

Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta

The Discourse to Gopaka Moggallāna

M 108/3:7-15

Theme: Not all dhyana are praised by the Buddha

Translated by Piya Tan ©2010

1 Sutta summary and background

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND COMMENTS. The Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 108) ominously opens like the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16), with forebodings of impending war, as Ajāta,sattu,¹ the rajah of Magadha, fortifies his capital of Raja,gaha, fearing an attack from the belligerent Caṇḍa Pajjota [1.2.1.1], the rajah of Avantī [1.2.1.2].²

The Sutta is named after the first person, that is, Gopaka Moggallāna [1.2.3], whom Ānanda meets in this account [§§3-4]. He asks Ānanda if there is any monk who has all the Buddha's qualities, and is answered in the negative [§5]. Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha then appears and interrupts their conversation [§6], and asks whether the Sangha has a successor to the Buddha. Ānanda answers no and adds that "the Dharma is our refuge." [§§7-9].

The perplexed political minded Vassa,kāra questions further, and Ānanda explains that the Buddha has prescribed the course of training (*sikkhā*) and the Pātimokkha (monastic code), which governs the lives of the monastics [§§10-11]. When Vassa,kāra still is perplexed how a community such as the Sangha could thrive without the leadership of a single person [§12], Ānanda goes on to explain how the 4 qualities of an elder monk [§13-17] and the 6 superknowledges [§§18-23]. In other words, the Sangha is guided not by the external power of an individual, but by their common inner moral virtue and spirituality.

At this point, Vassa,kāra shares his admiration of the Sangha with the general Upananda [§24]. Then when Vassa,kāra learns that Ānanda is staying in the Bamboo Grove, he remarks that it is a place very conducive for meditators and meditation. When Ānanda says that this is because of the safety "on account of protectors and guardians such as yourselves (that is, the rajah and his court)," Vassa,kāra retorts that the place is pleasant because of the presence of meditators, adding that the Buddha praises all kinds of meditation [§25].

To the last remark, Ānanda diplomatically corrects him, explaining that the Buddha rejects those meditation that is attended by mental hindrances [§26], and praises the four dhyanas [§27]. Vassa,kāra then courteously takes leave [§28]. Gopaka and Ānanda then conclude their conversation [§29].

1.2 SUTTA BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Caṇḍa Pajjota

1.2.1.1 CAṆḌA PAJJOTA (Skt Caṇḍa Pradyota), the rajah of Avantī, was a man of violent temper (*caṇḍa*) (V 1:277). He wanted to conquer the neighbouring kingdom of Vamśa, but failed. The rajah of Vamśa, Udena, eloped with his daughter, Vāsula,datta, and married her (DhA 2.1.4/1:191-199), so that the two kingdoms continued on friendly terms. Once when Pajjota was ill with jaundice, Bimbi,sāra, rajah of Magadha (before Ajāta,sattu killed him), sent his personal physician, Jīvaka, to heal him.³

Bhāsa (5th-2nd cent CE), one of India's best known playwright, centres his best known play, *Swapna Vāsava,datta*, around Pajjota. In the play he is called Mahāsena ("great army") on account of his huge force and belligerent nature (5.20). As such, his full name, in Sanskrit, is Caṇḍa Pradyota Maha,sena.

Pajjota's chief queen, Gopala,mātā (mother of prince Gopāla) was a disciple of Mahā Kaccāna, and she built a stupa in Ujjenī.

¹ On Ajāta,sattu, see *Sāmañña,phala S* (D 2) = SD 8.10 (4).

² See *Mahā,parinibbāna S* (D 16.1.1b/2:72) = SD 9 nn.

³ Mv 8.1.23-29/V 1:276-278; qu at MA 4:71; AA 1:399.

1.2.1.2 AVANTĪ was one of the 4 great kingdoms of the Buddha's time, the other 3 being Magadha (capital, Rājagṛha), Kosala (capital, Sāvathī) and Vamsa or Vatsa (capital, Kosambī). All these are among the 16 great states (*mahājanapada*) of 6th century BCE India.⁴

The country (covering roughly modern Malwa, in Madhya Pradesh) was divided into two regions by the Vindhya mountains, the capital of the northern part was Ujjenī (Skt Ujjayinī; modern Ujjain), and the south centred around Mahissatī⁵ (Skt Mahiśmatī). Pajjota resided in Ujjenī.⁶

After Buddhism was established in Avantī, it was notably present in such famous places as Bhārhut, Sāñcī, and Vidiśā, all famous for their many great stupas, some of which survived or have been excavated in modern times.

1.2.2 Gopaka Moggallāna. The word *gopaka* means “cattle-herd,” which suggests his occupation or that his wealth is in terms of cattle. The Gopaka Moggallāna says that Ānanda visits brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna “where he was working” (*kammanto*) [S4], which the Commentary says was “outside the city” (MA 4:71). They are then joined by Vassa, kāra, chief minister of Magadha, and general Upananda.

From all this, the Dictionary of Pali Proper Names surmises that Gopaka Moggallāna is “a brahmin minister of Ajātasattu, in charge of some defence works in Rajagṛha” (DPPN 1:818). His forename, perhaps a nickname, *gopaka*, however, means “cattle-herd.” A further clue that Gopaka could be working on the fortification with Vassa, kāra is that Gopaka, too, asks basically the same question as Vassa, kāra does.

There is little else about Gopaka Moggallāna in the suttas, except for Ānanda's Thera, gāthā, where this verse is addressed to Gopaka Moggallāna:

*Dvāsīti buddhato gaṇhiṃ
dve saḥassāni bhikkhuto
catur'āsīti, saḥassāni
ye me dhammā pavattino*

From the Buddha I grasped 82 thousand,
from the monks another two.
Eighty-four thousand
teachings are set going in me. (Tha 1024)

The Thera, gāthā Commentary says that Gopaka Moggallāna here asks Ānanda how much of the Buddha's teachings he remembers. Ānanda answers that he remembers 84,000 teachings of the Buddha and goes on to explain this (ThaA 3:117).

1.2.3 Vassa, kāra (Skt Varṣakāra) is mentioned with Sunīdha in the **Mahā, parinibbāna Sutta** (M 16).⁷ Both are said to be “chief ministers.” Apparently, he was a man of high position, even prime minister, in Magadha.⁸

The Majjhima Commentary on the Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 108) has a curious story about Vassa, kāra. It is said that once, upon seeing Mahā Kaccāna descending Mt Vulture Peak, he remarks that Mahā Kaccāna looked just like a monkey. Hearing this, the Buddha says that unless Vassakāra asks for the elder's forgiveness, he would be born as a monkey in Veḷuvana. Vassakāra, fearing that the Buddha's prophecy would come true, has various fruit trees and other trees planted in Veḷuvana, to be of use to him as a monkey in due course. After his death, he is actually reborn as a monkey who answers to the name Vassakāra! (MA 4:73)

⁴ A 1:213, 4:252, 256, 260. See Mahā, parinibbāna S (D 16) = SD 9 Intro (16a).

⁵ D 2:235.

⁶ V 1:276, 30; DhA 1:192; ThaA 2:107, 1.

⁷ D 16.1.26/2:86 = SD 9.

⁸ *Mahāmatta*; cf Skt *mahā, mātra* = *mahā āmacca*? PED: “A king's chief minister [evidently more than one of them].” His position is of such importance, that he even ranges as a *rājā* or king (V 3:47: *rājā...akkhadassā mahāmattā ye vā pana chejjabhejjanī anusāsanti ete rājāno nāma*). He was said to be prime minister, “who was the highest Officer-of-State and real Head of the Executive” (Banerjea, *Public Administration in Ancient India*, 1916). An acc sg *mahā-mattānaṃ* at A 1:154 (formed after the prec *rājānaṃ*). See V 1:74 (where 2 ranks of *mahāmatta* are given: *senā, nāyaka* ~a, the minister of defence, and *vohārika* ~a, that of law); also D 1:7, 3:88, 3:64 (here with ep *khattiya*): A 1:154, 252, 279, 3:128; V 4:224; Vism 1:21; VbhA 312 (in simile of 2 ~ā), 340; PvA 169. Cf Fick, *Soziale Gliederung* 92, 99, 101.” See also VA 2:294, 5:1095; DA 2:540.

2 The Sangha's refuge

2.1 "THE DHARMA IS OUR REFUGE" [§10(3)]. This is the key statement in the Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 108). This means that the Sangha is not governed by a single person or by personal judgements of its members (that is, charisma, or a power structure), but by a consensus based on the Dharma-Vinaya (the teaching and discipline) laid down by the Buddha. This is in keeping with the Buddha's famous declaration, recorded in the **Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), thus:

Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

"Ānanda, it may be that you would think:

'Gone is the Teacher's word! We have no teacher.'

It should not be seen thus, Ānanda, for the Dharma and the Vinaya [the Teaching and the Discipline] that I have taught and explained to you, will, at my passing, be your teacher.

(D 16.6.1/2:154) = SD 9

The Gārava Sutta (S 6.2) relates how the newly-awakened Buddha declares that the Dharma is his teacher, worthy of his reverence.⁹ The above may be said to give the essence of the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16). The term *satthā* (teacher) is here redefined: while the Buddha lives, *he* is teacher; after his passing, the role is found in the Dharma and Vinaya.

With the Buddha's passing, Buddhism ceases to be a cult (where the teacher or leader, or his charisma, is the final authority), and it becomes a spiritual and teaching-centred system. In this sense, it may be said that the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta is the Buddha's last will and testament to his spiritual heirs.

On the other hand, while the religious and faith-inclined might accept that the Buddha's authority and presence have been *spiritually* transferred to the Dharma and Vinaya, they may also perceive that he is "*physically*" transferred into his relics, the stupa and the Buddha image.¹⁰

11b (4) "Is there, master Ānanda, a single monk whom you now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on?"

"*There is no one monk*,¹¹ brahmin, whom we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on."¹² [§11b]

After the Buddha's passing, two powerful institutionalized religious trends developed. Those who readily accept the Buddha as a historical figure, thus accepting his death as being a natural event, tended towards dogmatizing the Dharma and ritualizing the Vinaya, as exemplified by the Mahāvihāra tradition of Sri Lanka. The other trend, which generally rejected the Buddha's death, deified the Buddha and modified Buddhism to suit their own cultures and circumstances: this is the Mahāyāna (including the Vajrayāna).¹³

I'm not at all inclined toward a fundamentalist approach to Buddhism, championing a "pure or pristine" form of early Buddhism, and I'm not against the acculturation (assimilation into a culture) of Buddhism (which is, after all, a natural social phenomenon). However, it is to our common advantage if we have strong Buddhist roots, especially when we still have a very complete early scripture in the Pali Canon and valuable documents in the ancient Āgamas preserved in Chinese translations, in Sanskrit and in other ancient languages.

⁹ S 6.2/1:138-140 = SD 12.2.

¹⁰ See Ray 1994:348-352, 364.

¹¹ Be WT *N'atthi* [Ce Ee Se *Atthi*] *kho, brāhmaṇa, eka, bhikkhu pi yaṃ mayā etarahi sakkaroma garuṃ karo-ma mānema pūjema; sakkatvā garuṃ katvā upanissāya viharāma ti*. Interestingly, only Be (the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā ed) has the reading *n'atthi*: see Intro (2).

¹² For the laity living in dependence on a monastery, see **Mahā Sakul'udāyī S** (M 77.6/2:5) = SD 49.5.

¹³ On the issue of "death denial" and post-Buddha Buddhism, see **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16) = SD 9 Intro (9) & Miraculous Stories = SD 27.5b (6.2).

A triangulated appreciation of the Pali Canon, the Āgamas, and the forest monastic tradition, will give us a good idea and taste of the spirituality of the Buddha's teachings. When we whole-heartedly give our common spiritual legacy its proper place—at the root and core of our Buddhist lives—while celebrating the Buddhist presence culturally (and without exploiting Buddhism for worldly pursuits and gains), there is a great good that Buddhism can do for the individual, society and the world.

3 *Jhāna*: “meditation” or “dhyana”?

3.1 THE EARLY BUDDHIST CONTEXT. The usage of the term *jhāna* in the Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 108) [§§25-27], especially with Ānanda's statement, “The Blessed One, brahmin, does not praise all kinds of meditation [dhyana], nor does he not dispraise all kinds of meditation [dhyana]” [§26]. If we accept the fact that dhyana (*jhāna*) *arises only after all the five mental hindrances have been dispelled*, then it is clear, from §26, that “dhyana” (at least as understood in this Sutta) is a generic term for “meditation.” §26 states that the Buddha does not praise any meditation that is tainted by any of the five mental hindrances.

Such an interpretation is supported by Analayo, who writes:

Although *jhāna* usually refers to the attainment of deep absorption, the word occasionally retains the original meaning of meditation. The *Gopakamoggallāna Sutta*, for example, mentions a form of *jhāna* in which the hindrances still obsess the mind.¹⁴ Such “*jhāna*” does not qualify as a meditative absorption, since it is the absence of the hindrances that characterize true absorption.

(2003:75)

The Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 108) says that it is impossible to meditate properly when the mind is obsessed by ill will (or any of the hindrances): we would only “meditate, over-meditate, under-meditate, out-meditate” (*jhāyati pajjhāyati nijjhāyati apajjhāyati*) [§26]. The Buddha does not speak in praise of such a practice.¹⁵

Loosely, and only loosely, we could associate the last three terms with the three unwholesome roots: *pajjhāyati* is to meditate “consumed” by greed (*lobha*) or lust (*rāga*), *nijjhāyati* is weighed “down” by hate, and *apajjhāyati* is led astray and “way out” by delusion. In a negative sense, *jhāyati* here, following the text, is to meditate troubled by the five mental hindrances. I don't think the suttas use these terms in such a technical way, but only in a reiterative and mnemonic sense, simply meaning “to meditate troubled by the five hindrances,” which defines *jhāyati*, the first and key term here (in this context).

3.2 A BROADER BUDDHIST CONTEXT. Amongst the Chan traditions of Chinese Buddhism, and their descendants (Zen, Sōn, Th'ien, etc), which traditionally reject the “southern” or Indian conception of *jhāna*,¹⁶ opting to be guided by such teachings and traditions as this verse, attributed to Bodhidharma:

教外別傳	<i>jiào wài bié zhuàn</i>	A special [separate] transmission outside the teachings,
不立文字	<i>bú lì wén zì</i>	do not depend on written words, ¹⁷
直指人心	<i>zhí zhǐ rén xīn</i>	directly point to the human mind,
見性成佛	<i>jiàn xìng chéng fó</i>	see one's nature and become Buddha.
		(See T2008.360a24-360c12 & 2008.364c9-364c24) ¹⁸

¹⁴ See Analayo's fn here.

¹⁵ M 108.26/3:13 f = SD 33.5. There is a wordplay here: *pajjhāyati* (*pa + jhāyati*), “to be in flames, to waste, decay, dry up”; fig: “to be consumed or overcome with grief, disappointment or remorse” (V 3:19, 4:5; A 2:214, 216, 3:57; J 3:534 *pajjhāti* mc); uau tr as “it burns up, he is consumed (by grief, etc)”; *nijjhāyati* means “he thinks” but also has the sense of “being consumed (by thought, etc); and *apajjhāyati* means “he is absorbed (in thoughts on account of ‘I am’-conceit).” My tr here follows the basic senses of the prefixes: *pa-* (up), *ni-* (down), and *apa-* (out). Also at M 50.13/1:334 = SD 36.4 (pl).

¹⁶ The Chan rejection of the Indian Buddhist conception of *jhāna* has

¹⁷ Most translations take *wénzì* (文字) as a dvandva (“words and letters”), but the more common usage is as karmadharaya, which I follow here.

For the benefit of those who are more comfortable with such a definition, I have give a more accommodating alternate translation, parenthesized by “[dhyana],” which means meditation in the general, and which also refers to its acculturated forms.

Where the Chan traditionalists and followers reject or downplay *jhāna*, as known in early Indian Buddhism, they are close to the modern tradition of Vipassana.¹⁹ Both traditions admonish their practitioners to see directly into the true nature of things. However, Vipassana, in a sense is less intellectualized²⁰ as it does not make use of the gong’an (Jap koan).²¹

A final note to those keen on meditation as a means of mental cultivation or self-healing, try any method you feel would work for you, especially with the guidance of a morally virtuous, patient and experienced teacher. The best test to know whether the method is working for you or not, is that you consistently feel a sense of inner joy and spaciousness, it is probably working for you. The next test is that if you find one system works for you, it is likely that any other bona fide mindfulness method would not pose any difficulty for you. If your meditation allows you to accept yourself in a positively joyful manner and allows an inclusive space for others, too, then it is working well.

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¹⁸ See **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (5.1.2).

¹⁹ See **Samatha & Vipassana** = SD 41.1.

²⁰ DT Suzuki, in a light moment, remarks: “Zen claims to be ‘a specific transmission outside the scripture and to be altogether independent of verbalism,’ but it is Zen masters who are the most talkative and most addicted to writings of all sorts.” (In his intro to Zenkei Shibayama’s *A Flower Does Not Talk*, Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1971:9). See also **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (5.1.3.3).

²¹ See **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (5.1.2.7) & (5.1.3.1).

The Discourse to Gopaka Moggallāna

M 108/3:7-15

1 Thus have I heard.

Ānanda meets Gopaka Moggallāna

At one time, not long after the parinirvana [the final passing away] of the Blessed One,²² the venerable²³ Ānanda was staying in the squirrels's feeding-ground in Veḷu,vana [the bamboo grove] near Rāja,gaha.

2 Now at that time, Ajāta,sattu Vedehi,putta [son of the lady Vedehi], the rajah of Māgadha, being suspicious of the rajah Pajjota,²⁴ was having Rāja,gaha fortified. [S6a]

3 Then in the morning, the venerable Ānanda, having dressed himself, taking robe and bowl, entered Sāvattḥī for alms. Then, it occurred to the venerable Ānanda,

“It is still too early to wander for alms in Rajagaha. What now if I were to visit the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna while he is at work.”²⁵

4 So the venerable Ānanda went to where the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna was working.

The brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna saw the venerable Ānanda coming from afar. Seeing the venerable Ānanda, he said this to him:

“Come, master Ānanda! Welcome to the master Ānanda! It has been a long time since the venerable Ānanda found an opportunity to come here.”²⁶ Please sit down, master Ānanda; there is a seat prepared.”

The venerable Ānanda sat down on the prepared seat. [8] The brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna took a certain low seat and sat down at one side.

Gopaka Moggallāna's question

5a Sitting thus at one side, the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna said this to the venerable Ānanda:

5b “Master Ānanda, is there a single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the master Gotama, the arhat [worthy], fully self-awakened one?”²⁷

“There is, brahmin, no single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the Blessed One, the arhat [worthy], fully self-awakened one.

²² Comy says that this was just after the distribution of the Buddha's relics, when Ānanda was at Rāja,gaha for the Dharma-Vinaya recital (*dhmma,vinaya saṅgīti*, ie “the first Council”) (MA 4:70).

²³ *Ee* omits *āyasma*, which is found in other MSS.

²⁴ *Pajjota*, more fully, Caṇḍa Pajjota (“the fierce”), king of Avantī (capital, Ujjenī, DhA 1:192), was a friend of king Bimbisāra, who was killed by his own son, Ajāta,sattu. Ajāta,sattu thought that Pajjota might seek to avenge his friend's murder (MA 4:70). See Intro (1.2.1.1).

²⁵ “The brahmin...while he was at work” (*brāhmaṇassa kammanto*), ie, outside the city (MA 4:71). Apparently, from the above context, DPPN surmises that Gopaka Moggallāna is “a brahmin minister of Ajātasattu, in charge of some defence works in Rajagaha” (DPPN 1:818). His forename, perhaps a nickname, *gopaka*, means “cattle-herd.”

²⁶ *Cirassaṃ kho bhavaṃ ānando imaṃ pariyāyam akāsi yad idaṃ idh'āgamanāya*. See *Paṭṭhapāda S* (D 9.5/-1:179) = SD 7.14; *Udumbarikā Siha,nāda S* (D 25.7a/3:39) = SD 1.4; *Gopaka Moggallāna S* (M 108.4/3:7) = SD 33.5. In the phrase, *pariyāyam akāsi*, “made it an occasion.” In the phrase, *pariyāyam akāsi*, “made it an occasion,” Comy glosses *pariyāya* as *vāra* (“occasion, opportunity”) (UA 115). This is stock: D 1:90 (DA 2:369), 179 (see D:RD 1:245 n2), 2:270, 3:2, 39; M 1:252 (MA 2:300 f), 326, 481, 2:2, 30, 3:7; S 1:142; A 3:332 (AA 3:363), 4:76; U 13 (UA 115); J 3:359. In *Brahma Nimantanika S* (M 49), Baka Brahmā says: “Come, sir! Welcome, sir!... (*ehi kho mārisā, sāgataṃ mārisā, cirassaṃ kho marisā imaṃ pariyāyaṃ akāsi yadidaṃ idh'āgamanāya*). (M 49.3a/-1:326) = SD 11.7.

²⁷ *Atthi nu kho, bho ānanda, eka,bhikkhu pi tehi dhammehi sabbena,sabbaṃ sabbathā,sabbaṃ samannāgato yehi dhammehi samannāgato so bhavaṃ gotamo ahosi araham sammā,sambuddhō ti?*

5c For, the Blessed One is the one who gives rise to the unarisen path, who brings forth the path not yet brought forth, who points out the path that is not yet pointed out, the path-finder, the path-knower, the path-expert. But his disciples even now dwell as accomplished followers after him.”²⁸

Vassa,kāra’s entry

6a But this conversation that the venerable Ānanda was having with the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna was interrupted. For, then the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, while supervising work near Rājagaha [§2],²⁹ approached the venerable Ānanda and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side. Sitting thus as one side, the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“Master Ānanda, what is the talk you are having, sitting together here? And what is the conversation that is left unfinished?”³⁰

6b “Here, brahmin, the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna said thus:

‘Master Ānanda, is there a single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the master Gotama, the arhat [worthy], fully self-awakened one?’

When this was said, I, brahmin, said this to the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna:

‘There is, brahmin, no single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the master Gotama, the arhat [worthy], fully self-awakened one.

For the Blessed One was the one who gave rise to the unarisen path, [9] who brought forth the path not yet brought forth, who pointed out the path that was not yet pointed out, the path-finder, the path-knower, the path-expert. But his disciples even now dwell as accomplished followers after him.’

This, brahmin, is the conversation that I’m having with the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna is left unfinished. Then you arrived.”

Who is the refuge of the community?

7 (1) “Is there, master Ānanda, not a single monk that the master Gotama had appointed, thus: ‘This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,’ and to whom you should now turn to?”³¹

²⁸ So hi, brāhmaṇa, bhagavā anuppannassa maggassa uppādetā, asaṅgātassa maggassa saṅjanetā, anakkhāta-sa maggassa akkhātā, maggaññū, magga,vidū, magga,kovido. Maggānugā ca pana etarahi sāvakā viharanti pacchā samannāgatā ti, M 3:8,12 = S 1:191,1 ≠ 3:66,16 (SA 2:278,5) = S 3:66,15 = Miln 217,10-219,11 = Pm 2:194,19 ≠ Ap 570,5 = ThīA 91,33*. This para [§5c] is stock, repeated in **Pavāraṇā S** (S 8.7/1:191 = SD 80.1) & **Sammā,sambuddha S** (S 22.58/3:65 f = SD 63.11). Comy is silent on *pacchā samannāgata*, but Comy on S 22.58 explains it as: “they follow after him (*sam-anugatā*, from *sam-anugacchatī*) the Blessed One who has gone before them” (*pa-ṭhama,gatassa bhagavato pacchā samanugatā*, SA 1:277): see also M:H 350 n1. Note that Ānanda repeats this passage to Gopaka Moggallāna at the end of the sutta [§29].

²⁹ Elsewhere, Vassakāra and Sunidha (another chief minister, *mahāmatta*) were fortifying Pāṭali,gāma against the Vajjī (V 1:222 = D 2:86 = U 87). **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16) opens with Ajāta,sattu, king of Magadha, sending Vassa,kāra to tell the Buddha that he (Ajāta,sattu) was preparing to battle the Vajjī (D 16.1.2-5/3:72-76) = SD 9.

³⁰ *Kāya nu ’ttha, bho ānanda, etarahi kathāya sannisinnā, kā ca pana vo antarā,kathā vippakatā ti?* This is stock, where the person interrupting is usu the Buddha, eg, D 1.1.4/1:2; M 108.6/3:8 (the brahmin Vassa,kāra), 119.-2/3:89, U 2.2/11; J 4/1:120

³¹ Ce Ee Ke Se *Atthi nu kho, bho ānanda, eka,bhikkhu pi tena bhotā gotamena ṭhapito: ayaṃ vo mam ’accayena paṭisaraṇaṃ bhavissatī ti, yaṃ tumhe etarahi paṭidhāveyyāthā* (Be *paṭipādeyyāthā* ti? **Paṭidhāveyyātha** is 3 pl opt of *paṭidhāvati* (he runs back to, runs near): cf *pubbantam...* ~ (“would run back to the past,” M 1:265,1) ≈ *pubbantam...* *paṭidhāvissati* (S 2:26,27); opp *aparantam ādhāveyyātha* (“would run ahead to the future,” M 2:265,7) ≈ *aparantam upadhāvissati* (vl *apadhāvissati*), S 2:26,33). **Paṭipādeyyātha** is 3 pl opt of *paṭipajjati* (he follows): cf *pāpakassa vivāda,mūlassa āyatim anavassavāya* ~, “you should practise for the non-emergence for the evil root of dispute in the future” (V 2:89,22-24 (cf 5:92,22) = D 3:246,22...247,16 = M 2:246,9-12 = A 3:335,1-3); *navānam kam-mānam akaraṇā āyatim anavassavo*, “not doing any more new karma” (M 1:93,7 = 2:214,10 f). See Intro (2).

“There is not a single monk, brahmin, that the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the arhat, fully self-awakened one, had appointed, thus: ‘This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,’ and to whom you should now turn to.”

8 (2) “But, master Ānanda, is there not a single monk, chosen by the Sangha, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: ‘This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,’ and to whom you should now turn to?”

“There is not a single monk, brahmin, chosen by the Sangha, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: ‘This one will be your refuge³² after the passing of the Blessed One,’ and to whom you should now turn to.”

9 (3) “But, master Ānanda, without such a refuge, which is the cause for concord [fellowship]?”

“But we are not without refuge, brahmin. We *are* with refuge, brahmin. The Dharma is our refuge!”³³

Vassa, kāra is perplexed

10 (1) “Now, master Ānanda, on being asked,

‘Is there, master Ānanda, not a single monk that the master Gotama had appointed, thus: “This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to?’

you answered,

‘There is not a single monk, brahmin, that the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the arhat, fully self-awakened one, had appointed, thus: “This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to.’

(2) On being asked,

‘But, master Ānanda, is there not a single monk, chosen by the Sangha, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: “This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to?’

you answered,

‘There is not a single monk, brahmin, chosen by the Sangha, appointed by a number of elder monks, [10] thus: “This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to.’

(3) On being asked,

‘But, master Ānanda, without such a refuge, what is the cause for concord [fellowship]?’

you answered,

‘But we are not without refuge, brahmin. We *are* with refuge, brahmin. The Dharma is our refuge!’³⁴

But, master Ānanda, what does this statement mean?”³⁵

Ānanda’s answer

11a “There are, brahmin, the course of training³⁶ for the monks prescribed, the Pātimokkha [monastic code]³⁷ laid down, by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one.”³⁸

³² *Paṭisaraṇa*, refuge, shelter, help, protection (M 1:295, *mano* as ~ of the other 5 senses); M 3:9; S 4:221, 5:-218; A1:199 (*bhagavaṃ* ~), 2:148 (*sa*~ able to be restored), 3:186 (*kamma*~); 4:158, 351, 5:355; J 1:213, 6:398. Opp *appaṭisaraṇa*, “without shelter, unprotected” (V 2:153). Comy glosses *paṭisaraṇa* as “support” (*avassaya*, MA 4:72; also J 1:211, 2:197, 4:167; Miln 160; DhA 2:267, 4:198; PvA 5, 113).

³³ **Mahā, parinibbāna** S (D 16) records the Buddha as declaring that “the Dharma and the Vinaya will, at my passing, be your teacher” (D 16.6.1/2:154). See Intro (2).

³⁴ The Sangha is not governed by a single person or personal judgements, but by the Dharma-Vinaya laid down by the Buddha. See Intro (2).

³⁵ *Imassa pana, bho ānanda, bhāsitaṃ kathaṃ attho daṭṭhabbô ti?* Lit, “But how, master Ānanda, is the meaning of this talk to be seen?”

³⁶ “The course of training” (*sikkhā, pada*, lit “steps of training”). Here it is taken in a general sense of “training” (as in *sikkhā, kāma*, “desirous of training,” V 1:44; D 2:101; S 5:154, 263; A 1:24, 238), rather than “training-rule, precept” (as in *sikkhā, samādāna*, “undertaking the precepts,” V 1:146; A 1:238 f, 4:15, 5:165); or with both senses,

On the Uposatha [observance] day, those of us who live in dependence of the one and same village and field, all assemble as one. Having assembled, we ask of one another as regards what has happened.³⁹

If any of the monks were to say he has committed an offence or a transgression, we will deal with him in accordance with the training-rule [the Dharma],⁴⁰ in accordance with the way we have been instructed.⁴¹

It is the worthy ones do not deal with us; the Dharma deals with us.”⁴²

11b (4) “Is there, master Ānanda, a single monk whom you now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on?”

“*There is no one monk*,⁴³ brahmin, whom we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on.”⁴⁴

Vassa,kāra is still perplexed

12 “(1) Now, master Ānanda, on being asked,

‘Is there, master Ānanda, not a single monk that the master Gotama had appointed, thus: “This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to?’

you answered,

‘There is not a single monk, brahmin, that the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the arhat, fully self-awakened one, had appointed, thus: “This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to.’

(2) On being asked,

‘But, master Ānanda, is there not a single monk, chosen by the Sangha, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: “This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to?’

you answered,

‘There is not a single monk, brahmin, chosen by the Sangha, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: “This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,” and to whom you should now [then] [11] turn to.’

as in *sikkhā.sā.jīva*, “the course of training comprising precepts governing life (of a monastic)” (V 3:23 f; M 1:179, 267, 345, 2:162, 226, 3:33; A 2:208, 5:204; Pug 37; def at MA 2:205).

³⁷ *Pātimokkha* or *pāṭimokkha*. Formally known as Pātimokkha Sutta. A collection of precepts for the monks (totalling 227) and nuns (totalling 311), recited on *uposatha* or precept days. These rules form the basis of the Sutta Vibhaṅga & Bhikkhuṇī Vibhaṅga (V 3+4). They do not incl every rule for monastics, but serve as a summary. Many other rules and texts for formal acts (*kamma,vācā*), eg, are found in the Khandhaka, comprising the Mahā,vagga, V 1, & Culla,vagga, V 2). See (1) Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, 1996 §§15-21; (2) *The Pātimokkha*, ed W Pruitt, tr KR Norman, Oxford: Pali Text Soc, 2001.

³⁸ *Atthi kho, brāhmaṇa, tena bhagavatā jānatā passatā arahatā sammā,sambuddhena bhikkhūnaṃ sikkhā,padam paññattaṃ, pātimokkhaṃ uddiṭṭhaṃ.*

³⁹ *Te mayaṃ tad-ah uposathe yāvatikā ekaṃ gāma,khettaṃ upanissāya viharāma te sabbe ekajjhaṃ sannipatāma; sannipatitvā yassa taṃ pavattati taṃ ajjhesāma.*

⁴⁰ “In accordance with the training-rule,” *yatha,dhamma*. I think IB Horner is right here: instead of taking *dhamma* to mean “the Dharma,” the context is in greater favour of rendering *dhamma* as “training-rule.” See M:H 3:60 n3 & V:H 4:v (indexes sv “Rule, according to the”). However, the tr “in accordance with the Dharma” is also acceptable if we incl the sense of “training rule,” too. Moreover, in the foll sentence, *dhamma* is best render as “the Dharma.” As Horner herself notes regarding *dhamma* that “The context here seems to require ‘rule’ in translation, which only shows the close inner bond of *dhamma* as teaching and *dhamma* as rule.” (M:H 3:60 n3)

⁴¹ *Tasmiñ ce bhaññamāne hoti bhikkhussa āpatti hoti vīṭikkamo taṃ mayaṃ yathā,dhammaṃ yathā nusiṭṭhaṃ kāremā ti.*

⁴² *Na kira no bhavanto kārenti; dhammo no kāreti.* See Intro (2).

⁴³ Be WT *N’atthi* [Ce Ee Se *Atthi*] *kho, brāhmaṇa, eka,bhikkhu pi yaṃ mayaṃ etarahi sakkaroma garuṃ karo-ma mānema pūjema; sakkatvā garuṃ katvā upanissāya viharāmā ti.* Interestingly, only Be (the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā ed) has the reading *n’atthi*: see Intro (2).

⁴⁴ For the laity living in dependence on a monastery, see **Mahā Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77.6/2:5) = SD 49.5.

(3) On being asked,

“Is there, master Ānanda, a single monk whom you now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on?”

you answered,

“There is no one monk, brahmin, whom we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on.”

But, master Ānanda, what does this statement mean?”

The 10 qualities inspiring faith

13 “There are, brahmin, ten qualities that inspire faith⁴⁵ that have been pointed out by the Blessed One, the one who sees and knows, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one.

In whomever these qualities are found, it is him that we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on.

What are the ten?

THE 4 QUALITIES CONSTITUTING AN ELDER (*thera, karaṇa dhamma*)⁴⁶ [§§14-17]

14 (1) Here, brahmin, a monk is morally virtuous (*sīlava*): he dwells restrained by the restraints of the Patimokkha, accomplished in conduct and resort, seeing danger even in the smallest fault, trains himself in the course of training [the training-rules] he has undertaken.⁴⁷

15 (2) He is deeply learned (*bahu-, s, suta*), remembers what he has heard [learned], a store of learning.⁴⁸ The Teachings that are beautiful in the beginning, in the middle, in the end, along with its meaning and phrasing, which declare the holy life, wholly complete, utterly pure—these are what he is deeply learned in, he remembers, has mastered verbally, examined them in his mind, penetrated them rightly by view.

16 (3) He is contented (*santuṭṭha*) regarding robe, alms-food, lodging, and support for the sick and medicinal requisites.

17 (4) He attains at will, without trouble, without difficulty, the four dhyanas that constitutes the higher mind (*catu jhāna ābhicetasika*), an abiding that is pleasant here and now.

THE 6 SUPERKNOWLEDGES (*cha-l-abhiññā*)⁴⁹ [§§18-23a]

18 (5) He wields the manifold psychic power,⁵⁰ namely,

Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.

He appears, and vanishes.

He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.

He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.

He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.

Sitting cross-legged, he goes through the air [12] like a winged bird.

With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.

He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.

⁴⁵ *Dasa pasādanīya dhamma*. Cf **Mahā Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77), where Udāyī lists these 5 qualities of the Buddha—eats little, uses any kind of robe, eats any kind of almsfood, content with any kind of dwelling, and lives in seclusion—that make him worthy of respect and for living in dependence on (M 77.8/2:5 f) = SD 49.5.

⁴⁶ These 4 qualities [§§14-17] are listed in **Uruvelā S 2** (A 4.22) and called as such.

⁴⁷ *Idha, brāhmaṇa, bhikkhu sīlavā hoti, pātimokkha, saṃvara, saṃvuto viharati ācāra, gocara, sampanno, aṇumattesu vajjesu bhaya, dassāvī, samādāya sikkhati sikkhā, padesu*. As in **Sekha S** (M 53), where it is the first quality of a noble disciple (M 53.7/1:355) = SD 21.14. As in **(Ti) Sikkhā S** (A 3.88/1:235) = SD 24.10c. See (Sekha) **Uddesa S** (A 3.85/1:231 f) = SD 3.3(2) for a fuller def of the 3 higher trainings (*ti adhi, sikkhā*), in terms of the 4 types of saints. On an ancient list of ethical rules, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.43-62/1:63-69 = SD 8.10).

⁴⁸ *Bahu-, s, suta hoti suta, dharo suta, sannicayo*.

⁴⁹ *Cha-l-abhiññā* is a late term found only in the Abhidhamma and Comys.

⁵⁰ Cf **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11) where the Buddha disapproves of exhibiting such powers (D 11.4-5/1:213 f) = SD 1.7. See **Miracles** = SD 27.15a.

19 (6) With the divine-ear element,⁵¹ purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

20 (7) He knows the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind.⁵²

*He knows[understands] a mind with lust as a mind with lust,
and a mind without lust as a mind without lust.*

*He knows a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion,
and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion.*

*He knows a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion,
and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion.*

*He knows a contracted mind [due to sloth and torpor] as a contracted mind,
and a distracted mind [due to restlessness and remorse] as a distracted mind.*

*He knows an exalted mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] as an exalted mind,
and an unexalted mind [not developed by dhyana] as an unexalted mind.*

*He knows a surpassable mind as a surpassable mind,
and an unsurpassable mind as an unsurpassable mind⁵³.*

*He knows a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind,
and an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind.*

*He knows a released mind as a released mind,
and an unreleased mind as an unreleased mind.*

21 (8) He recollects his manifold past existence, that is to say, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred thousand births, many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, thus:

‘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 the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’ Thus, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.⁵⁴

22 (9) He sees—by means of the divine eye [clairvoyance],⁵⁵ purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-arising, and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, in the heavens, in the suffering states, faring in accordance with their karma.

23a (10) By realizing for himself through direct knowledge, right here and now, he attains and dwells in the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom⁵⁶ that are influx-free with the destruction of the mental influxes!⁵⁷

⁵¹ “Divine-ear element,” *dibba,sota,dhātu*, clairaudience. See Miracles = SD 27.5a (5.2).

⁵² The following section (italicized) is a list of mental states is apparently taken from Satipaṭṭhāna Ss (D 22.-12/2:299 = M 10.34/1:59), where it fits more appropriately (Walshe, D:W 546 n131). On another def of mind-reading (4 kinds), see Sampasādaniya S (D 28.6/3:103 f) = SD 14.10.

⁵³ Unsurpassable (*anuttaram*) mind is prob synonymous with “developed” mind. See D:W 592 n667.

⁵⁴ This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

⁵⁵ *Dibba,cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma,cakkhu*) (see n in §104). Here, it is stated in brief; for the full passage, see *Sāmañña,phala S* (D 2.97/1:82) = SD 8.10. On the relationship of this knowledge to the 62 grounds for wrong views, see *Brahma,jāla S* (D 1) = SD 25.3(76.3). See prec n.

⁵⁶ “Liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom,” respectively, *ceto,vimutti* (or, liberation by concentration, ie through destruction of the mental hindrances) and *paññā,vimutti* (liberation through insight) (A 1:60). One who is “liberated by wisdom” “may not have reached the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*) in his own body, but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed” (M 70.16/1:478). All arhats are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into 2 types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain the 8 liberations (*aṭṭha,vimokkha*), which include the 4 formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called “liberated both ways,” ie, liberated from the physical body by means of the formless dhyanas,

23b These, brahmins, are the ten qualities that inspire faith that have been pointed out by the Blessed One, the one who sees and knows, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one.

In whomever these qualities are found, it is him that we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on. [13]

General Upananda

24 When this was said, the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, addressed general Upananda:⁵⁸

“What do you think, good general—how these worthy ones honour those to be honoured, respect those to be respected, esteem those to be esteemed, venerate those to be venerated?”

“Truly, these worthy ones honour those to be honoured, respect those to be respected, esteem those to be esteemed, venerate those to be venerated!

For, if these worthy ones were not to honour those to be honoured, respect those to be respected, esteem those to be esteemed, venerate those to be venerated, then whom would these worthy ones, having honoured, having respected, having esteemed, having venerated, dwell in dependence on?”

Vassa,kāra praises the Buddha and meditation

25 Then, the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“Where is master Ānanda staying now?”

“Brahmin, I am now staying in the Bamboo Grove.”

“I hope, master Ānanda, that the Bamboo Grove is delightful, of little noise, of little sounds, sheltered from the winds, a dwelling away from humans, and conducive for solitude retreat.”⁵⁹

and from all defilements by the path of arhathood. Arhats like Sāriputta and Moggallāna are “liberated both ways” (*ubhato,bhāga,vimutta*). The differences between the two types of liberation are given in Mahā,nidāna S (D 2:70 f) and Kīṭāgiri S (M 1:477 f). For full list of the 8 deliverances, see Mahā Nidāna S (D 15.35/ 2:70 f) = SD 5.17.35. See also D 3:262, 228; Vimokkha S, A 8.66/4:306; also M 120.37/3:103 = SD 3.4.37.

⁵⁷ *Āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto,vimuttiṃ paññā,vimuttiṃ diṭṭh’eva dhamme sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati*: Mahāli S (D 6.13/1:156), Mahā,parinibbāna S (D 16.2.7/2:92), Cakka,vatti Siha,nāda S (D 26.28/3:78); Ākaṅkheyya S (M 6.19/1:35), Sekha S (M 53.24/1:358), Saṅkhār’upapatti S (M 120.37/3:103); Jhānābhiññā S (S 16.27/2:214), Āsava-k,khaya S (S 48.20/5:203); Sāraṇiya S (A 3.12/1:107), Anusota S (A 4.1-/2:6), Upakkilesa S (A 5.23.11/3:19), Āhuneyya S 2 (A 6.2.6/3:281), Udakūpama S (A 7.15.9/4:13), Saddhā S 1 (A 8.71.3/4:314), (Navaka) Assa Khaluṅka S (A 9.22.12/4:400), Jhāna S (A 10.8.2/5:10 f), Subhūti S (A 11.15.-12/5:340); Nanda S (U 3.2/23); Deva Sadda S (It 3.4.3/75). The more common pericope is this: “His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the influx of sensual desire, the influx of existence, the influx of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released (am I)!’ He knows that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life has been lived, done is that which needs to be done. There is nothing further beyond this,’” eg Sāmañña,phala S (D 2.99c/1:84) = SD 8.10.

“Mental influxes,” *āsavā*: the oldest list is perhaps the set of 3 influxes (*āsava*)—of sense-desire (*kāma’āsava*), of existence (*bhava’āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijjā’sava*) (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63)—which are essentially the same as the 3 graspings (*ti,gaha*) of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and views (*diṭṭhi*), on account of which arise, resp, the notions “this is mine,” “this I am,” and “this is my self”: see Vatthūpama S (M 7.18/1:38) = SD 28.12. The term *āsava* comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards or inwards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, cankers, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untr. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsavas*, which is also found in the Nikāyas: the influxes of (1) sense-desire (*kāma’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhava’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 16.1.12/2:82, 16.2.4/2:91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). See BDict: āsava.

⁵⁸ Upananda is a *senāpati* (general, commander-in-chief). This is prob the only ref in the Pali Canon to him. DPPN (“4 Upananda”) says he is “the commander-in-chief of the Magadha kingdom.” On the name *upananda*, see MA 4:129, where it is said that there are 4 namesakes.

⁵⁹ *Kacci pana, bho ānanda, veḷu,vanaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ c’eva appa,saddaṃ ca appa,nigghosaṃ ca vijana,vātaṃ manussa,rāhasseyyakaṃ paṭisallāna,sārappan ti*.

“Truly, brahmin, the Bamboo Grove is delightful, of little noise, of little sounds, sheltered from the winds, a dwelling away from humans, and conducive for solitude retreat, on account of protectors and guardians such as yourselves.”

“Truly, master Ānanda, the Bamboo Grove is delightful, of little noise, of little sounds, sheltered from the winds, a dwelling away from humans, on account of worthy meditators and those inclined to meditation. And the worthy ones are indeed meditators and those inclined to meditation, too.”⁶⁰

At one time, master Ānanda, master Gotama was dwelling in the Pinnacled Hall in the Great Forest [Mahā, vana], near Rāja, gaha. Then, I, master Ānanda, went to the Pinnacled Hall in the Great Forest, near Rāja, gaha, and approached the master Gotama. And there master Gotama spoke of meditation [dhyana] in many different ways. Master Gotama was indeed a meditator and inclined to meditation, and he praised all kinds of meditation [dhyana].”

The kind of meditation the Buddha rejects

26 “The Blessed One, brahmin, does not praise all kinds of meditation [dhyana], nor does he not dispraise all kinds of meditation [dhyana].”⁶¹

And, what kind [14] of meditation, brahmin, does the Blessed One not praise?

THE FIVE MENTAL HINDRANCES⁶²

(1) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with sensual lust, overcome by sensual lust, and does not know according to reality the escape from sensual lust that has arisen. Keeping sensual lust in his heart,⁶³ he meditates, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.⁶⁴

(2) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with ill will, overcome by ill will, and does not know according to reality the escape from ill will that has arisen. Keeping ill will in his heart, he meditates, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.

(3) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with sloth-and-torpor, overcome by sloth-and-torpor, and does not know according to reality the escape from sloth-and-torpor that has arisen. Keeping sloth-and-torpor in his heart, he meditates, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.

(4) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with restlessness-and-remorse, overcome by restlessness-and-remorse, and does not know according to reality the escape from restlessness-and-remorse that has arisen. Keeping restlessness-and-remorse in his heart, he meditates, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.

(5) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with doubt, overcome by doubt, and does not know according to reality the escape from doubt that has arisen. Keeping doubt in his heart, he meditates, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.

This kind of meditation, brahmin, the Blessed One does not praise.

⁶⁰ *Jhāyino c’eva bhavanto jhāna, sīlino ca.*

⁶¹ On the tr of *jhāna* as “meditation” or as “dhyana,” see Intro (3).

⁶² For detailed studies on the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*), see **Mental hindrances** = SD 32.

⁶³ *So kāma, rāgaṃ y’eva antaraṃ karitvā*. Comy explains *antaraṃ karitvā* as “making it the interior (the heart)” (*abbhantaraṃ karitvā*, MA 4:73; see also AA 5:79), where CPD def *abbhantara* as “including (or making it the main thing).” CPD def *antaraṃ karitvā* as “to keep in mind, to be mainly concerned with (M 3:14,4 = A 5:323,7” (CPD 1:241a). Cf NMA 2:430) & C 1.9.6. The phrase comes from *antaraṃ karoti*, lit “he makes (it) the centre,” means “he keeps in mind; he is mainly concerned with”: cf *kāma, rāgaṃ antaraṃ karitvā*, etc (used in connection with mental hindrances) at **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108.26/3:14) = SD 33.5 & **Saddha S** (A 11.10/5:323). Used in a positive sense throughout **Sappurisa S** (M 133): “keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way” (*so paṭipadam y’eva antaraṃ karitvā*) (M 113/3:37-45) = SD 23.7.

⁶⁴ *So kāma, rāgaṃ y’eva antaraṃ karitvā jhāyati pajjhāyati nijjhāyati apajjhāyati*. On the phrase *jhāyati pajjhāyati nijjhāyati apajjhāyati* (freely rendered at M:NB as “meditate, premeditate, outmeditate, and mismeditate”) and its variants, see: M 50.13/1:334 = SD 36.4 (pl) (attacks directed at the Buddha and his monks); 108.26-27/3:13 f = SD 33.5. **Mahā Cunda S** (A 6.46) has *pajjhāyati* (“he is consumed in meditation”) (A 6.46.2/3:355 = SD 4.6), a wordplay (reflecting disapproval): see Intro (3.1).

The kind of meditation the Buddha praises

27 And, what kind of meditation, brahmin, does the Blessed One praise?

THE FOUR DHYANAS

(1) Here, brahmin, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, he attains and dwells in the first dhyana, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and happiness born of solitude.⁶⁵

(2) With the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he attains and dwells in the second dhyana, free from initial application and sustained application, with zest and happiness born of concentration.⁶⁶

(3) With the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in the third dhyana, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

(4) With the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure—he attains and dwells in the fourth dhyana, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

This is the kind of meditation, brahmin, that the Blessed One praises.”

Vassa,kāra departs

28 “It seems, master Ānanda, that the Buddha censured the meditation to be censured, and praised what is to be praised.

“Well, then, master Gotama, we now depart. Many are our duties, there is much to be done.”

“Please, maharajah, do as you deem fit here.”⁶⁷ [15]

Then, the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, having delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Ānanda’s words, rose from his seat and departed.

Admonition to Gopaka Moggallāna

29 Then, not long after the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, had left, the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“We asked master Ānanda a question, but master Ānanda has not answered it.”

“Did we not tell you, brahmin:

‘There is, brahmin, no single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the Blessed One, the arhat [worthy], fully self-awakened one.

⁶⁵ “Born of solitude,” *viveka,ja*; ie it is the result of abandoning the hindrances: on the 3 kinds of solitude, see The body in Buddhism, SD 29.6a (1.5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see The layman and dhyana = SD 8.5.

⁶⁶ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuṇhī,bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *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. In Ariya,pariyesanā S (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate). See *Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S* (S 40.-2/4:263 f) = SD 24.12.

⁶⁷ *Yassa dāni tvaṃ brāhmaṇa kālaṃ maññasī ti*, lit “Please, brahmin, do what you think it is now the time to do.” This is stock: *Sāmañña,phala S* (D 2.103/1:85 = SD 8.10); *Mahā Parinibbāna S* (D 16.3.6/2:104 = SD 13), *Sekha S* (M 53.3/1:354 = SD 21.14), *Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S* (M 90.17/2:132 f = SD 10.8); *Gopaka Moggallāna S* (M 108.28/3:14 = SD 33.5); *Puṇṇ’ovāda S* (M 145.6/3:269 = S 35.88/4:62,31 = SD 20.15), *Avassuta S* (S 35.243/-4:183,15+30), *Khemā Therī S* (S 44.1/4:379,29), *Vesālī S* (S 54.9/5:321,16, 17) & *Thapatayā S* (S 55.6/5:348,27). See Joy Manné, “On a departure formula and its translation,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 10, 1993:27-43.

For the Blessed One is the one who gives rise to the unarisen path, who brings forth the path not yet brought forth, who points out the path that is not yet pointed out, the path-finder, the path-knower, the path-expert. But his disciples even now dwell as accomplished followers after him.” [S5b]

— evarā —

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