 1963:143-145, 152-154, 157-159 (see index) & Jaini (1970) 2001:57-61.

³¹ *Nirodha*, more fully, the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā, vedayita, nirodha*) or attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*). It is the last of 9 stages, known as “the 9 successive abodes” (*anupubba vihāra*), ie, the 4 dhyānas (*jhāna*), the 4 formless attainments (*samāpatti*) and cessation. See (**Pañcāla, caṇḍa**) **Sambadha S** (A 9.42.11/A 4:451) & SD 33.2(2); **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.25/1:296) & SD 30.2 (4). Also **S 14.11/2:150 f**, **28.9/3:238**, **36.11/4:216**, **41.6/4:293-295**; A 4:410; D 3:265, 290; Vism 23.51/709; cf S 22.95/3:143*; Dh 41.

³² See further **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36.17-44/1:242-249) = SD 1.12 = SD 49.4 & **Mahā Siha, nāda S** (12.44/1:77-83) = SD 1.13 = SD 49.1.

³³ For an ancient list of wrong livelihoods to be avoided by a monastic, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.43-62/1:63-69) = SD 8.10 (3).

³⁴ See eg **Kūṭa, danta S** (D 5/1:127-149) & SD 22.8 (3-4).

³⁵ For such a typology, see eg the case of the monk Ariṭṭha in **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22.1-10/13\;130-134) = SD 3.13. Hedonism is often associated with the *lokāyatika*, esp after the Buddha’s time: see **Lok’āyika S** (A 9.38/4:-428-432) = SD 35.2 (2).

those who subscribe to the first three false views would practise any of these tormenting methods,³⁶ because

- (1) the nihilists (*n'atthika, vāda*), being materialists, too, deny any value in moral state or action;
- (2) the amoralists (*kiriya, vāda*), reject conditionality (cause-and-effect, karma etc) and moral accountability, and so would not have anything to do with purification or salvific rituals, especially painful ones; and
- (3) the determinists (*ahetuka, vāda*) believe in fatalism and natural purification, and so would reject such practices.

It is however possible that those who hold either of the last two false views, that is, the rejection or denial of the formless states and of cessation [2.3], would turn to self-mortifying rituals, and encourage others to do so, too. We know that this sort of practice is very common in the Buddha's time.³⁷

3.3 THE TRUE PRACTITIONER. Of all the four practitioners related to torment or pain, the fourth, the practitioner, who neither torments himself nor others, is given the most detailed description [§§39-56]. In fact, it might be properly said that the whole discourse builds up to this true practitioner who is *torment-free*. This torment-free spirituality is a powerful statement that spiritual awakening and liberation does not entail inflicting pain on the body,³⁸ nor is the divine state or spiritual attainment and liberation external to the body or a posthumous affair.³⁹ Awakening and liberation can be attained here and now with this body itself [§39]. This can be said to be the Buddha's vision statement.

Then comes the Buddha's mission statement, that is, the teaching and discipline for those who wish to work on *their liberation here and now* [§40]. The Buddha provides this viable alternative to the crowded family and urbanized life, that is, the life of a renunciant that is "entirely complete and pure" [§§41-42].

This is, of course, the famous "fruits of recluship" (*sāmañña, phala*),⁴⁰ guaranteed by the Buddha for the true practitioner, based on the model of the threefold training⁴¹ of

- moral virtue [§§43-44], disciplining of body and speech in preparation for meditation,
- mental cultivation [§§45-53], the attainment of dhyana, and
- wisdom [§§54-56], the attaining of superknowledge and arhathood.

Here, the fruits of recluship are given in an abridged form, compared to those in the first thirteen suttas (the *Sīla-k, khandha Vagga*) of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, where they are laid out in full.⁴²

The brahmins of *Sālā* are wise enough to understand the Buddha's discourse, and even wiser in accepting them. As such, they go for refuge. [§57]

4 The Buddha's wager

4.1 THE BUDDHA'S REBUTTAL OF THE FALSE VIEWS. In the *Apaṇṇaka Sutta*, the Buddha systematically examines each of the first three false views stated above [2.1]. For each of the three false views, the Buddha applies the same pattern of analysis:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| (1) Statement of the false view (rejects karma and rebirth) | §§5, 13, 21 |
| (2) Statement of the right view (affirms karma and rebirth) | §§6, 14, 22 |

³⁶ Contra I B Horner, who suggests that this typology covers the various kinds of view-holders, etc (M:H 2:81 n2).

³⁷ See **Dhamma, cakka-p, pavattana S** (S 56.11.2-3/5:421) & SD 1.1 (3).

³⁸ On dhyana as "a pleasure *not* to be feared," see **Laṭukikôpama S** (M 66.21/1:454) = SD 28.11.

³⁹ See eg **Te, vijja S** (D 13/1:235-252) = SD 1.8.

⁴⁰ The *sāmañña, phala* pericope here is abridged, compared to those in the first 13 suttas of the *Dīgha*. For details, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.40-99/1:62-85) & SD 8.10 (3) on the moralities; also **Sīla, samādhi, paññā** = SD 21.6(1-3).

⁴¹ On the three trainings, see **(Ti) Sikkhā S** (A 3.88/1:235) = SD 24.10c & **Sīla, samādhi, paññā** = SD 21.6.

⁴² See eg **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.40-99/1:62-85) & SD 8.10 (3).

Those who deny karma and rebirth

- (1.1) The pernicious effect of the false view on our conduct.
- (1.2) The wise rejects the false view and affirms its opposite.
- (1.3) The wise knows that whether the view is true or false, it is best that he rejects it.

Those who affirm karma and rebirth

- (2.1) Such a right view has a wholesome effect on the conduct of the wise.
- (2.2) Those who accept the right view benefits from the good.
- (2.3) The wise concludes it is best to lives as if this view were true.

The arguments regarding the last two false views [§§23, 29]—concerning the formless states and cessation—seem to follow the same pattern, but are much simpler. The first three wrong views are *philosophical* and speculative by nature, and the points for or against them can be quite complicated. The last two false views, however, concern *meditative* or spiritual states—they can only be attained through personal experience—so that philosophical statements about them are only useful or meaningful in terms of language and reasoning. But these are *suprasensuous* and *translinguistic* states (personal experiences that are beyond language and the physical senses). As such, their possible standpoints boil down to either denying them or affirming them. The wise choose to affirm them based on the testimony of those who have experienced them.

4.2 A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS. In the *Kesa,puttiya Sutta* (A 3,65), as here in the Apanṇaka Sutta (M 60), the Buddha wagers, as it were, that it is better to eschew the three notorious false views of nihilism, amoralism and determinism (and two views denying the formless states and cessation).⁴³ While in the *Kesa,puttiya Sutta*, the Buddha gives *meditative and spiritual* arguments for living a morally virtuous life, here in the Apanṇaka Sutta, it might be said that he gives *philosophical and ethical* arguments for rejecting these five false views

K N Jayatilleke, a 20th century Sinhala scholar of Buddhist philosophy, in his book, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, translates *apanṇako dhammo* as “infallible dhamma,” and asserts that the “infallibility” here is “purely logical and rational” (1963:405). However, to avoid any technical difficulty that might lead to academic students writing dissertations on them, let me expressly state here that the terms “logical” and “rational” are used here in their non-technical senses.

We will take “logical” to mean “that which follows as a reasonable inference or natural consequence; that is in accordance with the ‘logic’ of events, of human character, etc,” “rational” as “agreeable to reason; reasonable, sensible; not foolish, absurd, or extravagant,” and “to reason” is “think in a connected, sensible, or logical manner...in forming conclusions” (OED).

In the Apanṇaka Sutta, the Buddha says that there are these two doctrines,

- (1) one *denying* karma (moral responsibility) and rebirth (or survival, that is, a hereafter or life after death) (*n’atthika,vāda*), and
- (2) its diametrically opposite view (*uju,vipaccaṇīka,vāda*) which asserts karma and rebirth⁴⁴ [§6].

4.3 THE BUDDHA’S SURE TEACHING. The Buddha declares that in such a situation, a wise person (*viññū puriso*) [§9] would reason as follows:

The nihilist (who rejects moral responsibility and the hereafter) [§§8-9]

- (1.1) If a person adopts the first alternative, and there is *no* hereafter (*sace...n’atthi paro loko*),

⁴³ A 3.65/1:188-193 = SD 35.4a.

⁴⁴ Karma and rebirth are not directly mentioned in the arguments of *Apanṇaka S* (M 60). but the allusions and implications are clear. Hence, I have freely used karma as a blanket term for references to moral efficacy, etc, and rebirth for references to the hereafter, the afterlife for related ideas. I find this non-technicality vital for helping us see the Buddha’s early teachings as a coherent whole moral accountability and survival are widely accepted. However, I am not advocating that, on account of such a notion, we regard modern Buddhists who reject karma and rebirth, or put them on hold, as it were, to be having “wrong view.” Here, we are all taking our own careful and measured steps towards the middle path.

- then he will have no cause for regret (*sotthim attānam karissati*).
- (1.2) But if there *is* a hereafter (*sace...atthi paro loko*), then, he would *suffer*, arising in a subhuman plane (*apāyam...upapajjissati*).
- (1.3) Anyway, he would be *reproved* in this life as an immoral person and a nihilist (*diṭṭhe va dhamme viññūnam gārayho, dussīlo...n'atthika, vādo*).
- (1.4) If there is a hereafter, he would stand to lose in *both* worlds (*ubhay'attha kali-g, gaho*).
- (1.5) Thus, in choosing this alternative, he would benefit only *one* way (*ek'aṃsam pharivā tiṭṭhati*).

The wise (who affirms moral responsibility and the hereafter) [§§10-11]

- (2.1) On the other hand, if a person adopts the second alternative, and there *is* a hereafter (*sace...n'atthi paro loko*), then, after death he would be *happy*, arising in heaven (*param marañā...sugatiṃ...upapajjis-sati*).
- (2.2) Anyway, he would be *praised* in this life as a moral person and an affirmer of moral responsibility and the hereafter (*diṭṭhe va dhamme viññūnam pasamso, sīlavā...atthika, vādo*).
- (2.3) If there is a hereafter, he would benefit in *both* worlds (*ubhay'attha kaṭa-g, gaho*).
- (2.4) Thus, in choosing this alternative, he benefits *both* ways (*ubhay'aṃsam pharivā tiṭṭhati*).

4.4 THE BUDDHA'S WAGER. We may represent the “Buddha’s wager” as follows:

	<u>If p is true</u>	<u>If p is false</u>
We wager p	We are happy in the hereafter	We are praised by the wise here and now
We wager not-p	We are unhappy in the hereafter	We are reprovved by the wise here and now

The most logical and reasonable conclusion here is to choose p because, in doing so, we *win* either way. However, if we choose not-p we *lose* either way.⁴⁵

The two doctrines given as alternatives are the doctrines of those who *affirm* moral efficacy and the hereafter, and those who *reject* or deny them. It is argued, on logical and rational grounds, that it would be *better to choose the affirmative*, irrespective of the truth-value. In form, the Buddha’s wager is a precedent of Pascal’s wager, but there are important differences.⁴⁶

4.5 THE BUDDHA’S SKILLFUL MEANS. If we take the Apanṇaka Sutta as the Buddha taking a philosophical and rational approach to resolve certain religious difficulties and dilemmas, we also see the Buddha elsewhere adopting very different methods in correcting wrong views. In **the Te, vijja Sutta** (D 13), the Buddha, addressing two young brahmin disciples, appealed to what they are familiar with (that is, the *brahma, vihāra* or divine abodes), and teaches them “the path leading to fellowship with Brahmā” (*brahmānam saḥavyatāya maggo*).⁴⁷

Such adjustments and fluidity of the Buddha’s teachings to fit the audience’s disposition and situation are what the ancient texts call “skill-in-means” (*upāya, kosalla*).⁴⁸ Although this term is rare in the Tipiṭaka, appearing only in **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33) and **the Vibhaṅga** (Vbh §771), such an approach is the rule in the Buddha’s teaching and instructing.⁴⁹

In fact, **the Kesa, puttiya (or Kālāma) Sutta** (A 3.65), a discourse similar in spirit as the Apanṇaka Sutta, similarly concludes with the “sure” argument or “assurance.” However, it does not close with the path to arhathood. Instead, as in the Te, vijja Sutta (D 13), it is declared that the noble disciple is one who “dwells pervading the entire world with a mind filled with lovingkindness, compassion, appreciative joy,

⁴⁵ See Jayatilleke 1963:405 f.

⁴⁶ See **Kesa, puttiya S** (A 3.65) = SD 35.4a (7.1).

⁴⁷ D 13.76-81/1:250-252 = SD 1.8.

⁴⁸ See **Skillful means** = SD 30.8.

⁴⁹ D 33.1.10(54)/3:220; Vbh 771/325 f (details) & VbhA 414.

equanimity ... whose mind is free from enmity, illwill, uncorrupted and pure, he has won four solaces [assāsa].⁵⁰

— — —

The Discourse on the Sure Teaching

M 60/1:400-413

1a Thus have I heard.

The brahmin householders of Sālā

1b At one time the Blessed One was wandering in Kosala with a large community of monks. He arrived in the brahmin village of Sālā and stayed there.

2 The brahmin householders⁵¹ of Sālā heard that:

“The recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyas who went forth from a Sakya clan, is wandering in Kosala [401] with a large community of monks and has come to Sālā. Concerning this Blessed One, this fair report has been spread about:

“The Blessed One is an arhat, the fully self-awakened one, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of the tamable, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and priests, its rulers and people, he makes it known to others. He teaches the teaching, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.’

It is good to see such arhats.”

3 Then, the brahmin householders of Sālā approached the Blessed One. Some exchanged greetings with him; some greeted him with their palms together; some announced their name and clan before the Blessed One—and then sat down at one side. Some kept silent and sat down at one side.

The sure teaching

4 When they were (all) seated, the Blessed One asked them:

“Now, householders, is there any suitable teacher in whom you have gained wise faith (supported by reasoning)?”⁵²

“No, bhante, we have not.”

⁵⁰ A 3.65/1:92 = SD 35.4a.

⁵¹ *Brāhmaṇa, gahapatikā*, also spelt as *brāhmaṇa, gahapati*, which is invariably a collective term, never an individual, ie, the landed community of the brahmin villages (*brāhmaṇa, gāma*) or fiefs (*brahma, deya*) as a whole. This classification is based on land-ownership (ie their economic function), who nonetheless still identified with the larger priestly class. As such, individually, theu (such as Kūṭa, danta, Caṅkī, etc) are still referred to simply as *brāhmaṇa*. See Chakravarti 1987:72 f.

⁵² *Atthi kho pana vo gahapatayo koci manāpo satthā yasmim vo ākāra, vatī saddhā paṭiladdhā ti*. “Wise faith,” *ākāra, vatī saddhā*, reasoned confidence, reasonable trust. There are 2 kinds of faith: (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlaka, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravatī, saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320, 8 401, 23). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). **Comy** says that the Buddha began by asking this question because the village of Sālā was situated at the entrance to a forest, and many recluses and brahmins of various creeds would stay there overnight, championing their own views and knocking down those of others. As such, the villagers were perplexed, unsure of any teaching. (MA 3:115 f). A very similar commentarial remark (AA 2:305) is given to **Kesa, puttiya S** (A 3.65.2/1:189 f) = SD 35.4a Comy (2).

“Householders, since you have not found any suitable teacher in whom you have gained wise faith, you should follow this sure teaching.⁵³ For when the sure teaching is followed, it will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time.

“And what is this sure teaching?”

1 NIHILISM

5 (1) MORAL NIHILISM. Householders, there are some recluses and brahmins who teach and hold this view:⁵⁴

‘There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions [karma]. There is no this world, no next world; there is no mother, no father, there are no spontaneously born beings;⁵⁵ there are no brahmins and recluses who, living rightly and practising rightly, having directly known and realized for themselves this world and the hereafter, proclaim them.’⁵⁶ [402]

6 (2) RIGHT VIEW. Now, householders, there are some recluses and brahmins whose teaching is directly [diametrically] opposed to those of these recluses and brahmins, and they say thus:

‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There is fruit and result of good and bad actions [karma]. There is this world, the next world. There are mother and father, spontaneously born beings. There are brahmins and recluses who, living rightly and practising rightly, proclaim this world and the next after having directly known and realized it for themselves.’

What do you think, householders? Don’t these recluses and brahmins hold teachings directly contradicting one another?”

“Yes, bhante.”

THE BUDDHA’S ANSWER TO NIHILISM

Rejection of nihilism

7 (1.1) THE NIHILIST REJECTS SPIRITUALITY. “Now, householders, of those recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:⁵⁷

‘There is nothing given,⁵⁸ nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions [karma]. There is no this world,⁵⁹ no next world;⁶⁰ there is no mother, no father,⁶¹ there are no

⁵³ “Sure teaching,” *apaṇṇaka dhamma*: see Intro (1.2.3).

⁵⁴ This is stock def of wrong view: see **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41.10/1:287) = SD 5.7 & **Apapaṇṇaka S** (M 60.5-12/1:402-404) = SD 35.5. In **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), it is given as Ajita Kesakambala’s view (D 2.21/1:55) = SD 8.10. On Kesakambala, see Intro (2.2.1).

⁵⁵ *Opapātika*, said of the rebirth of a non-returner, but also refers to all divine and hell beings. See **Mahāli S** (D 1:27, 156).

⁵⁶ Comy: This last statement is made regarding the non-existence of “all-knowing” (*sabbaññū*) Buddhas (MA 2:322), in other words, awakening is impossible.

⁵⁷ In **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), this view is attributed to Ajita Kesakambalī, the hair-blanket ascetic (D 2.23/1:55): see Intro (2.2.1).

⁵⁸ “There is nothing given,” *n’atthi dinnam*. MA 2:332 = DA 165 says that this means there is no fruit of (or no value in) giving. Cf D 1:55; M 1:401, 515; S 3:206.

⁵⁹ “There is no this world,” *n’atthi ayam loko*, lit “this world does not exist, the next world does not exist.” On the problem of associating these two differing views to Ajita Kesambala, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.22-24/1:55 f) = SD 8. See Jayatilleke 1963:79 f, 91 f).

⁶⁰ “There is no this world, there is no next world.” Comys explain that “(a) ‘there is no this world’ means that when one is established in the next world, this world does not exist; (b) ‘there is no next world’ means that when one is established in this world, the next world does not exist.” (MA 2:332 = DA 1:165). Deeds done in such a deterministic system would not carry over into the afterlife, even if this view concedes to a hereafter.

⁶¹ “There is no father, no mother.” Comys explain “there is no fruit of good or of bad behaviour (towards them)” (MA 2:332=DA 1:165).

spontaneously born beings;⁶² there are no brahmins and recluses who, living rightly and practising rightly, proclaim this world and the next after having directly known and realized it for themselves.’

—It is to be expected that they will *avoid* these three wholesome states, namely, good bodily, verbal and mental conduct.

Why is that? Because those good recluses and brahmins do not see the danger, degradation and defilement in unwholesome states, nor do they see the benefit of renunciation and wholesome states as the means of purification.

8 (1.2) THE WISE AFFIRMS SPIRITUALITY. Since there actually is a hereafter [another world], one who holds the view that ‘There is no hereafter’ has wrong view. Since there actually is a hereafter, one who intends that ‘There is no hereafter’ has wrong intention. Since there actually is a hereafter, one who declares that ‘There is no hereafter’ has wrong speech.

Since there actually is a **hereafter**, one who says that ‘There is no hereafter’ contradicts the arhats who know the hereafter. Since there actually is a hereafter, one who convinces another that ‘There is no hereafter’ convinces him to accept a false reality [false dharma]; he praises himself and disparages others.

Thus he abandons any previous wholesome virtue of his and replaces it with bad conduct. And this wrong view, wrong intention, wrong speech, contradicting the noble ones, convincing another to accept a false reality, and self-praise and disparagement of others—these bad unwholesome states thus arise with wrong view as their condition. [403]

9 (1.3) THE FIRST SURE TEACHING. On the other hand, householders, a wise person considers thus: ‘If there is *no hereafter*, then, with the body’s breaking up, after death,⁶³ this kind individual will only have made himself safe.’⁶⁴

‘But if there *is* a hereafter, then, with the body’s breaking up, after death, he will reappear in a state of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

THE FIRST WAGER. Now, whether or not the word of those good recluses and brahmins is true, let me assume that there is *no* a hereafter.’

Still this kind individual *is* here and now censured by the wise as an *immoral* person, one of wrong view who holds **the doctrine of nihilism**.⁶⁵

‘On the other hand, if there *is* a hereafter, then this kind individual has made an unlucky throw on both counts: he is censured by the wise here and now, and with the body’s breaking up, after death, he will reappear in a state of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

He has wrongly accepted and undertaken this sure teaching in such a way that is only *one-sided* and *excludes the wholesome alternative*.⁶⁶

One with right view

10 (2.1) ONE WITH RIGHT VIEW AVOIDS EVIL. Now, householders, of those recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:

‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There is fruit and result of good and bad actions [karma]. There is this world, the next world. There are mother and father, spontaneously born

⁶² *Opapātika*, said of the rebirth of a non-returner, but here also refers to all divine and hell beings. See **Mahāli S** (D 1:27 156).

⁶³ ‘With the body’s breaking up, after death,’ *kāyassa bheda param, marañā*. Buddhaghosa explains this phrase as follows: ‘‘With the body’s breaking up’’ (*kāyassa bheda*) means on abandoning the aggregates that are clung to; ‘‘after death’’ (*param, marañā*) means that in-between state (*tad-antaram*), in the grasping of the aggregates that have been generated (*abhinibbatta-k, khandha, gahaṇe*). Or, ‘‘with the body’s breaking up’’ means the interruption of the life-faculty, and ‘‘after death’’ means after the death-consciousness’’ (*cuti, cittato uddham*). (Vism 13.91/427; cf NcA 69)

⁶⁴ He is safe (*sotthi*) in the sense that he will not be subject to suffering in a future life. However, he is still subject to sufferings attending to those particular lives, which are about to be mentioned.

⁶⁵ *N’atthika, vāda*, lit ‘‘the doctrine that nothing exists’’: it denies that there is an afterlife and karma. In modern terms, this is known as materialism.

⁶⁶ ‘‘Only one-sided’’ because he makes himself safe only on the presupposition that there is no hereafter, while if there is a hereafter he loses on both counts. (MA 3:117)

beings. There are brahmins and recluses who, living rightly and practising rightly, proclaim this world and the next after having directly known and realized it for themselves.’

—It is to be expected that they will *avoid* these three unwholesome states, namely, bodily, verbal and mental misconduct.

Why is that? Because those good recluses and brahmins see the danger, degradation and defilement in unwholesome states. They see the benefit of renunciation and wholesome states as the means of purification.

11 (2.2) ONE WITH RIGHT VIEW GAINS THE WHOLESOME. Since there actually is a hereafter, one who holds the view that ‘There is a hereafter’ has right view. Since there actually is a hereafter, one who intends that ‘There is a hereafter’ has right intention. Since there actually is a hereafter, one who declares that ‘There is a hereafter’ has right speech.

Since there actually is **a hereafter**, one who says that ‘There is a hereafter’ [404] does not contradict the arhats who know the hereafter. Since there actually is a hereafter, one who convinces another that ‘There is a hereafter’ convinces him to accept a true reality [true Dharma]; he neither praises himself nor disparages others.

“Thus he abandons any previous bad conduct of his and replaces it with wholesome virtue. And this right view, right intention, right speech, not contradicting the noble ones, convincing another to accept a true reality, and neither praising himself nor disparaging others—these wholesome states thus arise with right view as their condition.

12 (2.3) THE SECOND SURE TEACHING. Now, householders, a wise person considers thus:

‘If there *is* a hereafter, then, with the body’s breaking up, after death, this kind individual will reappear in a happy destination, in heaven.

THE SECOND WAGER. Now, whether or not the word of those good recluses and brahmins is true, let me assume that there is *no* hereafter. Still this kind individual is here and now praised by the wise as a virtuous person, one of right view who holds **the doctrine of affirmation**.⁶⁷

On the other hand, if there *is* a hereafter, then this kind individual has made a lucky throw on both counts: he is praised by the wise here and now, and when with the body’s breaking up, after death, he will reappear in a happy destination, in heaven.

He has rightly accepted and undertaken this sure teaching in such a way that is *double-sided* and *excludes the unwholesome alternative*.⁶⁸

2 AMORALISM OR NON-ACTION VIEW

13 (1) THE AMORAL REJECTS GOOD AND MERIT. Now, householders, there are some recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:⁶⁹

‘When one acts or makes another act, such as cutting others, burning others, or hurting others, tormenting others, intimidating others, killing, stealing, breaking into houses, plundering, burgling, ambushing, committing adultery, lying, **one does no evil**.

‘If with a razor-disc (*cakka*) one were to turn all the living beings on this earth to a single mountain of flesh, no evil would come from it.

If one were to go along the south bank of the Ganges, killing and making others kill, mutilating and making others mutilate, torturing and making others torture, there is no evil, no source of evil.

Or, if one were to go along the north bank of the Ganges, giving and making others give, sacrificing and making others sacrifice, there is no merit, no source of merit.

In generosity, self-taming, self-restraint, and truthful speech, there is **no merit, no source of merit**.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *Atthika, vāda*, lit “the doctrine that it exists”: it affirms that there is an afterlife and karma.

⁶⁸ “Double-sided” because he benefits from his view of affirming the hereafter whether or not there really is a hereafter (life after death) (MA 3:118).

⁶⁹ In *Sāmañña, phala S*, this view is attributed to *Pūrana Kassapa* (D 2.16-17/1:52 f); see Intro (2.2.2).

14 (2) WHO AFFIRMS KARMA AFFIRMS GOOD AND MERIT. Now, householders, there are some recluses and brahmins [405] whose teaching is directly opposed to those of these recluses and brahmins, and they say thus:

‘When you act or make another act, such as cutting others, burning others, or hurting others, tormenting others, intimidating others, killing, stealing, breaking into houses, plundering, burgling, ambushing, committing adultery, lying, **one does evil**.

If with a razor-disc one were to turn all the living beings on this earth to a single mountain of flesh, there would be evil, a source of evil.

If one were to go along the south bank of the Ganges, killing and making others kill, mutilating and making others mutilate, torturing and making others torture, there would be evil, a source of evil.

Or, if one were to go along the north bank of the Ganges, giving and making others give, sacrificing and making others sacrifice, there is merit, a source of merit.

In generosity, self-taming, self-restraint, and truthful speech, there is **merit, a source of merit**.’

What do you think, householders? Don’t these recluses and brahmins hold teachings directly contradicting one another?”

“Yes, bhante.”

THE BUDDHA’S ANSWER TO THE VIEW OF NON-ACTION

The amoral will suffer evil consequences

15 (1.1) THE AMORAL SEES NO NEED OF GOOD. Now, householders, of those recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:

‘When one acts or makes another act, such as cutting others, burning others, or hurting others, tormenting others, intimidating others, killing, stealing, breaking into houses, plundering, burgling, ambushing, committing adultery, lying, **one does no evil**. ... [§13]

In generosity, self-taming, self-restraint, and truthful speech, there is **no merit, no source of merit**.’

—It is to be expected that they will *avoid* these three wholesome states, namely, good bodily, verbal and mental conduct.

Why is that? Because those good recluses and brahmins do not see the danger, degradation and defilement in unwholesome states, nor do they see the benefit of renunciation and wholesome states as the means of purification.

16 (1.2) THE AMORAL ACCUMULATES EVIL. Since there actually is **action** (*kiriya*), one who holds the view that ‘There is no action’ has wrong view.

Since there actually is action, one who intends that ‘There is no action’ has wrong intention.

Since there actually is action, one who says that ‘There is no action’ has wrong speech.

Since there actually is action, one who declares that ‘There is no action’ contradicts the arhats who teach that there is action.

Since there actually is action, one who convinces another that ‘There is no action’ convinces him to accept a false reality [false dharma]; he praises himself and disparages others.

Thus he abandons any previous wholesome virtue of his and replaces it with bad conduct. [406] And this wrong view, wrong intention, wrong speech, contradicting the noble ones, convincing another to accept a false reality, and self-praise and disparagement of others—these bad unwholesome states thus arise with wrong view as their condition.

17 (1.3) THE THIRD SURE TEACHING. On the other hand, householders, a wise person considers thus:

‘If there is no action, then, with the body’s breaking up, after death, this kind individual⁷¹ will only have made himself safe.

⁷⁰ This is called *akiriya, vāda* (the doctrine of non-action), the view of Pūraṇa Kassapa, mentioned in **Sāmañña-phala S** (D 2.16-17/1:52 f) = SD 8.10. See Intro (2).

⁷¹ “This kind individual” (*ayaṃ bhavaṃ purisa, puggalo*), a polite reference, not a value judgement.

But if there is action, then, with the body's breaking up, after death, after death, he will reappear in a state of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

THE THIRD WAGER. Now, whether or not the word of those good recluses and brahmins is true, let me *suppose* that there is *no* action. Still this kind individual is here and now censured by the wise as an immoral person, one of wrong view who holds *the doctrine of non-action*.

On the other hand, if there *is* action, then this kind individual has made an unlucky throw on both counts: he is censured by the wise here and now, and with the body's breaking up, after death, he will reappear in a state of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

He has wrongly accepted and undertaken this sure teaching in such a way that is only *one-sided* and *excludes the wholesome alternative*.'

The moral will enjoy the fruits of good

18 (2.1) THE MORALLY VIRTUOUS AVOIDS DOING EVIL. Now, householders, of those recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:

'When you act or make another act, such as cutting others, burning others, or hurting others, tormenting others, intimidating others, killing, stealing, breaking into houses, plundering, burgling, ambushing, committing adultery, lying, one does evil....

If with a razor-disc one were to turn all the living beings on this earth to a single mountain of flesh, there would be evil, a source of evil.

If one were to go along the south bank of the Ganges, killing and making others kill, mutilating and making others mutilate, torturing and making others torture, there would be evil, a source of evil.

Or, if one were to go along the north bank of the Ganges, giving and making others give, sacrificing and making others sacrifice, there is merit, a source of merit.

In generosity, self-taming, self-restraint, and truthful speech, there is merit, a source of merit.'

—It is to be expected that they will *avoid* these three unwholesome states, namely, bodily, verbal and mental misconduct.

Why is that? Because these good recluses and brahmins see the danger, degradation and defilement in unwholesome states. They see the benefit of renunciation and wholesome states as the means of purification.

19 (2.2) THE MORALLY VIRTUOUS ACCUMULATES GOOD. Since there actually is **action**, one who holds the view that 'There is action [karma]' has right view.

Since there actually is action, one who intends that 'There is action' has right intention.

Since there actually is action, one who says that 'There is action' has right speech.

Since there actually is action, one who declares that 'There is action' does not contradict the arhats who teach that there is action.

Since there actually is action, one who convinces another that **[407]** 'There is action' convinces him to accept a true reality [true Dharma]; he neither praises himself nor disparages others.

Thus he abandons any previous bad conduct of his and replaces it with wholesome virtue.

And this right view, right intention, right speech, not contradicting the noble ones, convincing another to accept a true reality, and neither praising himself nor disparaging others—these wholesome states thus arise with right view as their condition.

20 (2.3) THE FOURTH SURE TEACHING. Now, householders, a wise person considers thus:

'If there is action [karma], then, with the body's breaking up, after death, this kind individual will reappear in a happy destination, in heaven.

THE FOURTH WAGER. Now, whether or not the word of those good recluses and brahmins is true, let me *suppose* that there is *no* karma [action]. Still this kind individual is here and now praised by the wise as a virtuous person, one of right view who holds **the doctrine of action**.

On the other hand, if there *is* action, then this kind individual has made a lucky throw on both counts: he is praised by the wise here and now, and with the body's breaking up, after death, he will reappear in a happy destination, in heaven.

He has rightly accepted and undertaken this sure teaching in such a way that is *double-sided* and *excludes the unwholesome alternative*.⁷²

3 NON-CONDITIONALITY VIEW

21 (1) DETERMINISM.⁷² Now, householders, there are some recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:

‘**There is neither cause nor condition**⁷³ for the defilement of beings. There is neither cause nor condition for the purification of beings. There is nothing self-caused, nothing other-caused, nothing human-caused.

There is no strength, no effort, no human energy, no human endeavour. All animals, all life, all beings, all living things⁷⁴ are powerless, devoid of strength, devoid of effort.

Subject to the whims of fate,⁷⁵ circumstances, and nature, they enjoy pleasure and pain in the six great classes by birth.⁷⁶

22 (2) CONDITIONALITY. Now, householders, there are some recluses and brahmins whose teaching is directly opposed to those of these recluses and brahmins, and they say thus:

‘There *is* cause and condition for the *defilement* of beings. There *is* cause and condition for the *purification* of beings. Beings are purified owing to **cause and condition**.

There *is* strength, effort, human energy, human endeavour. It is *not* the case that all living beings, all life, all beings, all selves⁷⁷ are powerless, devoid of strength, devoid of effort.

They do not, subject to the whims of fate, circumstances, and nature, enjoy pleasure and pain in the six great classes by birth.’

What do you think, householders? [408] Don’t these recluses and brahmins hold teachings directly contradicting one another?”

“Yes, bhante.”

⁷² In **Sāmañña,phala S**, this view is attributed to **Makkhali Gosāla** (D 2.18-20/1:53 f): see Intro (2.2.3).

⁷³ *hetu* means “root” (eg greed, hatred, delusion); *paccaya* means “condition.”

⁷⁴ “All...all living things,” *sabbe sattā sabbe pañā sabbe bhūtā sabbe jīvā*. Comys on **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2) and **Apannaka S** (M 60) say that “animals” (*sattā*) are camels, cattle, donkeys, etc; life or “breathers” (*pañā*) are those with one or two faculties; beings (*bhūta*) are those enclosed in egg-shell or membrane; “living things” (*jīva*) are rice, corn, wheat, etc (DA 1:161 = MA 3:120). This list also appears in the Jain Sūtras, where Jacobi tr as “Every sentient being, every insect, every living thing, whether animal or vegetable” (*Jaina Sūtras* 2:xxvi). It is however uncertain how these words were used by Gosāla, or how the Buddhists supposed he used them: see D:RD 1:71 n2. Cf the 4 modes of birth (*yonī*) at **Mahā Siha,nāda S** (M 12.32-33/1:71) = SD 49.1.

⁷⁵ “Fate, circumstances and nature,” *niyati.saṅgati,bhāva*. *Niyati* is fate or destiny, the primary idea in Gosāla’s view; “circumstance and nature” (*saṅgati,bhāva*) apparently refers to how it works within an individual and externally. See foll n.

⁷⁶ *Niyati,saṅgati,bhāva,parinātā chass’ev’ābhijātisu sukha,dukkham paṭisaṃvedeti*. On *niyati,saṅgati,bhāva*, see prec n. See **Apannaka S** (M 60.21-28/1:407-410 = SD 35.5) & **Sandaka S** (M 76.13-14/1:516 f), where this wrong view (attr to **Makkhali Gosāla**) is refuted. On the 6 “classes by birth” (*ābhijāti*), see **Cha-!-ābhijāti S** (A 6.57), where according to the antinomian **Pūraṇa Kassapa**, they are (1) the black class (*kaṇhābhijāti*), ie the bloody trade (butchers, fishermen, robbers, etc); (2) the blue class (*nīlābhijāti*), ie monks who subscribe to karma; (3) the red class (*lohītābhijāti*), ie the loin-clad Jains; (4) the yellow class (*haliddābhijāti*), ie the white-clad disciples of naked ascetics; (5) the white class (*sukkābhijāti*), ie the male and female Ājīvikas; (6) the purest white class (*parama,sukkābhijāti*), the highest, ie the Ājīvika teachers, Nanda Vaccha, Kisa Saṅkicca and Makkhali Gosāla (M 36.5/1:238) = SD 49.4. The Buddha however rejects this arbitrary gesture, and teaches that it is **karma** that makes us, not class (A 6.57/3:383-387 @ SD 23.10; also DA 1:182; MA 3:131; AA 2:342 f; SA 2:342 f); also **Deva,daha S** (M 101.22-4)/2:222 = SD 18.4), where *ābhijāti* is mentioned in connection with the Nirgranthas, and Bodhi 1989: 73-75.

⁷⁷ *Jīva*, also tr as “soul,” here used as a “bridging term” for those who believe in an unchanging soul.

THE BUDDHA’S ANSWER TO THE VIEW OF NON-CONDITIONALITY

23 (1.1) THE DETERMINIST SEES NO NEED OF GOOD. “Now, householders, of those recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:

‘There is no cause or condition for the defilement of beings...

Subject to the whims of fate, circumstances, and nature, they enjoy pleasure and pain in the six great classes of birth.’

—It is to be expected that they will *avoid* these three wholesome states, namely, good bodily, verbal and mental conduct.

Why is that? Because these good recluses and brahmins do not see the danger, degradation and defilement in unwholesome states, nor do they see the benefit of renunciation and wholesome states as the means of purification.

24 (1.2) THE DETERMINIST ACCUMULATES EVIL. Since there actually *is* **conditionality**,⁷⁸ one who holds the view that ‘There is *no* conditionality’ has wrong view.

Since there actually is conditionality, one who intends that ‘There is no conditionality’ has wrong intention.

Since there actually is conditionality, one who says that ‘There is no conditionality’ has wrong speech.

Since there actually is conditionality, one who declares that ‘There is no conditionality’ *contradicts* the arhats who teach that there is conditionality.

Since there actually is conditionality, one who convinces another that ‘There is no conditionality’ convinces him to accept *a false reality* [false dharma]; he praises himself and disparages others.

Thus he abandons any previous wholesome virtue of his and replaces it with bad conduct. And this wrong view, wrong intention, wrong speech, contradicting the noble ones, convincing another to accept a false reality, and self-praise and disparagement of others—these bad unwholesome states thus arise with wrong view as their condition.

25 (1.3) THE FIFTH SURE TEACHING. On the other hand, householders, a wise person considers thus: ‘If there is no conditionality, then, with the body’s breaking up, after death, this kind individual will only have made himself safe.

But if there is conditionality, then with the body’s breaking up, after death, he will reappear in a state of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

THE FIFTH WAGER. Now, whether or not the word of these good recluses and brahmins is true, let me *suppose* that there is *no* conditionality. Still this kind individual is here and now censured by the wise as an immoral person, one of wrong view who holds *the doctrine of non-conditionality*.

On the other hand, if there *is* conditionality, then this kind individual has made an unlucky throw on both counts: [409] he is censured by the wise here and now, and with the body’s breaking up, after death, he will reappear in a state of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

He has wrongly accepted and undertaken this sure teaching in such a way that is only *one-sided* and *excludes the wholesome alternative*.’

Who accepts conditionality will enjoy the fruits of good

26 (2.1) WHO ACCEPTS CONDITIONALITY WILL AVOID EVIL. Now, householders, of those recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:

*‘There is cause and condition for the defilement of beings. There is cause and condition for the purification of beings. Beings are purified owing to **cause and condition**.*

There is strength, effort, human energy, human endeavour. It is not the case that all living beings, all life, all beings, all selves are powerless, devoid of strength, devoid of effort.

⁷⁸ *Hetu*, usu tr as “cause,” on the limitations and problems of which, see **Necessity & sufficiency** = SD 35.1(4).

They do not, subject to the whims of fate, circumstances, and nature, enjoy pleasure and pain in the six great classes of birth.⁷⁹

—It is to be expected that they will *avoid* these three unwholesome states, namely, bodily, verbal and mental misconduct.

Why is that? Because these good recluses and brahmins see the danger, degradation and defilement in unwholesome states. They see the benefit of renunciation and wholesome states as the means of purification.

27 (2.2) WHO ACCEPTS CONDITIONALITY ACCUMULATES GOOD. Since there actually is **conditional-ity**, one who holds the view that ‘There *is* conditionality’ has right view.

Since there actually is conditionality, one who intends that ‘There is conditionality’ has right intention.

Since there actually is conditionality, one who declares that ‘There is conditionality’ has right speech.

Since there actually is conditionality, one who says that ‘There is conditionality’ does *not* contradict the arhats who teach that there is conditionality.

Since there actually is conditionality, one who convinces another that ‘There is conditionality’ convinces him to accept a *true* reality [true dharma]; he neither praises himself nor disparages others.

Thus he abandons any previous bad conduct of his and replaces it with wholesome virtue.

And this right view, right intention, right speech, not contradicting the noble ones, convincing another to accept a true reality, and neither praising himself nor disparaging others—these wholesome states thus arise with right view as their condition.

28 (2.3) THE SIXTH SURE TEACHING. Now, householders, a wise person considers thus:

‘If there *is* conditionality, then, with the body’s breaking up, after death, this kind individual will reappear in a happy destination, in heaven.

THE SIXTH WAGER. Now, whether or not the word of these good recluses and brahmins is true, let me suppose that there is *no* conditionality. Still this kind individual is here and now praised by the wise as a virtuous person, one of right view who holds *the doctrine of conditionality*.

On the other hand, if there *is* [410] conditionality, then this kind individual has made a lucky throw on both counts: he is praised by the wise here and now, and with the body’s breaking up, after death, he will reappear in a happy destination, in heaven.

He has rightly accepted and undertaken this sure teaching in such a way that is *double-sided* and *excludes the unwholesome alternative*.

4 THE FALSE VIEW: “NO FORMLESS REALMS”

OPPOSING VIEWS

29 (1) DENIAL OF THE FORMLESS STATES. Now, householders, of those recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:

‘There are *no* formless realms at all.’⁷⁹

30 (2) AFFIRMATION OF THE FORMLESS STATES. Now, householders, there are some recluses and brahmins whose teaching is directly opposed to those of these recluses and brahmins, and they say thus:

‘There definitely *are* the formless realms.’

What do you think, householders? Don’t these recluses and brahmins hold teachings directly contradicting one another?”

“Yes, bhante.”

The sure teaching

31 IGNORANCE. (1.1) “On the other hand, householders, a wise person considers thus:

⁷⁹ *N’atthi sabbaso āruppā ti*. This is the denial of the existential, external or objective counterpart of the formless attainments of meditation as well as the meditation attainments themselves. On the formless attainments, see **Jhāna Pañha S 1** (S 40.1) @ SD 24.11(5); also **Ākāśānañc’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.5) @ SD 24.15(1).

‘These good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that

“There are *no* formless realms at all,” but of this *I know not*.

(1.2) But these other good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that

“There definitely *are* formless realms,” but of this *I know not*.

(1.3) If, without knowing and seeing, I were to take one side and declare, “Only this is true, all else is wrong,” that would not be fitting for me.

(2.1) FOLLOWING THE WISE. Now, as to those good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are: “There definitely are *no* formless realms,”

if their word were true, then it is certainly possible that I might (after death) reappear among the gods of the form realms⁸⁰ who are mind-made.⁸¹

(2.2) But these other good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that

“There definitely *are* formless realms,”

if their word were true, then it is certainly possible that I might (after death) reappear among the gods of the formless realms who consist of perception [perception-generated].⁸²

(2.3) AFFIRMATIVE POINT. The taking up of rod and sword, quarrels, disputes, mayhem [strife], slandering and lying⁸³ are seen to occur on account of *form*,⁸⁴ but this does not occur at all in *the formless realms*.⁸⁵

(2.4) AFFIRMATION BY THE WISE. After reflecting thus,⁸⁶ he practises the way to revulsion with material forms, to the fading away and cessation of material forms.⁸⁷

5 FALSE VIEW: “NO CESSATION OF BEING”

OPPOSING VIEWS

32 (1) DENIAL OF CESSATION. Now, householders, there are some recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are this:

‘There is *no* cessation of being at all.’⁸⁸

⁸⁰ *Rūpa,loka*, that is, the realms of the gods who, on account of their still being composed of subtle matter, enjoy a high level of divine pleasure.

⁸¹ *Mano,mayā*, ie they lack the form aggregate; referring to the devas of the form dhyanas, constituting the four form worlds (*rūpa,loka*).

⁸² *Saññā,mayā*, ie they comprise of very subtle consciousness, fuelled by their past good karma. We could say that while the form beings are characterized by their brilliant energy and *light*, these formless beings are purely *energy*.

⁸³ “The taking up of the rod... and lying” (*daṇḍ’ādāna,satth’ādāna,viggaha,vivāda,tuvantuva,pesuñña,musāvādānam*): **D** 34.2.2(4)/3:289,6; **M** 18.8/1:110,3, 19.113,24 (id), **60.31/1:410,29** (id); **A** 9.23.2/4:400,28; **DA** 500; **MA** 2:75; **SA** 3:64,5; **AA** 4:190; **Vism** 10.1/326. This phrase refers to general violence and disorder. The phrase, “the taking up of the rod” (*daṇḍ’ādāna*), ie, the use of corporal punishment, only in **Aggañña S** (**D** 27.19b/3:92,26, 22/-93,26) = SD 2.19.

⁸⁴ Here, form (*rūpa*) means “physical form” of the sense-world, not the “fine” form of the dhyanic realms, where there is neither physical “body” nor speech as we know it, with which to interact.

⁸⁵ “Are seen to occur on account of form (*rūpa*), but this does not occur at all in the formless realms,” *dissante kho pana rūpādhikaraṇam...n’atthi kho pan’etaṃ sabbaso arūpē ti*.

⁸⁶ Even though the wise man here doubts the existence of the formless realms, he attains the 4th dhyana, through which he attempts to attain the formless dhyanas. If he fails, he is sure to be reborn in the form realm, but if he succeeds he will be reborn in the formless realm. As such, this is a sure teaching for him. (MA 3:122 f)

⁸⁷ This is an application of a shorter *nibbidā* formula, marking the turning-point in our spiritual training, when we head for awakening. In this shorter formula, however, the process stops at “cutting off,” which is only temporary (see *pahāna*: SD 13.1 (4.2c)). The *full* formula is: “it leads to *utter revulsion*, to dispassion, to ending (of suffering), to peace [stilling], to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana” (D 1:189; S 5:82, 179, 255, 361; A 3:83, 4:-143, 5:216). These are the 7 criteria for the true Dharma-Vinaya (**dhamma,vinaya.jānana,lakkhaṇa*). On the nibbidā formula, see *Nibbidā* = SD 20.1.

⁸⁸ Comy: Here “cessation of being” (*bhava,nirodha*) is nirvana (MA 3:123).

33 Now, householders, there are some recluses and brahmins whose teaching is directly opposed to those of these recluses and brahmins, and they say thus:

‘There definitely [411] *is* the cessation of being.’

What do you think, householders? Don’t these recluses and brahmins hold teachings directly contradicting one another?”

“Yes, bhante.”

34a (2) AFFIRMATION OF CESSATION. “On the other hand, householders, a wise person considers thus: ‘These good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that “There is no cessation of being at all,” but of this *I know not*.

And these other good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that “There definitely is cessation of being,” but of this *I know not*.

If, without knowing and seeing, I were to take one side and declare, ‘Only this is true, all else is wrong,’ that would not be fitting for me.

The sure teaching

34b (1) Now, as to those good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that

‘There is *no* cessation of being at all,’

if their word were true, then it is certainly possible that I might (after death) reappear among the gods of the formless realms who consist of perception [perception-generated].⁸⁹

(2) Now, as to those good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that

‘There definitely *is* cessation of being,’

if their word were true, then it is certainly possible that I might here and now attain nirvana.⁹⁰

(3) The view of those good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that

‘There is *no* cessation of being at all’

is close to lust, close to bondage, close to delighting, close to holding, close to clinging.

(4) But the view of those good recluses and brahmins whose teaching and view are that

‘There definitely *is* cessation of being’

is close to non-lust, close to non-bondage, close to non-delighting, close to non-holding, close to non-clinging.’

(5) After reflecting thus, he practises the way to revulsion with material forms, to the fading away and cessation of material forms.⁹¹

FOUR KINDS OF RELIGIOUS PRACTITIONERS⁹²

Four kinds of persons in terms of tormenting

35 Householders, there are **four kinds of persons to be found in this world**. What are the four?

(1) Here, householders, a certain person torments *himself*, intent on tormenting himself.⁹³

⁸⁹ *Saññā, mayā*: see §31 (2.2) n.

⁹⁰ “I might...attain nirvana,” *parinibbāyissāmi*. Bodhi has “might...attain final Nibbāna. On the translation of this word, see K R Norman, “Mistaken Ideas About Nibbāna,” *The Buddhist Forum* 3 1995:211-225 & Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*, 2000:49-52 (General Intro).

⁹¹ Even though the wise here doubts the possibility of nirvana or its existence, he reaches the eight attainments, through one of which he develops insight, thinking, “If there is cessation, then I will attain arhathood and gain nirvana.” If he *fails*, he is sure to be reborn in the formless realm, but if he *succeeds* he attains arhathood and gains nirvana. As such, this is a sure teaching for him. (MA 3:123 f)

⁹² The rest of this sutta (except for the ending, §57) is found mutatis mutandis in **Kandaraka S** (M 51.5-28/1:340-349 & SD 32.9 (4)) = **Apannaka S** (M 60.36-56/1:412 f = SD 35.5, with 6 additional self-mortifying observances) = **Ghoṭa, mukha S** (M 94.10-30/2:161 f = SD 77.2). The 4 kinds of persons also given at **Attan Tapa S** (A 4.198/-2:205-211 = SD 56.7) = **Pug** 4.21/55-61. See (1) Self-tormentor n below.

⁹³ *Idha gaha, patayo ekacco puggalo attan. tapo hoti atta. pari. tāpanānuyogam-anuyutto*.

(2) Here, householders, a certain person torments *others*, intent on tormenting others.⁹⁴

(3) Here, householders, a certain person torments *himself*, intent on tormenting himself, and torments others, intent on tormenting others.⁹⁵

(4) Here, householders, a certain person *neither* torments *himself* nor is intent on tormenting himself, and *neither* torments *others* nor is intent on tormenting others.⁹⁶ [412] Neither tormenting himself nor others, he is here and now hunger-free, quenched and cooled, and abides enjoying bliss, having himself become holy [supreme like Brahmā himself].⁹⁷

(1) The self-tormentor

36 What, householders, kind of person **torments himself, is intent on tormenting himself?**

⁹⁸Here, householders, someone is a naked ascetic,⁹⁹ of loose habits [flouting conventions],¹⁰⁰ licking his hands;¹⁰¹

not coming when invited, not stopping when invited;

not accepting food that is brought nor food specially prepared nor a meal invitation;

not accepting anything from a pot, from a bowl, across a threshold, among the firewood, among the rice-pounders, from two eating together, from a pregnant woman, from a woman giving suck, from a woman coupling with a man,¹⁰²

from a food-distribution centre, from where a dog is waiting, from where flies are swarming;

accepting neither fish nor meat; drinking no wine nor beer nor cereal brew.¹⁰³

⁹⁴ *Idha gaha,patayo ekacco puggalo paran,tapo hoti para,paritāpanānuyogam-anuyutto.*

⁹⁵ *Idha gaha,patayo ekacco puggalo attan,tapo ca hoti atta,paritāpanānuyogam-anuyutto paran,tapo ca para,-paritāpanānuyogam-anuyutto.*

⁹⁶ *Idha gaha,patayo ekacco puggalo n'ev'attantapo hoti nātta,paritāpanānuyogam-anuyutto na paran,tapo na para,paritāpanānuyogam-anuyutto.*

⁹⁷ *So anattan,tapo aparān,tapo diṭṭh'eva dhamme nicchāto nibbuto sītī,bhūto sukha-p,paṭisaṃvedī brahma,bhūte-na attanā viharati.*

⁹⁸ This whole section on the self-tormentor is, mutatis mutandis, found in **Kassapa Sīha,nāda S** (D 8.14/1:165-167 = SD 77.1) = **Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S** (D 25.8b/3:41 = SD 1.4) = **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12.45/1:77 f = SD 49.1, the Bodhisattva's self-mortification) = **Kandaraka S** (M 51.8/1:342 f = SD 32.9) = **Apaṇṇaka S** (M 60.-36/1:412 = SD 35.5, with 6 additional self-mortifying observances) = **Ghoṭa,mukha S** (M 94.10/2:161 = SD 77.2) = **Paṭipadā Acelaka S** (A 3.141/1:295) = **Atta,daṇḍa Sutta Nd** (Nm 15/416 f). The Dīgha pericope here has 6 additional self-mortifying observances. See also sub-header n here.

⁹⁹ "Naked ascetic" (**acelaka**), *a-celaka = acela*, "unclothed": (m) V 4:92,14; J 5:18,25; M 1:281,33, DhA 1:309,3, 400,13, 4:489,17; J 3:246,18, 6:229,7; (adj) M 1:307,23 = 342,25 = 412,4 = 2:161,26 = D 1:166,2 = 3:40,27 = A 1:295,8 = 2:206,7; (pl) M 1:238,15 (cf A 3:384,5); (titles) **~vagga** A 1:295-299 = SD 72.4, V 4:91-108, 5:19-21, 39 f; **~laddhi** J 3:246,19, 39 f; **~sāvaka** (m pl) A 3:384,2; **~sikkhāpada** = Pāc 41 (V 4:91 f).

¹⁰⁰ *Mutt'ācāro.*

¹⁰¹ *Hatthāpalekhano.* Cf Sekh 52 (V 4:98) which proscribes hand-licking; D 1:166, 3:40; M 1:77, 238, 307; A 1:295; Pug 55.

¹⁰² *Puris'antara'gatā*, lit "gone amongst men," ie being intimate or having sex with a man. This phrase is used to define *gihi,gata*, "gone to a householder" (V 4:322); defines *itthi*, "woman" at MA 2:209, DA 78. Comys points to the danger of interrupting their pleasure and incurring their anger leading to violence.

¹⁰³ *Na suraṃ, na merayaṃ, na thus'odakaṃ pivati.* "Rice-wine," **thus'odaka** (Skt *tuṣodaka*, "rice chaff") "sour rice- or barley-gruel" (SED, sv *tuṣāmbu*). Comys: "a drink called Sovīraka made from (the husk of) all kinds of grain" (*sabba,sassa,sambhārehi kataṃ sovīrakam*, DA 2:355 = NmA 431 = PugA 232; *sabba,sassa,sambhārehi kataṃ loṇa,sovīrakam*, MA 2:44); *sabba,sassa,sambhārehi kata,sovīrakam*, AA 2:385: all add that *thusodaka* is a strong drink and as such blamable (*ettha ca surā,pānam eva sāvajjam*). On "salted Sovīraka (sour gruel)" (*loṇa,sovīraka*); see Vinaya, where it is mentioned as a cure for stomach wind, and allowed as a beverage if mixed with water (Mv 6.16.3/V 1:210); mentioned in a list of drinks given to monks (Vv 177/2.2.6/23). **Suśruta Saṃhita** describes preparation of *tuṣodaka* as a medicine (SuśSaṃ 44, 40cd-44ab). It is said to be sour gruel prepared with unhusked cereals; in SuśSaṃ it refers to "fermented liquors of barley with husks" used as a purgative (G J Meulenbeld (tr), *Mādhvanidāna*, Leiden, 1974:408 f). When boiled with pulse and barley, it becomes an acetous fermentation called

He keeps himself to one house, to one morsel [when collecting alms]; he keeps himself to two houses, to two morsels...keeps to seven house, to seven morsels;

He lives on one small serving (of food) a day; on two small servings a day...on seven small servings a day;¹⁰⁴

He takes food once a day; once every two days...once every seven days—thus even up to a fortnight, he dwells pursuing the practice of taking of food at such regular intervals.

He is an eater of greens, or of millet, or of wild rice, or of hide-parings, or of water-lettuce,¹⁰⁵ or of rice-bran, or of rice-remnants,¹⁰⁶ or of sesamum flour, or of grass, or of cow-dung.

He lives on forest roots and fruits, a windfall-eater.

He clothes himself in hemp, in hemp-mixed cloth, in shrouds,¹⁰⁷ in refuse rags, in tree bark, in antelope hide, in strips of antelope hide, in kusa-grass fabric, in bark fabric, in wood-shaving fabric, in head-hair wool, in animal wool, in owl's wings.

He pulls out (his) hair and beard, and is devoted to this practice.

He stands continuously, rejecting seats.

He squats continuously, and is devoted to such a posture.

He uses a bed of thorns [spikes], making it his bed.¹⁰⁸

He engages in (the ritual of) bathing in water three times a day, including the evening.¹⁰⁹

Thus in these various ways he dwells keeping to the practice of tormenting himself and mortifying the body.

This person, householders, is called one who torments himself, intent on self-torment.

(2) The other-tormentor

37 What kind of person, householders, **torments others, is intent on tormenting others?**

Here a person is a sheep-butcher, a pig-butcher, a fowler, an animal trapper, a hunter, a fisherman, a thief, an executioner, a prison warden, or one who follows such a bloody occupation.

This person, householders, is called one who torments others, intent on tormenting others.

(3) The self-tormentor and other-tormentor

38 And, householders, what kind of person **torments himself, intent on self-torment, and torments others, intent on tormenting others?**

Here, householders, a person who is a head-anointed kshatriya king or a wealthy brahmin, having had a new sacrificial shrine-hall¹¹⁰ built to the east of the city, and having shaven off his hair and beard, dressed himself in rough hide, and greased his body with ghee and oil, scratching his back with a deer's horn, he enters the sacrificial shrine together with his chief queen and his brahmin high priest.

tuṣāmbu. D:RD 3:38, “gruel”; M:ÑB 1:104 “rice gruel.” See D:RD 1:229 n2, D:W n196. My tr is contextual which suggests some kind of fermented drink.

¹⁰⁴ “Small serving,” *datti*. Comy says that a *datti* is a small bowlful from which they leave out the main food (MA 2:45).

¹⁰⁵ “Water-lettuce,” *haṭa*, a kind of water-plant, *Pistia stratiotes* (PED) of the Arales order.

¹⁰⁶ “Rice-remnants,” *ācāma*, “the moisture of boiled rice, rice-scum, rice-water (without condiments, a mean unsavoury food—hence, prob interpreted as the burnt crust sticking to the pot” (CPD): DA 356,15 = MA 2:45,12 = AA 2:355,17 = PugA 232,25; ie “burnt rice remnants in a pot,” or “kerak nasi” in Malay.

¹⁰⁷ Shrouds collected from corpses in a charnel ground.

¹⁰⁸ Here, the Dīgha Nikāya pericope lists 6 additional self-mortifying observations, ie, sleeping on a plank; sleeping on hard stony ground; lying on one side covered in dirt; living n the open; living on dirty food; not drinking cold water: see **Kassapa Siha,nāda S** (D 8.14/1:167) @ 1.4 & **Udumbarikā Siha,nāda S** (D 25.8b/3:42) @ SD 1.4.

¹⁰⁹ Apparently to wash away his “sins”: cf (**Udaka Suddhika**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 7.21/1:182 f) = SD 79.7.

¹¹⁰ *Santhāgāra*, assembly hall; Comys gloss as *yañña,sālā*, sacrificial pavilion (MA 3:12; AA 3:185), *yaññ'āgāra*, sacrificial hall (AAT:Be 2:360).

There he lies down on grass spread out on the bare ground.¹¹¹ The king lives on the milk in the first teat of a cow with calf of the same colour [1:344] while the chief queen lives on the milk in the second teat, and the brahmin high priest lives on the milk in the third teat. The milk of the fourth teat they pour into the fire, and the calf lives on what is left.

He says thus: ‘Let so many bulls be slaughtered for sacrifice. Let so many bullocks be slaughtered for sacrifice. Let so many heifers be slaughtered for sacrifice. Let so many goats be slaughtered for sacrifice. Let so many sheep slaughtered for sacrifice. Let so many trees be felled for the sacrificial posts. Let so much grass be cut for the sacrificial grass.’

And then his slaves, messengers and servants make preparations, weeping with tearful faces, being goaded on by threats of punishment and by fear.¹¹²

This person, householders, is called one who torments himself, intent on tormenting himself, and torments, intent on tormenting others.

The fruits of recluship

(4) The one who does not torment himself or others

39 And what kind of person, householders, *neither torments himself nor is intent on tormenting himself, and neither torments others nor is intent on tormenting others;*

neither tormenting himself nor others, he is here and now hunger-free, quenched and cooled, and abides enjoying bliss, having himself become holy [supreme like Brahmā himself]?¹¹³

40 Here, householders, there arises in the world a Tathāgata [Thus Come], worthy and fully self-awakened, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, well-gone, knower of the worlds, unexcelled trainer of tamable people, teacher of beings human and divine, awakened, blessed.

41 Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers¹¹⁴ and people, he makes it known to others. He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

42 A householder or householder’s son, hearing the Dharma, gains faith in the Tathāgata and reflects:

‘The household life is stifling, a dusty path. The life of renunciation is like the open air. It is not easy living at home to practise the holy life completely, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell. What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?’

So after some time he abandons [1:345] all his wealth, little or much, and relatives, few or many, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

¹¹¹ *bhūmiyā harit’upalittāya*, lit “on the ground smeared with green.”

¹¹² Cf **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5/1:127-149) = SD 22.8. Cf also (**Pasenadi**) **Yañña S** (S 3.9/1:75 f) = SD 22.11.

¹¹³ Here, the arhat is meant. To stress that the Buddha does not torment himself nor anyone else, he next describes the path of practice by which he himself arrives at awakening.

¹¹⁴ *deva*, here in the sense of “devas by convention” (*sammati,deva*), ie kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are “gods by rebirth” (*upapatti,deva*) and “gods by purification” (*visuddhi,deva*), ie the Buddhas, pratyeka buddhas and arhats. (Nc 307 KhA 123). See n7.

(A) MORAL CULTIVATION

Sāmanera,sikkhā 1-3¹¹⁵

43 (1) Having thus gone forth and accomplished in the monk's training and way of life, abandoning the destruction of life, he abstains from destroying life. He dwells with rod and weapon laid down, conscientious,¹¹⁶ merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

(2) Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a pure mind.

(3) Abandoning incelibacy, he lives a celibate life, living apart, refraining from the sexual act, the way of the village.¹¹⁷

Right speech

(4) Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world.

(5) Abandoning divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there.

Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or consolidating those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord.

(6) Abandoning abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing and pleasing to the public.

(7) Abandoning idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is factual, what is in accordance with the goal [or, what is beneficial]. He speaks on the Dharma and Vinaya. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, backed by reason, measured, connected with the goal.

Proper conduct

(8) He abstains from damaging seeds and plant life.¹¹⁸

Sāmanera,sikkhā 6-10

(9) He eats only once a day, refraining from the evening meal and from food at improper times.¹¹⁹

(10) He abstains from dancing, singing, music and from watching shows.

(11) He abstains from wearing garlands and from beautifying himself with scents and make-up.

(12) He abstains from high and luxurious beds and seats.

(13) He abstains from accepting gold and silver [money].

Right livelihood

(14) He abstains from accepting uncooked grain; raw meat; women and girls; male and female slaves; goats and sheep, fowl and pigs; elephants, cattle, horses, and mares.

(15) He abstains from accepting fields and lands [property].

(16) He abstains from running messages [or errands].

(17) He abstains from buying and selling.

(18) He abstains from dealing with false scales, false metals, and false measures. [1:346]

¹¹⁵ §§43(1)-(20) comprises the "lesser moral virtues" (*culla,sīla*) as listed in the first 13 suttas (Brahmajāla Sutta, etc.) of the Dīgha Nikāya: see **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 2.45/1:4 f).

¹¹⁶ *lajjī*, "feel shame, modest," explain in the Comy on S 1:73 as "one who has moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*)."¹¹⁷ Opp *alajjī*, shameless.

¹¹⁷ *gāma,dhamma*, ie the way of the householders, vulgar (in the sense of being associated with the masses).

¹¹⁸ Curiously, this replaces the precept against intoxicants which is omitted.

¹¹⁹ "Improper times" here means between noon and the following dawn (V 1:83).

(19) He abstains from bribery, deception, and fraud.

(20) He abstains from wounding, executing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plunder, and violence.

Contentment

44 Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden; so too is he content with a set of robes to protect his body and almsfood to dispel his hunger. Wherever he goes, he takes only his requisites along.

Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, he himself enjoys a blameless happiness.

(B) MENTAL CULTIVATION

Sense-restraint (Custody of the senses)

45¹²⁰ (1) When he sees a form with the eye, *he does not grasp at any sign or detail* by which, as long as he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty, bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure¹²¹ would overwhelm him, to that extent keeps himself restrained.

He guards the restraint of the eye-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint in the eye-faculty.

(2) When he hears a sound with the ear, *he does not grasp at any sign or detail* by which, as long as he dwells unrestrained in that ear-faculty, bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure would overwhelm him, to that extent keeps himself restrained.

He guards the restraint of the ear-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint in the ear-faculty.

(3) When he smells a smell with the nose, *he does not grasp at any sign or detail* by which, as long as he dwells unrestrained in that nose-faculty, bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure would overwhelm him, to that extent keeps himself restrained.

He guards the restraint of the nose-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint in the nose-faculty.

(4) When he taste a taste with the tongue, *he does not grasp at any sign or detail* by which, as long as he dwells unrestrained in that tongue-faculty, bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure would overwhelm him, to that extent keeps himself restrained.

He guards the restraint of the tongue-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint in the tongue-faculty.

(5) When he feels a touch with the body, *he does not grasp at any sign or detail*

¹²⁰ This whole para: *So cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuyyañjana-g, gāhī. Yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ cakkhu'ndriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhā, domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyyuṃ, tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhu'ndriyaṃ, cakkhu'ndriye saṃvaraṃ āpajjati.* On *Na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuyyañjana-g, gāhī*, lit “he is not one who grasps at a sign, he is not one who grasps at a detail [a feature],” see SD 19.14. Comys say that “**sign**” (*nimitta*) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda, rāga, vasena*) or on account of merely one’s view (*diṭṭhi, matta, vasena*); “**detail**” (*anuyyañjana*) here refers to finding delight by grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhsA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74). On other meanings of *nimitta*, see SD 13 §3.1a.

¹²¹ “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā, domanassaṃ*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the five hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one’s meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā, domanassa*, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S** (A 3.101): “Bhikshus, before my enlightenment, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... ‘Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world.’” (A 3.101/1:258, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

by which, as long as he dwells unrestrained in that body-faculty, bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure would overwhelm him, to that extent keeps himself restrained.

He guards the restraint of the body-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint in the body-faculty.

(1) When he cognizes an object with the mind, *he does not grasp at any sign or detail*

by which, as long as he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty, bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure would overwhelm him, to that extent keeps himself restrained.

He guards the restraint of the mind-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint in the mind-faculty.¹²²

Possessing this noble sense-restraint, he experiences within himself pure joy.¹²³

Mindfulness & full awareness

46 While going forward and returning, he acts with full awareness.¹²⁴

While looking toward and looking away;

while bending and extending his limbs;

while carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe, and his bowl;

while eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting;

while urinating and defecating;

while walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, or remaining silent, he acts with full awareness.

Abandoning the hindrances¹²⁵

47 Possessing this noble aggregate of moral virtue, this noble restraint over the sense-faculties, this noble mindfulness and full awareness, and this noble contentment, he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a forest, the shade of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw.

48 Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.¹²⁶ [1:347]

49 (1) Abandoning covetousness with regard to the world, he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness.

(2) Abandoning ill will and anger, he dwells with a mind devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will and anger.

(3) Abandoning sloth and torpor, he dwells with a mind devoid of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light. He cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor.

(4) Abandoning restlessness and remorse, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and remorse.

(5) Abandoning spiritual doubt, he dwells having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity with regard to wholesome mental states. He cleanses his mind of doubt.

¹²² D 2.64/1:70, 10.2.2/1:207, 33.1.11(10)/3:225; M 27.15/1:180, 33.20/1:223, 38.35/1:269, 51.16/1:346, 53.8/1:355, 94.18/2:162, 101.33/2:226; S 35.120/4:104, 35.239/4:176; A 3.16/1:113, 4.14/2:16, 4.37/2:39, 4.164/2:152 (×4), 4.198.11/2:210, 5.76.12/3:99 f, 5.140.11/3:163, 10.99.6/5:206, 11.18.23/5:351. For a study, see SD 9.14.

¹²³ *So iminā ariyena indriya samvarena samannāgato ajjhataṃ abyāseka, sukhaṃ paṭisaṃvedeti.* Cf **Sāmañña-phala S** (D 2.63/1:70) = SD 8.10. The word *avyāseka* (or *abyāseka*) means “pure, unmixed, not sensual.” This pure joy (*abyāseka, sukha*) arises from meditation and mindfulness: also at §17 below; cf *anavajja, sukha* above [§15].

¹²⁴ “He acts with full awareness,” *sampajāna, kārī*, lit “he is one who works with full awareness.” **Sāmañña-phala S** (D 2.67/1:71) reading: *sati, sampajāna, kārī*, “he acts with mindfulness and full awareness,” so too below here [§36]. As in **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.4/2:293) = **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.8/1:57).

¹²⁵ For the classic similes for the mental hindrances, see **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 2.67 = 1:71-73).

¹²⁶ Comy. He applies mindfulness towards his meditation subject; or he sets it up in the region of the mouth. As such, it is said in the Vibhaṅga: “This mindfulness is set up, set up well, at the tip of the nose or at the sign of the mouth” (Vbh ¶537/252). NT: The “sign of the mouth” (*mukha, nimitta*) is the middle region of the upper lip, against which the air strikes when it comes out of the nose.

The four dhyanas

50 Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states, he enters and remains in the first absorption, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of detachment.¹²⁷

51 Furthermore, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, he enters and remains in the second absorption, that is accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration, free from initial application and sustained application.¹²⁸

52 And furthermore, with the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly comprehending, and enjoys happiness with the body. He enters and remains in the third absorption, of which the Noble Ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

53 And furthermore, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of joy and grief—he enters and abides in the fourth absorption, that is neither pleasant nor painful and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

(C) CULTIVATION OF WISDOM

(1) Knowledge of the recollection of past lives

54 With his mind thus concentrated, purified and bright, unblemished, free from defects,¹²⁹ pliant, malleable, steady, and thoroughly undisturbed, he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the recollection of past lives** [lit. previous abodes]. He recollects his various past lives, ie, one birth, two births, three births, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand, many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, [recollecting],

‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my lifespan. Passing away from that state, I re-rose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, [1:348] such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’

Thus he recollects his various past lives in their modes and details.

(2) The passing-away & reappearance of beings

55 With his mind thus *developed*, [413] he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings**. He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],¹³⁰ purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and reappearing, and he discerns how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their karma:

‘These beings—who have committed bad conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—with the body’s breaking up, after death, have reappeared in a state of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.’

¹²⁷ ie *samādhi*, concentration. Dhyana factors: *vitakka vicāra pīti sukhasa ek’aggatā*.

¹²⁸ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within its initial application and sustained application (thought and examination) (*vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur (S 2:273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. At M 1:161 (Ariya, pariyesanā S), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled, “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate till dhyana).

¹²⁹ *upakkilesa*: to be distinguished from *kilesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff. are meant, but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (W)

¹³⁰ *dibba, cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*) (§104); see n79.

But these beings—who have committed good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—with the body’s breaking up, after death, after death, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’

Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and reappearing, and *how they fare according to their karma*.

(3) The destruction of influxes

55a With his mind thus concentrated, purified and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and thoroughly undisturbed, the monk directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the destruction of the influxes**.¹³¹

He discerns, as it is really is, that ‘This is unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*); this is the arising of unsatisfactoriness; this is the ending of unsatisfactoriness; this is the way leading to the ending of unsatisfactoriness.

These are influxes; this is the arising of influxes; this is the ending of influxes; this is the way leading to the ending of influxes.’

His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the canker of sensual desire, the canker of becoming, the canker of ignorance. With (his) release, there is the knowledge, ‘I am released!’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life has been lived, done is that which needs to be done. There is nothing further beyond this.’¹³²

56 This person, householders, is called one who neither torments himself, nor intent on self-torment, neither torments others, nor intent on tormenting others. **[1:349]** Neither tormenting himself nor tormenting others, he is right here and now hunger-free, quenched and cooled, and abides enjoying bliss, having himself become holy [supreme like Brahmā himself].¹³³

The brahmins go for refuge

57 When this was said, the brahmin householders of Sālā said to the Blessed One:

“Excellent, master Gotama! Excellent! Just as if, master Gotama, one

were to place upright what had been overturned,

were to reveal what was hidden,

were to show the way to one who was lost, or

were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,

in the same way master Gotama has, in numerous ways, made the Dharma clear.

We go to master Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks. May master Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone to him for refuge, from this day forth, for life.”

— evaṃ —

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¹³¹ *Āsava*: from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). Various translated as “biases,” “intoxicants,” “influxes,” “cankers” or “deadly taints” (RD). A further corruption, that of wrong views (*ditth’āsava*), is sometimes added. The destruction of these āsavas is equivalent to arhathood.

¹³² *Nāparam itthatāya*: lit “there is no more of ‘thusness’.” See **Mahānidāna S** (M 15.22/2:63 f) = SD 5.17.

¹³³ This is the closing of the passage of the 4th type of person which starts at §34.

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