

14

Sampasādanīya Sutta

The Discourse That Inspires Serene Faith | D 28/3:99-116

Theme: Sāriputta's lion-roar & the 16 unsurpassable qualities of the Buddha

Translated by Piya Tan ©2005

1 Sampasādanīya

The word *sampasādanīya* (adj), apparently found only in this Sutta, has an interesting range of meanings. The Pali-English Dictionary (PED) defines it as “leading to serenity, inspiring faith.” Edgerton’s Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary (BHSD) does not have *sampasādanīya*, but defines *prasādanīya* (also *prasadanīya* and *prasadanīya*) (= Pali *pasādanīya*) as “cheering, gracious, pleasing,” which is very close to the Pali *pāsādika*, in the title of D 29 that follows the Sampasādanīya Sutta. Essentially, both *sampasādanīya* and *pasādanīya* have the same meaning.

Monier-Williams’ Sanskrit-English Dictionary (SED) defines the Sanskrit forms *samprasāda* (m) as “trust, confidence,” and *samprasādana* (mfn) as causative “calming, sedative.” The PED defines *sam-pasāda* as “serenity, pleasure” and *sampasādana* (neut) as “tranquillizing,”¹ and notes that the Dhamma-saṅgāhī Commentary uses it as being descriptive of the second dhyana (DhsA 170).

The word *sampasādanīya* is resolved as *saṁ + pasādanīya*, and then as *saṁ + pasāda + ṇīya* (a gerundive suffix). The prefix *saṁ* here connotes connectedness and completeness, and is explained by the PED as follows:

Its primary meaning is “together” (cf Latin con-); hence arises that of a closer connection or a more accentuated action than that expressed by the simple verb (intensifying = thoroughly, quite), or noun. Very often pleonastic [redundant], especially in combination with other prefixes (eg *saṁ-anu...*, *saṁ-ā...*, *saṁ-pa...*)...it often equals *pa-* (eg *pamodati* → *sammomodati*), with which it is often combined as *sam-pa-...*

The suffix *ṇīya* is a gerundive, that is, a verbal adjective from the gerund stem having the sense “that which should be done,” for example, *katabba*, *kariya*, *kicca*, *karaṇīya* (all meaning “that which should be done”).

The PED gives three definitions of the noun *pasāda* (Vedic, BHS *prasāda*):

1. clearness, brightness, purity (J 1:319 of the eye; SnA 453; DhsA 306, 307).
2. joy, satisfaction, happy or good mind, virtue, faith (M 1:64; S 1:202; A 1:98, 222, 2:84, 3:270, 4:346; SnA 155; PvA 5, 35).
3. repose, composure, allayment, serenity (Nett 28, 50; Vism 107, 135; Tha 258).

The verb form of *pasāda* is *pasādati* (*pa + √SAD*) which is defined thus in the PED:

1. to become bright, to brighten up (*mukha, vaṇṇo*, PvA 132).
2. to be purified, reconciled or pleased; to be clear and calm, to become of peaceful heart (*mano* or *cittam pasādati*); to find one’s satisfaction in (loc), to have faith (D 2:202; S 198, 2:199 *sutvā dhammaṁ pasādati*; A 3:248; Sn 356, 434, 563; Nc 426 = *saddahati*, *adhimuccati*, *okappeti*; Vv 50, 14 *mano me pasādi*, aor; Vism 129; Miln 9; DhA 3:3 = he is gracious, ie good; VvA 6 better *passivā*; PvA 141. Past participle *pasanna* (qv). See also *pasādeti* & *vippasīdati*.

The verb *sampasādati* means “to be tranquillized, reassured” (DPL; PED). Evidently, it also has a special sense of “appreciation”; as such, it means “to feel appreciative,” or “that which arouses gladness.”² In fact, Sāriputta’s appreciative and joyful enthusiasm, not to say his eloquent wisdom, are clearly expressed throughout the Sampasādanīya Sutta. The listener or reader of the discourse, too, due to Sāriputta’s exposition, would be able to appreciate the Buddha’s virtues.

¹ D 1:37; B 1:35; Dhs 161; Miln 34; Vism 156.

² See *Mahā, parinibbāna S* (D16 = SD 9.7h).

2 Sāriputta's gratitude

2.1 SĀRIPUTTA'S GRATITUDE TO SAÑJAYA. Although Sāriputta is declared by the Buddha to be the foremost among those monks who possess wisdom (A 1:23), he is also renowned for his remarkable sense of gratitude. Hearing the true Dharma for first time from Assaji, Sāriputta attains streamwinning. Sāriputta then transmits the true Dharma to his best friend, Moggallāna, who similarly becomes a streamwinner.

After becoming a streamwinner, Moggallāna suggests to Sāriputta that both of them go to see the Buddha at Veḷuvana, but Sāriputta, who always has a profound respect for his teachers, replies that they should first seek their erstwhile teacher, **Sañjaya**, to give him the good news and invite him along to see the Buddha.³

2.2 SĀRIPUTTA'S GRATITUDE TO ASSAJĪ. Sāriputta has great respect for **Assaji**, from whom he receives the true Dharma. We are told in the Commentary to the Nāvā Sutta (Sn 2.8) and the Dhammapada Commentary that from the day of their first meeting, in whatever quarter he hears that Assaji is staying, in that direction he would extend his clasped hands in an attitude of reverent supplication, thinking "This venerable one was my first teacher. It was through him that I came to know the Buddha's teaching," and in that direction he will turn his head when he lies down to sleep.⁴

This open devotion of his leads some unawakened monks to think, "After becoming a chief disciple, Sāriputta still worships the heavenly quarters! Even today he cannot give up his brahminical views!" When these complaints reach the Buddha, he explains the real reason, and then expounds **the Nāvā Sutta** (Sn 2.8), which opens with the words:

As the devas pay homage to Indra,
So should one revere the person
Through whom one has learnt the Dharma. (Sn 316)

2.3 SĀRIPUTTA'S LION-ROAR. Sāriputta's greatest gratitude is, of course, shown to none other than the Buddha himself, as recorded in **the Sampasādanīya Sutta** (D 28). Towards the end of the Buddha's public ministry, while he is staying at Pāvārika's Mango Grove near Nālandā, Sāriputta declares that there has been, is and will be, no one greater than the Buddha, or anyone wiser as regards self-awakening (*sambodhi*) [§§1.1-1.2]. This Sutta is a more elaborate account of the brief episode found in **the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta**.⁵

When questioned by the Buddha whether Sāriputta has known the Buddhas of the past or those of the future, or that he is able to comprehend the present Buddha's mind with his own, Sāriputta admits that he does not at all [§§1.3-1.6]. However, he declares that he knows "the drift of the Dharma" (*dharm 'anvaya*, alternatively, "the flow of the truth; the Dharma lineage"),⁶ that is, the retrospective knowledge (*anvaye ñāṇam* or *paccavekkhaṇā ñāṇa*, S 2:58) that enables him to deduce the qualities of past Buddhas and future Buddhas [§§2.1-2.2].⁷ Sāriputta then goes on to recount the qualities and attainments of the Buddha that are unsurpassable [§§2.3-20]. The elder Udāyi, too, interjects in admiration at the Buddha's qualities [§21]. The Sutta closes with the Buddha advising Sāriputta to repeat this exposition to others for their spiritual benefit [§22].

³ Ap 1:15 ff; AA 1:159 f; DhA 1:93 ff; ThaA 3:94 f; cf V 1:39 ff

⁴ SnA 1:328; DhA 4:150 ff

⁵ D 16.1.16-17/2:81-83 = SD 9.

⁶ "The drift of the Dharma," *dharm 'anvaya*, "by means of the Dharma" (D 2:83 = 3:100), ie by inference through the Dharma. CPD gives these meanings of *anvaya*: (1) series, lineage, succession; (2) successor, next, following; (3) ifc: following, descended from, dependent on; (4) (logical) connection, reasoning, inference, conclusion, consequence; (5) "positive concomitance." I here follow the tr of PED 338b & Walshe, and guided by Comys which gloss *anvaya* as *anumāna* (inference) (DA 3:880, MA 3:352, SA 3:210). Sāriputta means that his lion-roar is based on his understanding and realization of the Dharma.

⁷ On *anvaya*, see **Kesaputtiya S** (A 3.65) = SD 35.4 Comy 3a(6)2.

3 The Buddha's 16 unsurpassable virtues

Śāriputta's lion-roar in the Sampasādanīya Sutta, attesting to his appreciative faith in the Buddha, comprises a statement of his sixteen unsurpassable qualities (*ānuttariya*).⁸ Significantly, after Śāriputta declares that it is through "the drift of the Dharma" (*dharm 'anvaya*) that he knows the supremacy of the Buddha, the seven sets of dharmas constituting the 37 limbs of awakening (*bodhi pakkhiyā dhammā*), here called "wholesome dharmas," are listed, that is, as the first of the 16 unsurpassables. **Gethin** notes its significance thus:

This, then, is the first of the sixteen *ānuttariyas* or 'unsurpassables' of the Buddha. The practical way in which the seven sets collectively constitute the highest realization of the Buddhist path is here explicit. (2001:237)

The 16 sets of unsurpassables are here listed:

1. The 7 sets of wholesome dharmas (*kusala dhamma*) [§3]
2. The definition of the 6 sense-bases (*āyatana paññatti*) [§4]
3. The 4 modes of conception (*gabbhāvakkanti*) [§5]
4. The 4 modes of mind-reading (*ādesana, vidhā*) [§6]
5. The 4 attainments of vision (*dassana samāpatti*) [§7]
6. The designation of the 7 individuals (*puggala paññatti*) [§8]
7. The 7 efforts (*padhāna*), ie the 7 awakening-factors (*bojjhaṅga*) [§9]
8. The 4 ways of progress (*paṭipadā*) [§10]
9. The fourfold proper modes of speech (*bhassa samācāra*) [§11]
10. A person's proper moral conduct (*purisa sīla, samācāra*) [§12]
11. The 4 modes of instructing (*anusāsana, vidhā*) [§13]
12. The fourfold knowledge of liberating others (*para, puggala, vimutti, ñāṇa*) [§14]
13. The 3 eternalist doctrines (*sassata, vāda*) [§15]
14. The knowledge of recollection of past lives (*pubbe, nivāsānussati ñāṇa*) [§16]
15. The knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings (*iddhi, vidhā*) [§17]
16. The manifold psychic powers (*iddhi, vidhā*) [§18]

Śāriputta's lion-roar, his exuberant and masterly display of faith in the Buddha, here, is a good example of wholesome affective faith: he is full of confidence, gratitude, and joy. However, we should remember that Śāriputta bases this tribute on "the drift of the Dharma" (*dharm 'anvaya*), that is, his spiritual attainment—in other words, wisdom comes first, then faith. In **the Pubba,koṭṭhaka Sutta** (S 48.44),⁹ he makes an enigmatic reply when the Buddha asks him whether he has faith that the 5 spiritual faculties lead one to nirvana:

Bhante, I do not go by faith in the Blessed One about this:
 that the faculty of faith, when cultivated and often developed, has the Deathless as its ground,
 the Deathless as its destination, the Deathless as its final goal;
 that the faculty of effort, ...
 that the faculty of mindfulness, ...
 that the faculty of concentration, ...
 that the faculty of wisdom, when cultivated and often developed, has the Deathless as its
 ground, the Deathless as its destination, the death-free as its final goal...

I am one, bhante, for whom this is known, seen, understood, realized, touched by wisdom—I have no uncertainty,¹⁰ no doubt,¹¹ about this: that *the five spiritual faculties*, when cultivated and

⁸ On etym & usages of *ānuttariya*, see SD 14.15 (1).

⁹ S 48.44/5:220-222 = SD 10.7.

¹⁰ "No uncertainty," *nikkaṅkhā* = *ni* + *kaṅkhā*.

¹¹ "No doubt," *nibbīcīkicchā* = *ni* + *vicikkicchā*.

often developed, has the death-free as its ground, the death-free as its destination, the death-free as its final goal. (S 48.44.4/5:221)

Sāriputta is saying that as he has realized the truth for himself, as such he does not need to rely on faith.

4 The “unsurpassables” in other texts

4.1 THE THREE UNSURPASSABLES (ĀNUTTARIYA). In the **Cūḷa Saccaka Sutta** (M 35), the Buddha, at the end of his discourse, tells Saccaka Nigaṇṭha,putta the following:

26 When a monk’s mind is thus liberated, he is endowed with three unsurpassable qualities: unsurpassable vision, unsurpassable practice, and unsurpassable liberation.

When a monk is thus liberated, he still honours, respects, reveres, and venerates the Tathagata thus:

“The Blessed One is awakened, and he teaches the Dharma for the sake of	awakening.
The Blessed One is tamed, and teaches the Dharma for	taming oneself.
The Blessed One is at peace, and teaches the Dharma for the sake of	peace.
The Blessed One has crossed over (suffering), and teaches the Dharma for	crossing over.
The Blessed One has attained nirvana, and teaches the Dharma for attaining	nirvana.”

(M 35.26/1:235)

The Majjhima Commentary gives the following alternative explanations of these three unsurpassables as follows:

Mundane and supramundane: (1) wisdom, (2) practice and (3) liberation.

Supramundane: (1) the right view of the path of arhathood,
(2) the remaining seven path factors, and
(3) the supreme fruition (of arhathood).

Supramundane: (1) the vision of nirvana,
(2) the path factors, and
(3) the supreme fruition. (MA 2:281 f)

The **Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33), too, lists these “three unsurpassables” (*tīṇi anuttariyāni*) and its Commentary gives alternative explanations as follows:

The Saṅgīti Sutta

- (1) the unsurpassable vision (*dassanānuttariya*)
 - (2) the unsurpassable practice (*paṭipadā’nuttariya*)
 - (3) the unsurpassable liberation (*vimuttānuttariya*)
- (D 33.1.10(49)/3:219)

Commentary

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| insight (<i>vipassanā</i>) | the fruition (<i>phala</i>) |
| the path (<i>magga</i>) | the path (<i>magga</i>) |
| the fruition (<i>phala</i>) | nirvana (<i>nibbāna</i>) |
- (DA 3:1003)

These three unsurpassables are closely related to, although not identical with, the Sampasādanīya Sutta’s (5), (8) and (12) respectively.

4.2 THE 6 UNSURPASSABLES.

4.2.1 The Ānuttariya Sutta 1. A set of six unsurpassables (*cha anuttariyāni*) are given in the **Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33)¹² and three suttas in the **Āṅguttara** (A 6.8, 6.30, 6.121). These six unsurpassables are simply listed in the **Ānuttariya Sutta 1** (A 6.8/3:284) as follows:

SD 14.14(4.2.1)

Ānuttariya Sutta 1

The First Discourse on the Unsurpassables | A 6.8/3:284

A 6.1.1.8 Āṅguttara Nikāya 6, Chakka Nipāta 1, Paṭhama Paṇṇāsaka 1, Āhuneyya Vagga 8

¹² D 33.2.2(18)/3:250.

- 1 Bhikshus, there are these six unsurpassables. What are the six?
 2 They are:
- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| (1) the unsurpassable vision | <i>dassanānuttariya,</i> | |
| (2) the unsurpassable listening | <i>savanānuttariya,</i> | |
| (3) the unsurpassable gain | <i>lābhānuttariya,</i> | |
| (4) the unsurpassable training | <i>sikkhā'nuttariya,</i> | |
| (5) the unsurpassable service | <i>pāricariyānuttariya,</i> | and |
| (6) the unsurpassable recollection | <i>anussatānuttariya.</i> | |
- These, bhikshus, are the six unsurpassables.

— evaṃ —

4.2.2 The (Rāga) Ānuttariya Sutta. The (Rāga) Ānuttariya Sutta (A 6.121) mentions the purpose of the six unsurpassables as that for overcoming lust (*rāga*), thus:

SD 14.14(4.2.2)

(Rāga) Ānuttariya Sutta

The Discourse on the Unsurpassables (concerning lust) | A 6.121/3:451 f
 A 6.2.8.1 Aṅguttara Nikāya 6, Chakka Nipāta 2, Duttiya Paṇṇāsaka 8, Rāga Peyyāla 1

- 1 Bhikshus, six things should be cultivated for the direct knowing of lust. What are the six? [452]
 2 They are:
- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| (1) the unsurpassable vision | <i>dassanānuttariya,</i> | |
| (2) the unsurpassable listening | <i>savanānuttariya,</i> | |
| (3) the unsurpassable gain | <i>lābhānuttariya,</i> | |
| (4) the unsurpassable training | <i>sikkhā'nuttariya,</i> | |
| (5) the unsurpassable service | <i>pāricariyānuttariya,</i> | and |
| (6) the unsurpassable recollection | <i>anussatānuttariya.</i> | |

These, bhikshus, are six things that should be cultivated for the direct knowing of lust.

— evaṃ —

The Ānuttariya Sutta 2 (A 6.30) discusses each of the six unsurpassables in some detail.¹³

5 Creating an “arhat” in our own image

The Satta Jaṭṭila Sutta (S 3.11) reports a colourful procession of seven matted-hair ascetics (*jaṭṭila*), seven Jain monks (*nigaṇṭha*), seven naked ascetics (*acela*), seven loin-clothed ascetics (*eka, sātaka*, “single-robed”) and seven wanderers (*paribbājaka*), each carrying his bundle of requisites, passing by not far from the Buddha.

Then king Pasenadi of Kosala rose from this seat, arranged his upper robe over one shoulder, knelt down with his right knee on the ground, and raising his joined hands in reverential salutation towards them, he announced his name three times: “Bhantes, I am Pasenadi, king of Kosala....”
 (S 3.11/1:78) = SD 14.11

Then, not long after the ascetics have left, according to the Saṃyutta, the king remarks to the Buddha: “These ascetics, bhante, are arhats and those on the path to arhat-hood!” The Buddha replies that it is very difficult for one without any spiritual attainment to recognize an arhat and then goes on to teach on how

¹³ A 6.30/3:325-329 = SD 14.15.

to “read” another’s character. Here we have the Buddha’s gentle reminder not to canonize those we idolize, nor should we idolize anyone,¹⁴ but to take our faith as a base and launching-pad for working hard at our own liberation and for the wellbeing of others. **Nina van Gorkom**, a veteran Dutch practitioner, makes a sobering note here:

How can we find out who is an ariyan? There is no way to know who is an ariyan, unless we have become enlightened ourselves. It cannot be known from someone’s outward appearance whether he is an ariyan or not. People who are very amiable and peaceful are not necessarily ariyans. However, we can take our refuge in the ariyan Sangha even if we do not personally know any ariyans. We can think of their virtues, no matter whether they are in this plane of existence or in other planes. The ariyans prove that there is a way to the end of defilements. We should know what the condition is for the end of defilements: the cultivation of wisdom. The monks, nuns, men and women layfollowers who were ariyans in the Buddha’s time proved that what the Buddha taught can be realized in daily life. The Buddha did not teach abstract ideas, he taught reality. Should those who want to realize the truth not walk the same Path they walked, even if they still have a long way to go?
(Nina van Gorkom, 1977:76)¹⁵

6 Sāriputta’s last meeting with the Buddha

Bhikkhu Bodhi notes a chronological problem in the account of Sāriputta’s last meeting with the Buddha as related in **the Cunda Sutta** (S 47.13),¹⁶ which follows immediately after the Nālandā Sutta in the Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta, that

[it] poses a problem for the traditional chronology of the Buddha’s life. In the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, Sāriputta’s lion roar [**the Nālandā S**, S 47.12]¹⁷ takes place during what appears to be the Buddha’s final journey along the route from Rājagaha to Vesālī. From Vesālī the Buddha heads for Kusinārā without returning to Sāvattihī, some 200 km to the west. Yet the present sutta shows the Buddha residing at Sāvattihī when he receives the news of Sāriputta’s death. To preserve the traditional chronology, the Commentaries (SA here & DA 2:550) have the Buddha make an additional side trip to Sāvattihī following his rains retreat at Beluva, gāmaka,¹⁸ an excursion not mentioned in MahāParinibbāna Sutta. Sāriputta accompanies him on this trip to Sāvattihī, later takes his leave and returns to his native village Nālaka, gāma, where he falls ill and dies.

(S:B 1923 n157)

If **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** episode of the Buddha’s meeting with Sāriputta at Nālandā¹⁹ is taken to be historical, then evidently this is the last time that the two great masters meet.²⁰ As such, Sāriputta’s lion-roar recorded here is clearly a valediction or vote of thanks to the Buddha before Sāriputta takes his leave (knowing of his impending parinirvana) to visit his mother at Nālaka, his birthplace.

The Sampasādanīya Sutta, from the beginning up to (and including) the parable of the city [§§1-2.2] forms a sutta of its own called **the Nālandā Sutta** (S 47.12).²¹ Nālandā, a small village, lies on the road between Rājagaha and the village of Pāṭali, and the Buddha no doubt would have passed it, but it is rarely mentioned in the early texts. As such, **Nakamura** surmises,

This fact suggests that at the time the originals of these texts [**the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** versions] were composed, Nālandā was not at all important. By the time the extant Pāli recension

¹⁴ See eg **Rūpa S** (A 4.65/2:71), **Puggala-p, pasaāda S** (A 5.250/3:270); see SD 3.14.

¹⁵ *Buddhism in Daily Life*, digital ed, free download: <http://www.dhammadownload.com/outlook8.html>.

¹⁶ S 47.13/5:161-163.

¹⁷ SD 12.18.

¹⁸ D 16.2.21-26/2:98 f

¹⁹ D 16.1.16-17/2:81-83 = SD 9.

²⁰ **Nālandā** is a small village, lies on the road between Rājagaha and the village of Pāṭali. See below here.

²¹ This Sutta, up to this point, is found as **Nālandā S** (S 47.12/5:159-161 = SD 12.18). See Intro (5).

came into being, however, Nālandā had become prominent; its name may therefore have been introduced just before the Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta took its present form.” (2005:51 f)

Moreover, this episode, found in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, does not appear in the Chinese translations. In any case, Sāriputta predeceases the Buddha on the full moon day of Kattikā (October-November),²² and the account of their final meeting is given a place of honour in the Buddha’s last discourse.

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The Discourse That Inspires Serene Faith

D 28/3:99-116

Thus have I heard.

1.1 Once the Blessed One was dwelling in Pāvārika’s mango grove near Nālandā.

Sāriputta’s lion-roar

⟨D 16.1.16⟩ **1.2** ²³ Then the venerable Sāriputta went up to the Blessed One, and having saluted him sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the venerable Sāriputta said this to the Blessed One:

“It is thus clear to me [Such is my faith],²⁴ bhante, that there never *has been*, there *will* never be, and there *is* now no other recluse or brahmin who is better or wiser than the Blessed One, that is to say, as regards self-awakening!”²⁵

1.3 “Lofty indeed, are the words you utter, Sāriputta, and lordly as a bull, too! You are absolutely caught up in a lion-roar,²⁶ saying,

²² Tha 1158-61; DA 2:549 f; SA 3:214-221; J 1:391. On Sāriputta’s parinirvana, see Nyanaponika & Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, 1997:47-59; also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:5.26.

²³ The events of this section [1.16] are greatly expanded in **Sampasādaniya S** (D 28) = (**Nālandā S**, S 47.12/5:159-161, but without the last para). This is Sāriputta’s last meeting with the Buddha. Knowing that he will die in 7 days, he takes leave of the Buddha and visits his mother, and predeceases the Buddha on the full moon day of Kattikā (Oct-Nov) (Tha 1158-61; DA 2:549 f; SA 3:214-221; J 1:391). **Moggallāna**, his closest friend and the Buddha’s left hand monk, passes away a fortnight later on the new moon day: see **Ukkacelā S** (S 47.14/5:163-165) (SA 3:225; J 1:391)—see J 5:125 ff; DhA 3:65 ff for details of the attempts on his life. Both Sāriputta and Moggallāna are older than the Buddha (DhA 1:73).

Chronology problem: “The event related in this [**Cunda S**, S 47.13/5:161-163] poses a problem for the traditional chronology of the Buddha’s life. In the Mahāparinibbāna S, Sāriputta’s lion roar [**Nālandā S**, S 47.12] takes place during what appears to be the Buddha’s final journey along the route from Rājagaha to Vesālī. From Vesālī the Buddha heads for Kusinārā without returning to Sāvattihī, some 200 km to the west. Yet the present sutta shows the Buddha residing at Sāvattihī when he receives the news of Sāriputta’s death. To preserve the traditional chronology, the Comys (SA here & DA 2:550) have the Buddha make an additional side trip to Sāvattihī following his rains retreat at Beluva, gāmaka [D 16.2.21-26/2:98 f], an excursion not mentioned in Mahā Parinibbāna S. Sāriputta accompanies him on this trip to Sāvattihī, later takes his leave and returns to his native village Nālaka, gāma, where he falls ill and dies.” (S:B 1923 n157). On Sāriputta’s parinirvana, see Nyanaponika & Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, 1997:47-59; also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004:5.26. On Moggallāna’s parinirvana, see Nyanaponika & Hecker 1997:100-5; also Piya Tan 2004:5.35.

²⁴ *Evam, pasanno.*

²⁵ Cf Pāsenadi’s remarks about arhats, S 3.11/177-79 [5]; also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, ch 8 “The Thundering Silence” §14.

²⁶ *Ekamso gahito siha, nādo nadito.*

‘It is clear to me [Such is my faith],²⁷ bhante, that there never has been, there will never be, and there is now no other recluse or brahmin who is better or wiser than the Blessed One, that is to say, as regards self-awakening!’

Well now, Sāriputta, were you with the arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones of past times, so that with your mind you have grasped the minds of all the Blessed Ones thus, ‘Such is the moral virtue of the Blessed Ones, such is their nature,’²⁸ [100] such is their wisdom, such is how they live, such is their liberation’?²⁹

“No, bhante.”

1.4 “Well then, Sāriputta, will you be with the arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones of future times, so that with your mind you will grasp the minds of all the Blessed Ones thus, ‘Such is the moral virtue of the Blessed Ones, such is their nature, such is their wisdom, such is how they live, such is their liberation’?”

“No, bhante.”

1.5 “Well then, Sāriputta, do you know me as the arhat [worthy one], fully self-awakened one, so that with your mind you have grasped my mind thus, ‘Such is the moral virtue of the Blessed One, such is his nature, such is his wisdom, such is how he lives, such is his liberation’?”

“No, bhante.”

1.6 “So then, Sāriputta, you do *not* have the knowledge of the minds of the arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones of the past, of the future and of the present! But then, Sāriputta, why do you utter lofty (D 2:83) and lordly words; why are you absolutely caught up in a lion-roar, saying,

‘It is clear to me [Such is my faith], bhante, that there never has been, there will never be, and there is now no other recluse or brahmin who is better or wiser than the Blessed One, that is to say, as regards self-awakening!’?³⁰ [101]

2.1 (D 16.1.17a) “No, bhante, I have no knowledge of the minds of the arhats fully self-awakened ones of the past, of the future or of the present. **But it is known through the drift of the Dharma [the Dharma lineage].**³¹

Parable of the frontier city

2.2 (D 16.1.17b) Bhante, it is just as if there were a royal frontier city with strong bastions and a strong wall with an archway that has a single gate, where a wise gate-keeper, skilled and intelligent, who keeps out strangers and lets in only those he knows. And he constantly patrols and follows along a path, so that he would see any crack or cleft in the walls (large enough) for even a cat to crawl through. But whatever larger creatures that enter or leave the city, must all enter or leave through this very gate.³²

Even so, bhante, is the drift of the Dharma known to me.³³

The comprehensive practice

²⁷ “It is clear to me,” *evam passano*.

²⁸ “Such is their nature,” *evam, dhammā*. D:W renders this as “such was their teaching,” which is problematic as obviously all the Buddhas teach the same Dharma, and as such Sāriputta would clearly then know this. Moreover, it is evident from the flow of ideas and context, that the Buddha is referring to the future Buddha’s spiritual qualities.

²⁹ *Kin nu Sāriputta ye te ahesum aññātaṃ addhānaṃ arahanto sammā, sambuddhā, sabbe te Bhagavanto cetasa ceto paricca veditā, evam, sīlā te Bhagavanto ahesum itī pi, evam, dhammā evam, paññā evam, vihārī evam, vimuttā te Bhagavanto ahesum itī pi ti.*

³⁰ For Nina van Gorkom’s sobering note here, see Intro (4).

³¹ “The drift of the Dharma,” *dhamm’ anvaya*: see Intro 2.3 n.

³² This is a beautiful parable for mental cultivation. Cf another “frontier city” parable for mental cultivation in **Kinsuka S** (S 35.245/4:194 f) = SD 2.17(8.4) = SD 53.10 (full) where the Buddha explains the imageries he uses. See also **Nagara S** (S 12.65/2:104-107) = SD 14.2 (2).

³³ This sutta up to this point is found as **Nālandā S** (S 47.12/5:159-161 = SD 12.18). See Intro (5). Cf the parable of the ancient city of **Nagara S** (S 12.65.19-21/2:105 f) = SD 14.2.

2.3 Bhante, whatever arhats [worthy ones] fully self-awakened ones there were of past times, all these Blessed Ones,

having overcome the five mental hindrances³⁴ that are mental impurities sapping the strength of wisdom, then placing their minds firmly in the four focusses of mindfulness,³⁵

then cultivating the seven factors of awakening³⁶ according to reality, attain to the peerless full self-awakening.³⁷

Sāriputta's faith

2.4 Bhante, I came here [102] before the Blessed One to listen to the Dharma. The Blessed One taught me the Dharma most excellent, most exquisite, contrasting the dark against the light. And even as he had shown the Dharma most excellent, most exquisite, contrasting the dark against the light, there was direct knowledge in me regarding this Dharma.

Here, a certain Dharma amongst the Dharmas I have arrived at conclusively is that I have joyful faith in the Teacher,³⁸ that the Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one, that the Blessed One's Dharma is well taught, that the Sangha is well-practised.

The 37 limbs of awakening

3.1 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the wholesome dharmas [states]**. That is to say, these wholesome dharmas:³⁹

the four focusses of mindfulness,	<i>cattāro satipaṭṭhāna</i>
the four right efforts,	<i>samma-p, padhāna</i>
the four paths to success,	<i>iddhi, pāda</i>
the five spiritual faculties,	<i>pañc 'indriya</i>
the five spiritual powers,	<i>pañca bala</i>

³⁴ **The 5 mental hindrances** (*pañca nīvaraṇā*) are: (1) sensual desire (*kāma-c, chanda*); (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*); (3) sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*); (4) restlessness and worry (*uddhacca, kukkucca*); (5) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*). See (Nīvaraṇā) Saṅgārava S (S 46.55/5:121-126 = SD 3.12).

³⁵ **The focusses of mindfulness** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) are: (1) Contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), comprising 14 exercises: the 4 postures, full awareness, reflection on foulness, the 4 elements [12-13], and the 9 “corpse” meditations; (2) Contemplations of feelings (*vedanā'nupassanā*), 1 exercise, considering feeling in terms of the affective quality—as either pleasant, painful or neutral—with each being examined again as being either carnal or spiritual; (3) Contemplation of the mind (or mind-consciousness) (*cittānupassanā*), 1 exercise, examining 16 states of mind coloured by their concomitants—**Pubba S** (S 51.11/5:263-266); (4) Contemplation of mind-objects (or “the nature of things”) (*dhammānupassanā*) [36-45] is the most diversified exercise involving these 5 schemes: the 5 hindrances, the 5 aggregates, the 6 sense-bases, the 7 factors of awakening, and the 4 noble truths. See **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22 = SD 13.2), **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10 = SD 13.3), **Ānāpānasati S** (M 118 = SD 7.13) and **Mahā Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 62 = SD 3.11).

³⁶ **The 7 awakening-factors** (*satta (sam)bojjhaṅga*) are: (1) awakening-factor of mindfulness (*sati sambojjhaṅga*); (2) awakening-factor of mental investigation (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*); (3) awakening-factor of effort (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*); (4) awakening-factor of zest (*pīti sambojjhaṅga*); (5) awakening-factor of tranquillity (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*); (6) awakening-factor of concentration (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*); (7) awakening-factor of equanimity (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*) (D 3:251, 282; Vbh 277).

³⁷ **The Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 12.1.17b/3:83) account ends here. See SD 9. The underscored passage refers to the comprehensive meditation practice leading to awakening: see “The Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas” = SD 13.1(6b).

³⁸ *Tatha tatha 'haṃ tasmim dhamme abhiññā idh 'ekaccaṃ dhammaṃ dhammesu niṭṭhaṃ agamaṃ satthari pasīdim*. Here, Sāriputta is in fact referring to his own vision of “the mirror of the Dharma”: see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.2.8 f2:93 f) = SD 9.

³⁹ These teachings total 37, and are collectively known as the well known “limbs of awakening” (*bodhi, pakkiya dhamma*). Also at **Saṅgīti S** (D 33.2.3(2)).

the seven awakening factors, *satta bojjhaṅga*
 the noble eightfold path, *ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*

Here, bhante, a monk, right here and now having realized for himself through direct knowledge, after attaining, dwells in the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom⁴⁰ that are influx-free with the destruction of the mental influxes.⁴¹

With regards to the wholesome dharmas, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

This the Blessed One knows without exception [entirely]. The Blessed One, has directly known this without exception, and beyond this, there is nothing more to be known. In this direct knowing, there is no other recluse or brahmin who is greater or wiser (in direct knowledge) regarding the wholesome dharmas.

The definition of the sense-bases

4 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the definition of the sense-bases**. Bhante, there are these six internal and external sense-bases:

the eye and forms,
 the ear and sounds,
 the nose and smells,
 the tongue and tastes,
 the body and touches,
 the mind and mind-objects.

With regards to the definition of the sense-bases, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

This the Blessed One knows without exception [entirely]. The Blessed One has directly known this without exception, and beyond this, there is nothing more to be known. [103] In this direct knowing, there is no other recluse or brahmin who is greater or wiser (in direct knowledge) regarding the wholesome dharmas.

The modes of conception

5 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the modes of conception**.⁴² Bhante, there are **these 4 modes of conception**.⁴³

⁴⁰ “**Liberation of mind and liberation through 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 deliverances (*vimokkha* = *jhāna*) 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 two types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain **the 8 deliverances** (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*), which include the four formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called *liberated both ways*, that is, liberated from the physical body by means of the formless dhyanas, and from all defilements by the path of arhathood. Saḷha, like the arhats Sāriputta and Moggallāna, is “liberated both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*). The differences between the two types of liberation are given in **Mahānidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kīṭāgiri S** (M 1:477 f). For full list of the 8 deliverances, see **Mahānidāna S** (D 15.35/2:70 f). For full list of the 8 deliverances, see **Mahānidāna 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.

⁴¹ “**Mental influxes**,” *āsava*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints”, RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsavas*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) wrong 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*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) is probably older and is found more frequently in the suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: āsava.

⁴² *Gabbhāvakkanti*su, from *gabbhe okkanti*, “it descends into the womb” (Nc 304). Metonymically, this refers to birth and rebirth.

(1) Here, bhante, one who is not fully aware, simply⁴⁴ *descends* into the mother's womb. Not fully aware, he remains in the mother's womb. Not fully aware he *leaves* the mother's womb. This is the first mode of conception.

(2) Furthermore, bhante, here one who is fully aware, *descends* into the mother's womb. But not fully aware, he remains in the mother's womb. Not fully aware he *leaves* the mother's womb. This is the second mode of conception.

(3) Here, bhante, one who is fully aware, *descends* into the mother's womb. Fully aware, he remains in the mother's womb. But not fully aware he *leaves* the mother's womb. This is the third mode of conception.

(4) Here, bhante, one who is fully aware, *descends* into the mother's womb. Fully aware, he remains in the mother's womb. Fully aware he *leaves* the mother's womb. This is the fourth mode of conception.

Bhante, these are four modes of conception.

With regards to the four modes of conception, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

Mind-reading

6 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **mind-reading**. Bhante, there are **these 4 modes of mind-reading**.⁴⁵

(1) Here, bhante, by means of a sign,⁴⁶ one declares: 'Thus is your mind: this is in your mind; such is your thought.' And however many such declarations he makes, they are exactly so, not otherwise.

This is the first mode of mind-reading.

(2) Furthermore, bhante, one does not make his declarations by means of a sign, but after listening to the sounds of humans, of non-humans, or of devas, having heard their sounds, one declares, 'Thus is your mind: this is in your mind; such is your thought.' And however many such declarations he makes, they are exactly so, not otherwise.

This is the second mode of mind-reading.

(3) Furthermore, bhante, one does not make his declarations by means of a sign, nor after having heard voices of humans, of non-humans, or of devas, [104]

but from *having initially applied and sustained* his mind, listening to the sound of a person's thought-vibrations,⁴⁷ one declares, 'Thus is your mind: this is in your mind; such is your thought.' And however many such declarations he makes, they are exactly so, not otherwise.

This is the third mode of mind-reading.

(4) Furthermore, bhante, one does not make his declarations by means of a sign, nor after heard voices of humans, of non-humans, or of devas, nor by listening to the sound of a person's thought-vibrations, nor from having initially applied and sustained his mind, and listening to the sound of a person's thought-vibrations,

but by a samadhi free from initial application and sustained application, one knows the mind of another with his own, thus:

'By the way the mental formations of this good man are inclined, he will think such and such a thought within his mind.'⁴⁸

And however many such declarations he makes, they are exactly so, not otherwise.

This is the fourth mode of mind-reading.

With regards to mind-reading, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

⁴³ Comy says that these 4 modes of conception refer to (1) the ordinary worldling, (2) to the 80 great elders, (3) to the two chief disciples, to pratyeka-buddhas and bodhisattvas, and (4) to the "all-knowing" Bodhisattvas (ie those in their last rebirth, just before becoming the Buddha) (DA 3:885 ff).

⁴⁴ *Eva*.

⁴⁵ These 4 types of mind-reading are summarized as a general def in **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11.6/1:213) = SD 1.7.

⁴⁶ *Nimitta*, which Comy glosses as external signs, reflecting the person's mental state (AA 2:269). On other meanings of *nimitta*, see **Satipatṭhāna Ss** = SD 13.1 §3.1d & *Nimitta* = SD 19.7.

⁴⁷ "But from...thought-vibrations," *api ca kho vitakkayato vicarayato vitakka, vipphāra, saddaṃ sutvā*.

⁴⁸ *Yathā imassa bhoṭo mano, saṅkhārā paṇihitā imassa cittassa antarā amun, nāma vitakkaṃ vitakkissatī ti*.

The attainment of vision

7 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the attainment of vision**. Bhante, there are **these 4 attainments of vision**:

(1) **PERCEPTION OF FOULNESS: 31 PARTS OF THE BODY.**⁴⁹ Here, bhante, a certain recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention, touches such a level of mental concentration. His mind having touched such a samadhi,⁵⁰ he reviews⁵¹ this very body, wrapped in skin and full of various impurities, from the soles of the feet upwards and from the crown of the head downwards:

‘In this body there are⁵²

- (1) head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin,⁵³
- (2) flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys,⁵⁴
- (3) heart, liver, membranes (around the lungs),⁵⁵ spleen, lungs;⁵⁶
- (4) large intestines, small intestines, stomach-contents,⁵⁷ faeces[, brain],⁵⁸
- (5) bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat;⁵⁹
- (6) tears, grease, saliva, snot, oil of the joints,⁶⁰ urine.⁶¹

This is the first attainment of vision.

(2) **THE CHARNEL-GROUND MEDITATION.** Furthermore, [105] bhante, a certain recluse or brahmin—by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention—touches such a level of mental concentration. His mind having touched such a samadhi, he reviews this very body, wrapped in skin and full of various impurities, from the soles of the feet upwards and from the crown of the head downwards:

‘In this body there are

⁴⁹ In the Suttas, this practice is called *asubha,saññā* (perception of foulness). The term *asubha,nimitta* (the sign of foulness) in Comys, refers to one or other of the 10 foul objects, ie bodily remains in one of the 10 stages of decomposition (Vism 6.1-11/178 f). On details of practice, see **Kāya,gatā,sati S** (M 119) = SD 12.21 (5). See also **Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.29/5:277 f), on the analysis of will or desire (*chanda*).

⁵⁰ That is, on emerging from dhyana, or with a very focussed mind.

⁵¹ “Reviews,” *paccavekkhati*, see Intro (3.9b).

⁵² In this meditation of parts of the body, groups (1)-(4) constitute the **earth** element (**Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S**, M 62.8/1:421 f); groups (5)-(6) constitute the **water** element (ib M 62.9/1:422). The same sutta describes the **fire** element as *that by which one is warmed, ages, and burns, and that by which what is eaten, drunk, chewed and tasted gets completely digested*, or whatever else that is liquid, liquefied and clung to, internally, separately (M 62.10/1:422); and the **wind** element as *up-going winds [burping], down-going winds, winds in the belly [flatulence], winds that course through the limbs, in-breath and out-breath*, or whatever else that is air, airy and clung to, internally, separately (M 62.11/1:422 f). See prec n.

⁵³ *Kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco*. The meditation on these five parts “with skin as the fifth” or “skin pentad” (*taca, pancake kamma-t,thāna*) (Vism 242 = 8.50) forms the basic spiritual practice first taught to monks at the end of ordination.

⁵⁴ *Mamsaṃ nahāru aṭṭhi aṭṭhi,miñjā vakkam*.

⁵⁵ “Membranes,” alt tr “pleura,” *kilomaka*, ie a pair of membranous sacs surrounding the lungs.

⁵⁶ *Hadayaṃ yakanam kilomakam pihakam papphasam*.

⁵⁷ *Udariyam*, lit “that which is in the *udara* (stomach),” sometimes tr as “gorge” (Vism:Ñ 8.120/-122/258 f); technically, this includes chyme (food half digested by gastric juices, expelled into the duodenum).

⁵⁸ *Antam anta,gunam udariyam karisam*. See M 3:90; KhpA 38. Later traditions add the 32nd part—*matthake mattha,luṅgam* (lit “the brain in the head”) (Kh 3, Pm 1:6 f Vism 8.42-144/239-266): “brain” is not listed at S 4:111). Although “brain” is usually listed last, Comys list it as no 20, after “faeces” (KhA 60; Vism 8.126/260) in the set headed by “large intestines” since they have similar or related appearances. For a fascinating discussion on how ancient recluses obtain such knowledge of the human anatomy, see Zysk 1998:34-37.

⁵⁹ *Pittam semham pubbo lohitaṃ sedo medo*.

⁶⁰ *Lasikā*, ie synovial fluid.

⁶¹ *Assu vasā kheḷo siṅghānikā lasikā muttam*. Here there are a total of 31 parts of the body. See here (4)n.

- (1) head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin;
- (2) flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys;
- (3) heart, liver, membranes (around the lungs), spleen, lungs;
- (4) large intestines, small intestines, stomach-contents, faeces[, brain];
- (5) bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat;
- (6) tears, grease, saliva, snot, oil of the joints, urine.'

And going further, **he reviews bones covered with skin, flesh and blood.**⁶²

This is the second attainment of vision.

(3) STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS ESTABLISHED. Furthermore, bhante, a certain recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention, touches mental concentration. His mind having touched such a samadhi, he reviews this very body, wrapped in skin and full of various impurities, from the soles of the feet upwards and from the crown of the head downwards:

'In this body there are

- (1) head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin;
- (2) flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys;
- (3) heart, liver, membranes (around the lungs), spleen, lungs;
- (4) large intestines, small intestines, stomach-contents, faeces[, brain];
- (5) bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat;
- (6) tears, grease, saliva, snot, oil of the joints, urine.'

And going further, he reviews bones covered with skin, flesh and blood, and **he knows the unbroken stream of consciousness**⁶³ **as established in this world and established in the next.**

This is the third attainment of vision.

(4) STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS UNESTABLISHED. Furthermore, bhante, a certain recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention, touches mental concentration. His mind having touched such a samadhi, he reviews this very body, wrapped in skin and full of various impurities, from the soles of the feet upwards and from the crown of the head downwards:

'In this body there are

- (1) head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin;
- (2) flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys;
- (3) heart, liver, membranes (around the lungs), spleen, lungs;
- (4) large intestines, small intestines, stomach-contents, faeces[, brain];
- (5) bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat;
- (6) tears, grease, saliva, snot, oil of the joints, urine.'

And going further, he reviews bones covered with skin, flesh and blood, and **he knows the unbroken stream of consciousness as both unestablished in this world and unestablished in the next.**

This is the fourth attainment of vision.

With regards to the attainment of vision, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

The designation of individuals

8 THE SEVEN NOBLE INDIVIDUALS. Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the designation of individuals.**⁶⁴ Bhante, there are these seven individuals:⁶⁵

⁶² This is the 3rd stage of the reflection on bodily decomposition in the "charnel-ground (or cemetery) meditations" and is probably a metonym for the set of 9 practices: see M 10.14-30 = SD 13.3. However, see next section.

⁶³ *Viññāṇa, sota*, a term which appears only here and at (4) below. See **Myth in Buddhism** = SD 36.1 (4.4.3.1).

⁶⁴ "Designation of individuals," *puggala, paññatti*, which is also the title of one of the canonical Abhidhamma books, traditionally said to be authored by Sāriputta.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) the one liberated both ways | <i>ubhato, bhāga, vimutta</i> |
| (2) the wisdom-liberated, | <i>paññā, vimutta</i> |
| (3) the body-witness, | <i>kāya, sakkhī</i> |
| (4) the view-attainer, | <i>diṭṭhi-p, patta</i> |
| (5) the faith-liberated, | <i>saddhā, vimutta</i> |
| (6) the truth-follower, | <i>dhammānusārī</i> |
| (7) the faith-follower. | <i>saddhā'nusārī</i> |

With regards to the designation of individuals, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

Right effort

9 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One [106] teaches concerning **striving**.⁶⁶ Bhante, there are these seven awakening-factors:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) the awakening-factor of mindfulness, | <i>sati sambojjhaṅga</i> |
| (2) the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation, | <i>dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga</i> |
| (3) the awakening-factor of effort, | <i>virīya sambojjhaṅga</i> |
| (4) the awakening-factor of zest, | <i>pīti sambojjhaṅga</i> |
| (5) the awakening-factor of tranquillity, | <i>passadhi sambojjhaṅga</i> |
| (6) the awakening-factor of concentration, | <i>samādhi sambojjhaṅga</i> |
| (7) the awakening-factor of equanimity, | <i>upekkhā sambojjhaṅga</i> |

With regards to striving, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

The ways of progress

10 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the ways of progress**. Bhante, there are these four ways of progress.⁶⁷

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| (1) difficult progress, with slow direct knowing, | <i>dukkhā paṭipadā</i> | <i>dandh'ābhīññā</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|

⁶⁵ Briefly, (1) & (2) are the arhats, fully liberated, who have done their “duties with diligence,” while the rest still need to do so. (1) experiences the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*) [see below here] and liberation of mind through the formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*), and is liberated by wisdom; (2) is liberated by wisdom without experiencing the 8 liberations. (3-5) are the one on the arhat-path, the non-returner, and the once-returner, destroying some of the influxes through wisdom: (3) has strong samadhi (attains dhyana), experiences the 8 liberations; (4) fully understands the 4 noble truths, and (5) fully understands the 4 noble truths and is strong in the faith faculty (*saddh'indriya*). (6) works towards streamwinning on the basis of strong wisdom, and (7) works towards streamwinning on the basis of strong faith. This well known list of the 7 holy persons is found elsewhere in the Canon: **Saṅgīti S** (D 33.2.-3(11)/3:254), **Kiṭāgiri S** (M 70 = SD 11.1), **Bhaddāli Sutta** (M 65.11-12/1:439 f), **Saviṭṭha S** (A 3.21/1:118-120), and (**Āhuneyyā**) **Puggalā S** (A 7.14/4:10 f). See also Pm 2:52; Pug 10, 30-36, 73; Vism 659. On (7+8), see (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1.4+5/3:225) = SD 16.7; also see Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001:128-133, 135-137, 347.

Briefly, **the 8 liberations** (*aṭṭha vimokkha*) are: (1) dhyana via internal (body-based) kasiṇa practice; (2) dhyana via external kasiṇa practice; (3) dhyana via colour kasiṇa or the divine abodes; (4) the base of the infinity of space; (5) the base of the infinity of consciousness; (6) the base of nothingness; (7) the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; and (8) the cessation of perception and feeling. For details, see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.33/2:111 n) = SD 9.

⁶⁶ *Padhāna*, ie, right effort.

⁶⁷ These are explained in terms of the 3 motivational roots (*mūla*) and the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriya*) in **Paṭipadā S 2** (A 4.162/2:149 f) = SD 18.3. On these 4 modes of progress, see eg **Paṭipadā Ss** (A 2:149 f), **Asubha S** (A 2:150-152), **Ubhaya S** (A 2:153); cf **Kosala S 1** (A 5:63); DhsA 182-185. **Buddhaghosa** says that the “practice” or “progress” (*paṭipadā*) here refers to meditation leading up to access concentration, while “direct knowing” (*abhiññā*) refers to the knowledge that arises between access and dhyanas (Vism 3.15/86). He further notes: When one is overwhelmed by craving, progress is difficult; when one is overcome by ignorance, direct knowing is difficult; if one does not practise calmness (*samatha*), progress is difficult; if one lacks insight (*vipassanā*), direct knowing is difficult (Vism 3.18/87). See **Pubba,koṭṭhaka S** (S 48.44/5:220-222) = SD 10.7 (4).

- (2) difficult progress, with quick direct knowing, *dukkhā paṭipadā* *khipp'ābhiññā*
 (3) easy progress, with slow direct knowing, *sukkhā paṭipadā* *dandh'ābhiññā*
 (4) easy progress, with quick direct knowing, *sukkhā paṭipadā* *khipp'ābhiññā*

Bhante, in the case of difficult progress, with slow direct knowing, this progress, bhante, is said to be inferior [low]⁶⁸ due to both difficulty and slowness.⁶⁹

Bhante, in the case of difficult progress, with quick direct knowing, this progress, bhante, is said to be inferior due to difficulty.⁷⁰

Bhante, in the case of easy progress, with slow direct knowing, this progress, bhante, is said to be inferior due to slowness.⁷¹

Bhante, in the case of easy progress, with quick direct knowing, this progress, bhante, is said to be excellent due to both ease and speed.⁷²

With regards to the ways of progress, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

The proper modes of speech

11 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the proper modes of speech**.

Here, bhante,⁷³

- (1) one does not say anything involving false speech,⁷⁴
 (2) northat which is divisive,
 (3) northat which is slanderous,
 (4) northat which seeks [considers] victory born of haughtiness [arrogance]⁷⁵—

he speaks words ever wise, worth treasuring, timely.

With regards to the proper mode of speech, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

A person's proper moral conduct

12 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **a person's proper moral conduct**. Here, bhante,⁷⁶

one is truthful, has faith,

⁷⁷ not false, not pattering [fawning], not hinting for gains,⁷⁸ not a cheat,⁷⁹ not [107] coveting gain with gain,

⁶⁸ The first three modes of practice (*paṭipadā*) are here said to be “inferior” (*hīna*), but the fourth is said to be “excellent” or “exquisite” (*paṇīta*). This evaluation is similarly reflected in **Nalaka S** (Sn 714); see SD 18.3 Intro.

⁶⁹ The elder **Soṇa Kojivisa**, after being given a meditation subject by the Buddha, goes into retreat but his progress is severely impaired because he has too many visitors. He struggles in his meditation, especially the walking meditation until his feet bleed. The Buddha then admonishes him on the middle way. The elder Soṇa is an example of one who exerts great effort (*viriyam dhuraṃ katvā*)⁶⁹ and is declared as the foremost of those monks who put forth effort (*aggam āradhā, viriyānam*, A 1:24).

⁷⁰ The example here is that of Moggallāna: see **Sāriputta Mogallāna S 1** (A 4.167/2:154 f); also **Pacalā S** (A 7.58/4:85-91 = SD 4.11).

⁷¹ One is tempted to quote **Ānanda** as an example here, since he was only a streamwinner during the Buddha's life, and only became an arhat after the Buddha's passing.

⁷² The example here is that of **Sāriputta**: see **Sāriputta Mogallāna S 2** (A 4.168/2:155); see also **Dīgha, nakha S** (M 74/1:497-501 = SD 16.1).

⁷³ These are the fourfold right speech (*sammā vācā*). For detailed def, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.44/1:63 f = SD 8.10).

⁷⁴ *Na c'eva musā, vādūpasamhitam vācam bhāsati*, lit “one does not speak words connected with false speech.”

⁷⁵ *Sārambha, jam jayāpekkho*, lit “considering victory born of haughtiness [arrogance].”

⁷⁶ *Idha bhante ekacco sacco c'assa saddho ca, na ca kuhako, na ca lapako, na ca nemittiko, na ca nippesiko, na ca lābhena lābham nijjimsitā, indriyesu gutta, dvāro, bhojane mattaññū, sama, kārī, jāgariyānuyogam anuyutto, atandito āradhā, viriyo, ñāyī, satimā, kalyāṇa, paṭibhāno, gatimā, mutimā, na ca kāmesu giddho, sato ca nipako ca.*

⁷⁷ This line as at **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.20/1:8) & **Kuhaka S** (A 5.83/3:111).

guarded in his sense-doors, moderate in food, consistent in deeds,⁸⁰ devoted to wakefulness, going the right way[, a meditator],⁸¹ mindful, skilled in the good,⁸² of good conduct,⁸³ resolute, sensible, not greedy for sense-pleasures, mindful, and prudent.

With regards to a person's proper moral conduct, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

The modes of instruction

13 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the modes of instructing**. Bhante, there are these four modes of instructing.⁸⁴

THE FOUR KINDS OF SAINTS

- (1) THE STREAMWINNER. Bhante, the Blessed One knows for himself, other individuals, through wise attention, thus:

‘This individual, practising as instructed, having destroyed the three fetters,⁸⁵ will become a **streamwinner**, not bound for the lower world,⁸⁶ sure of liberation, destined for awakening.’

- (2) THE ONCE-RETURNER. Bhante, the Blessed One knows for himself, other individuals, through wise attention, thus:

‘This individual, practising as instructed, having destroyed the three fetters, and diminished lust, hate and delusion, will become a **once-returner**,⁸⁷ returning only once to this world to make an end of suffering.’

- (3) THE NON-RETURNER. Bhante, the Blessed One knows for himself, other individuals, through wise attention, thus:

‘This individual, practising as instructed, having totally destroyed the lower five mental fetters,⁸⁸ will gain spontaneous rebirth (in the Pure Abodes as a **non-returner**),⁸⁹ and without ever returning from that world, will gain parinirvana there.’

⁷⁸ *Nemittiko* refers to one who, due to negative motivation, obliquely seeks favours and wealth; also means “fortune teller, sooth sayer.”

⁷⁹ *Nippesiko*, alt tr “a juggler.”

⁸⁰ *Sama, kārī*, lit “a doer of sameness.”

⁸¹ *Ñāyī*, lit “methodical,” ie keeping to the noble eightfold path; from *ñāya*, “the right way.” See **Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas** = SD 13.1(3.3). However, vl *jhāyī*, “a meditator.”

⁸² *Kalyāṇa, paṭibhāno*.

⁸³ *Gatimā*.

⁸⁴ In **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.2.7/2:92 f = SD 9), these saints are listed the other way around, beginning with the arhat.

⁸⁵ There are **10 fetters** (*sariyojanā*): (1) personality view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), (5) repulsion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa, rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa, rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), and (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 5:13, Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*kāma, rāga*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya*). The abandonment of these 5 constitutes the state of the non-returner (*opapātika* or *anāgāmi*) (see **Ānāpānasati S**, M 118.9-12/3:80 = SD 7.13). The streamwinner (*sotāpanna*) has destroyed the first 3 fetters.

⁸⁶ *Avinīpāta*, alt tr “not fated for birth in a suffering state”; opp of *vinīpāta*, “the world of suffering,” another name for the 4 woeful courses (*duggati*) or the 4 lower worlds (*apāya*) (Vism 13.92 f). Sometimes 5 woeful courses (*pañca, gati*) (D 3:234 = 33.2.1, A 11.68) are mentioned: the hells (*niraya*), the animal kingdom (*tiracchāna, yoni*), the ghost realm (*pitti, visaya*), the human world (*manussa*) and the heavenly world (*deva*). Of these, the first three are woeful, with the asura-demons (*asura, kāya*) as the fourth woeful course. The remaining two are “happy courses” (*sugati*). For a discussion, see Nyanaponika & Bodhi (tr), *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, 1999:14-19.

⁸⁷ *Sakadāgāmi*.

⁸⁸ There are **10 fetters** (*sariyojanā*): (1) personality view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), (5) repulsion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa, rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa, rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), and (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 5:13, Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*kāma, rāga*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya*).

- (4) **THE ARHAT.** Bhante, the Blessed One knows for himself, other individuals, through wise attention, thus:⁹⁰
 ‘This individual, practising as instructed, will right here and now realize for himself through direct knowledge, attain and dwell in **the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom that are influx-free** with the destruction of the mental influxes.’

With regards to the modes of instruction, bhante, this is unsurpassable. [108]

The knowledge of others’ salvation

14 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the knowledge of liberating others.**

- (1) Bhante, the Blessed One knows for himself, other individuals, through wise attention, thus:
 ‘This individual, having destroyed the three fetters, will become **a stream winner**, not bound for the lower world, sure of liberation, destined for awakening.’
- (2) Bhante, the Blessed One knows for himself, other individuals, through wise attention, thus:
 ‘This individual, having destroyed the three fetters, and diminished lust, hate and delusion, will become **a once-returner**, returning only once to this world to make an end of suffering.’
- (3) Bhante, the Blessed One knows for himself, other individuals, through wise attention, thus:
 ‘This individual, having totally destroyed the lower five mental fetters, will gain **spontaneous rebirth** [in the Pure Abodes as a non-returner], and without ever returning from that world, will gain parinirvanathere.’
- (4) **THE ARHAT.** Bhante, the Blessed One knows for himself, other individuals, through wise attention, thus:⁹¹
 ‘This individual, having right here and now realized for himself through **direct knowledge**, attains and dwells in the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom that are influx-free with the destruction of the mental influxes.’

With regards to the knowledge of liberating other, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

The dogmas of eternalism

15.1 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the eternalist doctrines.** Bhante, there are these three doctrines of eternalism.⁹²

15.2 (1) **ETERNALISM BASED ON ONE’S RECALLING OF UP TO 100,000 PAST LIVES.** Here, bhante, a certain recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion heedfulness, by means of right attention, touches mental concentration. His mind having touched such a samadhi, he recalls his manifold his past existence, that is to say,

one birth, two, three, four, five births,
 ten births, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty births,
 one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred thousand births, thus:

The abandonment of these 5 constitutes the state of the non-returner (*opapātika* or *anāgāmī*) (see **Ānāpānasati S**, M 118.9-12/3:80 = SD 7.13). This verse evidently refers to the non-returner and seems to out of place in this section on the arhat.

⁸⁹ The Pure Abodes (*suddh’āvāsa*) form the five highest heavens of the Form World (*rūpa, loka*) inhabited only by non-returners (*anāgāmī*) who assume their last birth to become arhats and attain nirvana. These worlds are Āviha (“Non-declining”), Ātappa (“Unworried”), Sudassā (“Clearly Visible”), Sudassī (“Clear-visioned”) and Akaniṭṭhā (“Highest”) (D 3:237, M 3:103, Vbh 425, Pug 42-46).

⁹⁰ Here the *arhat* (the worthy awakened saint) is referred to.

⁹¹ Here the *arhat* (the worthy awakened saint) is referred to.

⁹² These 3 form the first 3 of the 4 grounds for eternalist views stated in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1.31-34/1:13-16). The 4th ground is an intellectual one, ie of the logical reasoner (*vitakkī*) or investigative speculator (*vīmaṇsī*). Cf **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.95/1:80 = SD 8.10), which conflates (1) & (2) here. But cf §16 below.

15.3 ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of joy 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 joy and pain, [109] such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’⁹³

Thus he recalls his manifold past existence in their modes and their details. He says thus:⁹⁴

‘I know the past, when the world rolled out [expanded] or when it rolled in [contracted],⁹⁵ but I do not know the future, whether the world will roll out [expand] or whether it will roll in [contract].’

15.4 The self and the world are eternal, barren, steadfast as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar.⁹⁶ And though these beings roam and wander through samsara, fall away and re-arise, yet the self and the world remain the same just like eternity itself.’

This is the first eternalist doctrine.

15.5 (2) ETERNALISM BASED ON ONE’S RECALLING OF UP TO 20 AEONS. Furthermore, bhante, here a certain recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention, touches mental concentration. His mind having touched such a samadhi, he recalls his manifold past existence, that is to say,

one world contraction and expansion,
or two world contractions and expansions,
or three world contractions and expansions,
or four world contractions and expansions,
or five world contractions and expansions,
or ten world contractions and expansions,
or twenty world contractions and expansions, thus:

15.6 ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of joy 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 joy and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’⁹⁷

Thus he recalls his manifold past existence in their modes and their details. He says thus:⁹⁸

‘I know the past, when the world rolled out [expanded] or when it rolled in [contracted], and I know the future, too, [110] when the world will roll out [expand] or when it will roll in [contract].’

15.7 The self and the world are eternal, barren, steadfast as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. And though these beings roam and wander through samsara, fall away and re-arise, yet the self and the world remain the same just like eternity itself.’

This is the second eternalist doctrine.

15.8 (3) ETERNALISM BASED ON ONE’S RECALLING OF UP TO 40 AEONS. Furthermore, bhante, here a certain recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention, touches mental concentration. His mind having touched such a samadhi, he recalls his manifold past existence, that is to say,

⁹³ This para as in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1.31/1:13). For details, see Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

⁹⁴ Except for the first para, this quote as at **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1.32/1:14).

⁹⁵ Here, “rolling in” (contraction or collapse) (*saṁvatta*) and “rolling out” (expansion) (*vivatta*), refer to the 2 primary phases of the great aeon or cosmic cycle (*mahā, kappa*). Bodhi says that the *saṁvatta, kappa* (the contraction aeon) “is the period between the full evolution of a world-system and its complete dissolution, the *vivatta, kappa* [the expanding aeon], the period between the dissolution and the full evolution” (1978:67 n1). Bodhi also notes that the PED defn should be reversed; see Vism 13.27-71/414-423. Since both the phases end in a stable phase—the *saṁvatta, kappa* in a *saṁvatta-t, thāyī* (post-contraction stability), and the *vivatta, kappa* in a *vivatta-t, thāyī* (post-expansion stability)—the two are often further divided into 4 *asaṁkheyya, kappa* (incalculable aeons) (ie 2 × 2 incalculable aeons), forming the great aeon (*mahā, kappa*). See **Kappa S** (A 4.156/2:142).

⁹⁶ *Sassato attā ca loka ca vaṇṇho kūṭaṭṭho esika-t, thāyī-t, thito*.

⁹⁷ This para is as in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1.31/1:13). For details, see Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

⁹⁸ Except for the first para, this quote as at **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1.33/1:15).

ten world contractions and expansions,
 or twenty world contractions and expansions,
 or thirty world contractions and expansions,
 or forty world contractions and expansions, thus:

15.9 ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of joy 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 joy and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’⁹⁹

Thus he recalls his manifold past existence in their modes and their details. He says thus:¹⁰⁰

‘I know the past, when the world rolled out [expanded] or when it rolled in [contracted], and I know the future, too, when the world will roll out [expand] or when it will roll in [contract].

15.10 **The self and the world** are etemal, barren, steadfast as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. And though these beings roam and wander through saṃsāra, fall away and re-arise, yet the self and the world remain the same just like etemity itself.’

This is the third etemalist doctrine.

15.11 With regards to teachings regarding eternalism, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

The knowledge of the recollection of past lives

16.1 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the knowledge of the recollection of past lives**.¹⁰¹

Here, bhante, some recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention, touches mental concentration. His mind having touched such a samādhi, he recalls his manifold past existence, that is,

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 **[111]** aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, thus,

16.2 ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of joy 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 joy and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’

16.3 Thus he recalls his manifold past existence in their modes and their details.

There are, bhante, devas whose lifespan is impossible to be reckoned by counting or calculating, yet whatever selfhood¹⁰² they have previously dwelled as,

whether amongst the form beings or amongst the formless beings,

whether in the conscious beings or amongst the non-conscious beings,

or amongst the neither-conscious-nor-non-conscious beings¹⁰³ —

he recalls his manifold past existence in their modes and their details.

16.4 With regards to the knowledge of the recollection of past lives, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

The knowledge of the death and rebirth of beings

17.1 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the knowledge of the passing away and re-arising of beings**.

⁹⁹ This para is as in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1.31/1:13). For details, see Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

¹⁰⁰ Except for the first para, this quote as at **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1.34/1:15).

¹⁰¹ *Pubbe, nivāsanānussati*, lit “recollection of past abiding [existence].”

¹⁰² “Individual existence,” *atta, bhāva*.

¹⁰³ “The neither-conscious-nor-non-conscious beings,” *n’eva, saññī, nāsaññī*, or “the neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient beings.”

17.2 Here, bhante, some recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention, he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the passing away and re-arising of beings. He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],¹⁰⁴ 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, faring in accordance with their karma:

17.3 ‘These beings—who were endowed with evil conduct of body, of speech, and of mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—after death, when the body has broken up, have re-arisen in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell.

17.4 But these beings—who were endowed with 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—after death, when the body has broken up, [112] have re-arisen in a happy destination, in heaven.’

17.5 Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-arising, and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, faring in accordance with their karma.

17.6 With regards to the knowledge of the passing away and re-arising of beings, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

The various psychic powers

18.1 Furthermore, bhante, unsurpassable is the Dharma that the Blessed One teaches concerning **the manifold psychic powers**. Bhante, there are these two psychic powers:

There is, bhante, the psychic power of one with mental influxes, with acquisitions [attachments], that is called ignoble [unarya], and there is, bhante, the psychic power of one without mental influxes, without acquisitions [attachments], that is called noble [arya].

18.2 (1) And what, bhante, is **the psychic power accompanied by mental influxes**, accompanied by acquisitions [attachments], that is called ‘ignoble [unarya]’?¹⁰⁵

Here, bhante, some recluse or brahmin, by means of ardour, by means of effort, by means of devotion, by means of heedfulness, by means of right attention, he directs and inclines it towards the manifold psychic powers.¹⁰⁶

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 flies through the air like a winged bird.

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

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

This, bhante, is the psychic power accompanied by mental influxes, accompanied by acquisitions [attachments], that is called ‘ignoble [unarya].’

18.3 (2) And what, bhante, is **the psychic power that is influx-free**, without acquisitions [attachments], that is called ‘noble [arya]’?¹⁰⁷

(a) Here, bhante, if a monk wishes, ‘Let me dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,’¹⁰⁸ so he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive.

¹⁰⁴ *Dibba, cakḥhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakḥhu*), which refers to streamwinning (*sotāpatti*): see **Sāmañña, phala S**, D 2.102n = SD 8.10.

¹⁰⁵ *Katamā ca bhante iddhi s’āsavā sa, upadhiḥ no ariyā ti.*

¹⁰⁶ *Iddhi, vidhā*. Cf **Kevalaḍḍha S** (D 11.5 = SD 1.7) where the Buddha disapproves of exhibiting such powers.

¹⁰⁷ *Katamā ca bhante iddhi anāsavā nirupadhiḥ ariyā ti.*

¹⁰⁸ *Paṭikūle appaṭikūla, saññī vihareyya*, Walshe’s tr: “Let me abide with the disgusting not feeling disgust” (D:W 424). According to **Paṭisambhidā, magga**, here one should do so with the thought: “May no hate arise in me to-

(b) If he wishes, ‘Let me dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,¹⁰⁹ [113] so he dwells perceiving the repulsive.

(c) Here, bhante, if a monk wishes, ‘Let me dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,¹¹⁰ so he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive.

(d) Here, bhante, if a monk wishes, ‘Let me dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,¹¹¹ so he dwells perceiving the repulsive.

(e) Here, bhante, if a monk wishes, ‘Let me, rejecting both the repulsive and the unrepulsive, dwell equanimous, mindful and fully aware,¹¹² so he dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware.

This, bhante, is the psychic power *without mental influxes*, without acquisitions [attachments], that is called ‘noble [arya].’

18.4 With regards to the various psychic powers, bhante, this is unsurpassable.

This the Blessed One knows without exception [fully knows]. The Blessed One has directly known this without exception, and beyond this, there is nothing more to be known.

In this direct knowing, there is no other recluse or brahmin who is great or wiser (in direct knowledge) regarding the manifold psychic powers.

Gotama and other Buddhas

19.1¹¹³ Whatever, bhante, that is possible for a clansman steeped in faith to attain through initiative and effort, through personal strength on account of fortitude,¹¹⁴ through personal effort, through personal exertion, through personal endurance—all this the Blessed One has attained.

And, bhante, the Blessed One is not one yoked to the indulgence in sensual pleasures, low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, unprofitable; and he is not one yoked to the pursuit of self-mortification, painful, ignoble, unprofitable.

wards objects that arouse hate.” (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f). In the case of a disagreeable object (eg a hostile person), he either pervades it with lovingkindness or regards it as physical elements. For example, he reflects: “What am I angry with: his head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin...?” (Vism 9.38/306). See **Halidda,vasana S** (S 46.54/5:119 = SD 10.11) & **Tikaṇḍaki S** (A 5.144/3:169 = SD 2.12).

¹⁰⁹ *Appaṭikūle paṭikūla,saññī vihareyya*. According to **Paṭisambhidā,magga**, here one should do so with the thought:] ‘May no lust arise in me towards objects that arouse lust.’ (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f). In the case of a disagreeable object (eg a hostile person), he either pervades it with lovingkindness or regards it as physical elements. For example, in the case of a repulsive object, he reflects: “What am I angry with: his head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin...?” (Vism 9.38/306). See **Halidda,vasana S** (S 46.54/5:119 = SD 10.11) & **Tikaṇḍaki S** (A 5.144/3:169 = SD 2.12).

¹¹⁰ *Paṭikūle ca appaṭikūle ca appaṭikūla,saññī vihareyya*. According to **Paṭisambhidā,magga**, here one should do so with the thought:] ‘May no hate arise in me towards objects that arouse hate, and may no lust arise in me towards objects that arouse lust.’ (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f). In other words, he pervades both agreeable and disagreeable objects with the thought of lovingkindness or regards them as physical elements; thus he perceives both as unrepulsive. See **Halidda,vasana S** (S 46.54/5:119 = SD 10.11) & **Tikaṇḍaki S** (A 5.144/3:169 = SD 2.12).

¹¹¹ *Appaṭikūle ca paṭikūle ca paṭikūla,saññī vihareyya*. According to **Paṭisambhidā,magga**, here one should do so with the thought:] ‘May no lust arise in me towards objects that arouse lust, and may no hate arise in me towards objects that arouse hate.’ (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f). In other words, he regards form as only form, sound as only sound, smell as only smell, taste as only taste, touch as only touch, thought as only thought; he is neither glad nor sad, but abides in equanimity, mindful and fully aware. See **Halidda,vasana S** (S 46.54/5:119 = SD 10.11) & **Tikaṇḍaki S** (A 5.144/3:169 = SD 2.12).

¹¹² *Paṭikūle appaṭikūla,saññī vihareyya*. Walshe’s tr: “Let me abide with the disgusting not feeling disgust” (D:W). According to **Paṭisambhidā,magga**, here one should do so with the thought:] ‘May no hate arise in me towards objects that arouse hate.’ (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f). [In the case of an agreeable object (eg a sensually attractive person), he either pervades it with the thought of foulness or regards it as impermanent.] For an example of this method, see Vism 9.38/306: “What am I angry with: his head hair, body hair...?” See **Halidda,vasana S** (S 46.54/5:119 = SD 10.11) & **Tikaṇḍaki S** (A 5.144/3:169 = SD 2.12).

¹¹³ Apparently, JE Carpenter, ed of D:PTS, inadvertently omitted this numbering.

¹¹⁴ *Thāmaṇatā purisa,thāmena*.

The Blessed One, here and now, attaining to the four dhyanas, the higher mind, as he wishes, without any difficulty, without any trouble [in abundance], dwells happily.¹¹⁵

19.2 Bhante, if I were asked thus: ‘Now, avuso Sāriputta, were there in the past any other recluse or brahmin **more excellent** in self-awakening than the Blessed One?’

Asked thus, bhante, the answer would be ‘No.’

‘But, avuso Sāriputta, would there be in the future any other recluse or brahmin more excellent in self-awakening than the Blessed One?’

Asked thus, bhante, the answer would be ‘No.’ [114]

‘But, avuso Sāriputta, is there any other recluse or brahmin more excellent in self-awakening than the Blessed One?’

Asked thus, bhante, the answer would be ‘No.’

19.3 Bhante, if I were asked thus: ‘Now, avuso Sāriputta, were there in the past any other recluse or brahmin **equal** in self-awakening with the Blessed One’s?’

Asked thus, bhante, the answer would be ‘No.’

‘But, avuso Sāriputta, would there be in the future any other recluse or brahmin equal in self-awakening with the Blessed One’s?’

Asked thus, bhante, the answer would be ‘No.’

‘But, avuso Sāriputta, is there any other recluse or brahmin equal in self-awakening with the Blessed One’s?’

Asked thus, bhante, the answer would be ‘No.’

19.4 Bhante, if I were asked thus: ‘**But, venerable Sāriputta, why acknowledge one, and not another?**’

Asked thus, bhante, the answer would be thus:

‘Avuso, I have heard this before the Blessed One himself; I have received this (teaching) before the Blessed One himself, thus:

“There were fully self-awakened ones in the past who will have the same self-awakening as mine.”

Avuso, I have heard this before the Blessed One himself; I have received this (teaching) before the Blessed One himself, thus:

“There will be fully self-awakened ones in the future who will have the same self-awakening as mine.”

Avuso, I have heard this before the Blessed One himself; I have received this (teaching) before the Blessed One himself, thus:

“It is impossible, there has been no occasion, it has not happened before, that two arhat fully self-awakened ones would arise simultaneously in the one and same world-system.”¹¹⁶ This is not possible.”

¹¹⁵ *Catunnam jhānānam abhicetasikānam diṭṭha, dhamma, sukha, vihārānam nikāma, lābhī akiccha, lābhī akasira, lābhī.* Comy glosses **nikāma, lābhī** as “attaining it whenever he desires it” (*yathā, kāma, lābhī*); **akiccha, lābhī** as “attaining it without difficulty” (*adukkha, lābhī*); and **akasira, lābhī** as “attaining it abundantly” (*vipula, lābhī*) (DA 3:897). This is stock: **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28.19/3:113), **Sekha S** (M 53.6+18+19+23/1:354, 356, 357, 358), **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108.17/3:11), **Kāyagatā, sati S** (M 119.36/3:98), **Nava S** (S 21.4/2:278), **Mahā Kappina S** (S 54.7/5:316), **Venāga, pura S** (A 1:181-184 ×9), **Uruvela S 2** (A 4.22.3/2:23), **Vassa, kāra S** (A 4.35.3/2:36 f), **Putta S** (A 4.87.5/2:87), **Nāgita S** (A 5.30.2/3:31 ×3), **Samāṇa, sukhumāla S** (A 5.31.7/3:33), **Phasu, vihāra S** (A 5:104/3:132), **Asekha S** (A 5.106/3:134), **Catuddisa S** (A 5.109/3:135), **Arañña S** (A 5.110/3:135), **Nāgita S** (A 6.42.2/3:342 ×2), **Yasa S** (A 8.86.2+3+4+5/4:341-343 ×6), **Kosala S 2** (A 10.30.9+10/5:67 f ×4), **Subhūti S** (A 11.15.13/5:341).

¹¹⁶ “It is not possible, bhikkhus, there is no chance that two (or more) arhat, fully self-awakened ones would simultaneously arise in a single universe [world-system]” (*aṭṭhānam etaṃ, bhikkhave, anavakāso yaṃ ekissā loka, dhātuyā dve arahanto sammā, sambuddhā apubbaṃ acarimaṃ uppajjeyyūṃ*, **Mahā Govinda S** (D 19.14/2:225) = **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28.19/3:114) = **Aṭṭhana Pāli** (A 1.15.10/1:27 f); see also Kvu 21.6/608 f; Abhidharma, kośa (tr Pruden) Abdhk 3.95-96(3) (Abdhk:Pr 2:484). It is interesting that **Kathā, vatthu** argues against the Mahā, saṅghika view of

19.5 Bhante, I hope, [115] that when I answered thus, I have stated what has actually been spoken by the Blessed One; that I have not misrepresented him with what is untrue; that I have explained the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma; and that neither reasonable rebuke nor ground for criticism would come up.”¹¹⁷

Udāyi: the wonderful and marvellous

20.1 When this was said, **the venerable Udāyi** said this to the Blessed One:

“How wonderful, bhante, how marvellous, bhante, is the Blessed One’s fewness of desire, contentment, austerity, when even though he is of such great power, of such great might, he himself makes no display of them!

If the wanderers of the other sects were able to see even one such quality in themselves, they would surely proclaim it with a banner!

How wonderful, bhante, how marvellous, bhante, is the Blessed One’s fewness of desire, contentment, austerity, when even though he is of such great power, of such great might, he himself makes no display of them!”

20.2 “Take note then, Udāyi, of the Blessed One’s fewness of desire, contentment, austerity, and that even though he is of such great power, of such great might, he makes no display of them.

That if the wanderers of the other sects were able to see even one such quality in themselves, they would surely proclaim it with a banner.

Take note then, Udāyi, of the Blessed One’s fewness of desire, contentment, austerity, and that even though he is of such great power, of such great might, he himself makes no display of them.” [116]

Conclusion

21.1 Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Sāriputta:

“Therefore, Sāriputta, you should repeat this Dharma exposition frequently to the monks and the nuns, to the layman followers and the laywoman followers.

21.2 Even though some foolish people may have doubt or uncertainty regarding the Tathagata, when they hear this Dharma exposition their doubt or uncertainty regarding the Tathagata will be abandoned.”

21.3 This was how the venerable Sāriputta proclaimed his faith in the Blessed One. Therefore the name of this exposition is “**that which inspires faith**” (*sampasādanīya*).

— evaṃ —

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many Buddhas in a world system by *challenging them to name those Buddhas* (Kvu 21.6/608 f; KvuA 190). Presumably, there were none at that time. However, in due course, as we well know, the name of numerous Buddhas were introduced.

¹¹⁷ “That no reasonable consequence...ground for criticism” (*na ca koci sahadhammiko vādānuvādo* [vī vādānu-pāto] *gārayham* *thānam āgacchati*). My rendition is guided by similar passages where *vādānuvādo* is contrasted with *pāsamsā* in **Sikkha S** (A 5.5/3:4). This is stock: V 1:145, 2:297; D 1:161, 3:115; M 1:368, 482; A 1:161; S 2:26, 33, 117, 3:6, 4:51, 340, 382, 5:6 f; the Buddha himself utters these words at S 2:39. On its difficulty, see S:B 747 n72, where Bodhi says that *saha, dhammika* is an adj meaning “legitimate, reasonable” (S 41.8/4:299). Its more common meaning is “a follower of the same teaching” (M 1:64).

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