



THE BUDDHA SMILES

The Buddha Smiles

HUMOR IN THE PALI CANON

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Introduction

The Pali Canon has a reputation for being humorless. And it's easy to see why. In some of its passages, the Buddha seems to regard humor in a bad light. For instance, in the Wailing Discourse (AN 3:107) he refers to “laughing excessively, showing one's teeth,” as a form of childishness, and counsels that a monk, when feeling joy in the Dhamma, should simply smile. His instructions to Rāhula in [MN 61](#) note that one shouldn't tell a deliberate lie, “even in jest.” A passage in the Vinaya ([Sk 51](#)) tells of a monk, formerly an actor, who made a joke about the Saṅgha. The Buddha, in response, made it an offense for a monk to tell a joke not only about the Saṅgha, but also about the Buddha or Dhamma.

There is also the famous verse in the [Dhp 146](#) that seems aimed at squelching all forms of merriment:

What laughter, why joy,
when constantly aflame?
 Enveloped in darkness,
don't you look for a lamp?

And then there's the fact that the Buddha himself rarely smiles in the Canon, and when he does, the reasons for his smile are never hilarious.

Still, the Canon's reputation for being devoid of humor is undeserved. It's there in the Canon, but it often goes unrecognized.

Now on that occasion the monks of Ālavī were having huts built from their own begging—having no sponsors, destined for themselves, not to any standard measurement—that did not come to completion. They were continually begging, continually hinting: ‘Give a man, give labor, give an ox, give a wagon, give a machete, give an ax, give an adz, give a spade, give a chisel, give rushes, give reeds, give grass, give clay.’ People, harassed with the begging, harassed with the hinting, on seeing monks would feel apprehensive, alarmed, would run away;

would take another route, face another direction, close the door. Even on seeing cows, they would run away, imagining them to be monks.

One of the reasons why the Canon's humor goes unrecognized relates to its style, which is often subtle, deadpan, and dry. This style of humor can go right past readers in modern cultures where jokes are telegraphed well in advance, and humor tends to be broad. Another reason is that translators often miss the fact that a passage is meant to be humorous, and so render it in a flat, pedantic way.

What's distinctive about the Canon's humor is that, for the most part, it functions in line with the Buddha's directives on wise speech: that it be true, beneficial, and timely. It's also in line with right speech—again, for the most part—in that it doesn't employ lies or exaggeration, divisive speech, harsh speech, or idle chatter: types of speech that, in the form of exaggeration, nationalism, racism, and silliness, are all too often humor's common mode.

We need to keep adding “for the most part” here because the humor in the Canon comes from at least four different sources. In some cases, it's from in the reported speech of the Buddha himself; in others, from the reported speech of his awakened disciples; in others, from the reported speech of more ordinary people, lay and monastic; and in still others, it lies in the way the compilers of the Canon shape their narratives. Thus, the Buddha's use of humor tends to be subtler and more sophisticated than, say, that of the ordinary people quoted in the Canon, who can sometimes be sarcastic and even crude.

So when we analyze the style and function of humor in the Canon, we have to remember that both style and function vary with the source. But even when we take these variations into consideration, the Canon's humor has some overall features that make it distinctive. After all, the compilers of the Canon were the ones who chose which speech to report and which not to report, so when they are quoting sarcasm or crude jokes, it's valid to ask what larger purpose the quotations are meant to serve.

In general, we can say that humor in the Canon seems aimed at serving a specific purpose on the path: to develop discernment. It does this in two distinct ways.

One aspect of discernment is to view things from a certain distance. As the Buddha says, to gain the knowledge that frees you from attachment to things,

you need to view those things as something separate ([SN 35:80](#)). In [Dhp 28](#), his image of discernment is of a man standing on a tower or a mountain, viewing the world below:

When the wise person drives out
heedlessness
with heedfulness,
having climbed the high tower
of discernment,
sorrow-free,
he observes the sorrowing crowd—
as the enlightened man,
having scaled
a summit,
the fools on the ground below.

Now, the sense of distance here is not harsh or unfeeling. Wise people also feel compassion for the sorrowing crowd. But still, they are no longer embroiled in those sorrows because they have learned how to develop distance from the causes of sorrow within themselves. Their compassion for others is tempered with the larger perspective that comes from a knowledge of kamma: You try to help others act in ways that lead to their happiness, but they have the free will to resist your help, and so you have to accept their free choices with equanimity.

The Buddha himself, on the night of his awakening, learned about the principles of kamma by watching all beings in the universe in a process of dying and being reborn in line with their kamma. The sense of detachment that came from the vastness of that vision was what enabled him to gain detachment, and ultimately freedom, from the actions of his own mind.

So a sense of distance is a necessary part of the path, and a wise sense of humor can be a useful tool in promoting it. The process of separating yourself from an old attachment is easier when you can see, in a good-humored way, how foolish the attachment is.

When we group the humorous passages in the Canon according to topic, we find that this aspect of humor applies to most of the topics, and in particular, the topics dealing with things that people in general find

enthraling or that pose particular dangers for people whose progress on the path is still weak. As a result, anyone on the path has to develop a detached attitude toward all of these things. Humor aimed at these topics is a means for fostering disenchantment: to see through the enthrallment and to realize that there is less there than meets the eye.

These topics are:

devas, Brahmās, and other non-human beings;
sensuality;
palace life;
viewpoints opposed to the Dhamma;
human foibles and weaknesses; and
psychic powers.

When focused on these topics, the Canon’s humor most often takes the form of irony and satire: poking fun at things that people usually take too seriously, so that they can learn to view them with healthy detachment. In these categories, the humor can range from the gentle to the very sharp—even the Buddha can be quite sharp in his comments on these topics, as in his comparison of brahmins with dogs. And it’s in these categories that the compilers of the Canon will sometimes draw on the sarcastic remarks of ordinary people to show that an awakened state of mind is not a necessary requirement for seeing that certain actions and ideas are foolish.

However, there are also three groups of topics in which humor is used in quite a different way:

the advantages of Dhamma practice;
Dhamma strategies; and
the stories that, when the Buddha calls them to mind, cause him to smile.

In these cases, the humor takes the form of “joy in the Dhamma,” and is employed to make Dhamma practice attractive. This type of humor relates to a second aspect of discernment: the ability to motivate yourself to do something that you know will lead to good results but, in itself, seems unappealing. In fact, all three groups portray discernment as a strategic faculty, and so all three are examples of the second of the three—Dhamma strategies—in action. As the Buddha himself says, discernment of this sort is connected with “mature stamina, mature persistence, and mature effort” ([AN](#)

4:115). It's the kind of discernment that gets you on the path and helps keep you there. In these categories, the humor often takes the form of similes, parables, stories, and analogies—the kind of humor that provokes a wise or a warm smile.

In this way, both of the main types of humor in the Canon—satire and joy in the Dhamma—serve the purpose of the fourth tradition of the noble ones (AN 4:28): the ability to take delight in abandoning unskillful qualities, and the ability to take delight in developing skillful ones. Both of these abilities, in turn, fall under one of the steps of breath meditation: gladdening the mind (MN 118).

So there's practical value in considering how the Canon uses humor to aid in developing discernment, and in particular how its humor varies with each of the above nine topics. But first we should note an aspect of the Canon's humor that crops up repeatedly in all the topics, but to some extent has fallen out of favor in an age that demands a quick laugh and instant gratification.

That aspect is what T.W. Rhys-Davids, the British scholar writing in the late 1800's, called an "American" sense of humor. According to him, American humor was marked by a love of the long, drawn-out tale, in which the humor lay not so much in the punch line, but in the luxuriant detail packed into the story. What Rhys-Davids apparently had in mind was Mark Twain's narrative style: throwing in detail after detail, making his observant eye and his patient wit in the act of telling itself part of the humor.

The Canon is full of examples of this style of humor, especially—but not exclusively—in the discourses from the Dīgha Nikāya, or Long Collection. A monk going to ask a question of the Great Brahmā doesn't go immediately to the Great Brahmā. We are told, one by one, how he visits all the devas in the deva-hierarchy leading up to the Great Brahmā, including many devas not included in the standard list. Two men searching for fortune in the abandoned villages of a countryside don't start with hemp and then immediately discover gold. We are told, in detail, all the various commodities of gradually increasing value they find.

In each case, the repeated details are not just decoration. They make a point. In the case of the deva-hierarchy, the repetition brings home the message that even though an organization may be large and impressive, it can still be full of ignorance. In the case of the commodities, the repetition emphasizes how stubborn an attachment can be. To appreciate much of the

humor in the Canon, you need to learn how to find both enjoyment and a useful lesson in the details of the story as the narrator spins out the tale.

However, there are also passages where the humor lies in quick one-liners. So the Canon employs many different styles of humor, depending on the topic and the lessons to be learned with regard to that topic.

The collection of passages gathered in this book is aimed at illustrating the Canon's use of humor with regard to each of the nine topics, to give an idea of not only of its style and range, but also of its purposes. Keep in mind that the collection is not exhaustive: There are many other humorous touches throughout the Canon. The passages here are simply some of the more obvious or outstanding examples of how the Canon uses humor to promote discernment. Although much of the humor in the Canon is remarkably timeless—related to aspects of human nature that have remained constant with the millennia—it can sometimes be subtle, and its mode of expression can sometimes relate to the culture of its times. For this reason, I would first like to provide a little background for each topic, so that you will be in a better position to appreciate the humor in the passages and the functions it serves.

1. DEVAS, BRAHMĀS, & OTHER NON-HUMAN BEINGS.

Most religions treat supernatural beings with a great deal of respect—in fact, many give these beings the highest form of worship, and regard knowledge from divine sources as the highest and most reliable form of wisdom. However, in the Buddha's view of the cosmos, none of these beings are worthy of worship. They are born into those states and fall from those states in line with their kamma, often without having gained any special insight or knowledge. In fact, their knowledge is inferior to the Buddha's.

So it's only natural that the Canon would make beings of this sort an object of satire, so that people practicing the Dhamma won't regard them with awe. On the one hand, this satirical attitude helps to protect you if you actually gain experience of such beings in your meditation: You won't believe everything they tell you. On the other hand, this attitude helps to immunize you against religions that claim to come from a divine source. If divine beings can be ignorant—and that is one of the main points of the satires here—then why should their knowledge be regarded as special?

For this reason, the satires in this section often overlap with those in the section on viewpoints opposed to the Dhamma, in particular in the area of

Brahmanism, which claims to come from a divine origin, the creator of the universe itself.

Three passages in this section stand out. The first is §1.1, in which a monk approaches the Great Brahmā and asks, in effect, how far the physical universe extends. The Great Brahmā, somewhat like Yahweh in the Book of Job, at first deflects the question by insisting on his status as the creator of all things. However, unlike Job, the monk is not cowed by this response. Instead, he notes that he didn't ask the Great Brahmā if he was the creator of the universe. He asked how far the universe extends. Twice the Great Brahmā tries to deflect the question again, and when the monk is still not cowed, the Great Brahmā takes him by the arm, pulls him aside, and tells him that he can't answer the question, but didn't want to disappoint his adoring retinue by confessing his ignorance in their presence.

The point of the satire, of course, is that the Great Brahmā is a vain, pompous fraud. And as we will learn in §4.3, his claim to being the creator is based on his own ignorant misunderstanding of how the cosmos evolves.

The second noteworthy passage in this section is §1.2, in which a deva, attracted to a monk bathing in a river, tries to seduce him. Much of the humor of the story lies in the word-play, in which the monk takes many of the terms used by the deva herself, but turns their meaning around in a way that she doesn't understand. An added element of humor is that the story ends with the monk taking the deva to the Buddha, who tames her pride by giving her teachings way over her head. At the end, after receiving some very high-level Dhamma, she can take away nothing more than the lesson that one should avoid evil and not consort with sensuality.

However, not all the satire in connection with this topic is aimed at divine beings. In a third passage (§1.3), it's aimed at a monk who wants a deva to warn him of any misdeeds she sees him committing. She tells him, rightly, that she is not his hired hand, and that his own behavior is his own responsibility. Just because you can see devas doesn't mean you have rights to any special favors from them. Even though divine beings don't deserve worship, they should still be treated with ordinary good manners and respect.

2. SENSUALITY

The Canon's most distinctive and artful use of humor lies in its satires on sensuality. Two of the most literary dialogues in the Canon are devoted to

making fun of people who act and speak under the power of lust. The use of literary language in both dialogues makes clear that they are intended to subvert one of the principles of ancient Indian literary theory.

Indian literary theory as a whole is based on the concept of *rasa*, or savor. Literary works, such as poems and dramas, are supposed to present emotional states that the reader or audience “savors” at a second remove. The emotional state and the savor are not identical: This is how the theorists explained the fact that some of the emotions felt by the characters, such as grief, might be painful, but the audience was meant to enjoy savoring those emotions from an aesthetic distance.

Classical literary tradition listed eight main savors, of which the comic was one. And although the theorists argued about how the savors were to be mixed in a work of art, one area of general agreement was that the comic savor went naturally with the sensitive or erotic savor, and never with the horrific: Humor intensifies and adds spice to an erotic tale.

So when the compilers of the Canon use humor to poke fun at lust, they are turning this theory around. For example, in §2.1, Sakka the deva-king sends a gandhabba, Pañcasikha, to put the Buddha in the proper mood to meet with a deva, i.e., Sakka himself. Now, gandhabbas have the reputation for being the adolescents of the deva world, obsessed with music and sex, and Pañcasikha is no exception. He chooses to sing a song for the Buddha, in which he illustrates his lust for his lady love by making analogies with the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha: His longing for her is as one-pointed as the Buddha in jhāna; his love for her has grown in power like an offering made to an arahant. The language of the song is lovely, in line with the erotic savor, but part of the humor of the passage lies in the situation: Pañcasikha is totally oblivious to how inappropriate the analogies are, and what a gaffe it is to sing such a song to the Buddha. The Buddha, having been raised in a palace, nevertheless humors him and compliments him knowledgeably on the technical aspects of his song, but another part of the humor lies in guessing at what must be going through the Buddha’s mind as he converses politely with such a hopelessly deluded being.

In §2.2, the Canon’s use of humor to poke fun at lust is even more radical. A young man tries to seduce a nun alone in the forest, speaking in poetic language of how much he loves her, finally focusing on how nothing is dearer to him than her eyes. She—coming from a position of total detachment—

calls his bluff and, taking out one of her eyes, offers it to him: You want it? Have it.

Two things in the poem make its use of humor radical. On the one hand, the man's lines are among the most sophisticated pieces of literature in the Canon. His vocabulary is exquisitely sensual, and he uses it artfully. Having set up this atmosphere, the dialog's swift denouement is even more startling. The mixture of the nun's sense of humor with her horrific solution to the situation is so unexpected that many people miss the fact that she's probably laughing to herself at her own bravado as she carries it through.

In both §2.1 and §2.2, the sophistication and sensuality of the language make a subversive point. Ordinary human culture all too often measures sophistication and refinement in line with the level of one's appreciation for sensual pleasures: the best wines, the most exquisite food and art. These passages, however, show that the Buddha's rejection of sensuality did not result from a lack of refinement on his part. After all, he was acquainted not only with the sensual pleasures of the palace, but also with the divine sensual pleasures in the heavenly realms, which far outstrip any sensual pleasures possible in the human world. He rejects sensuality, both human and divine, because he can see how even the most sophisticated tastes for sensual pleasures are foolish and vain.

In contrast, the humor in §2.3 is, in formal terms, somewhat more conventional, but it's still subversive in its own way. Here the Buddha takes an ancient Indian wedding custom—throwing dust, ashes, and cow dung over a new bride—and provides it with an origin story that reverses the meaning of the dust, ashes, and cow dung, turning them into symbols of disgust at the sexual act.

3. PALACE LIFE

Related to the Canon's satires of sensuality are its satires on palace life. These focus primarily on two points: first, that palaces, with all their pleasures, are dangerous places to live—or even to visit—both for kings and anyone else associated with them; second, that the position of being a king is not all that enviable. Because kings were the richest and most powerful people of the time, the satires of kings would apply at present to anyone who is rich, powerful, and famous. The satires of palace life would apply to anyone living in close contact with people in high positions.

In many of these passages, the satire is gentle. After all, the Buddhist Saṅgha needed the goodwill of kings to be allowed to exist, so it wouldn't want to appear too harsh in its judgment of them. But because the humor here can be so gentle, it's often easy to miss. A prime example is §3.1. Read superficially, it seems conventional. But on reflection, it's fairly remarkable. King Pasenadi is in his bedroom with his favorite queen, Mallikā, and in a moment of intimacy asks her if there is anyone she loves more than herself. Of course, being a king, he expects her to say, "Yes, your majesty: you," as a prelude to even greater intimacy. And if this were a Hollywood film, that's where the dialog would go. But this is the Pali Canon, and Mallikā is no fool. She, defiantly and truthfully, tells the king No, there is no one she loves more than herself. And she gets him to admit that there is no one he loves more than himself, either. That ends the scene. Even kings, with all their power, can't get what most lovers want: the assurance that the person loved loves the lover as dearly as the lover loves him or herself.

The humor in §3.4 is also gentle in its depiction of an 80-year old king who is, from the standpoint of the Dhamma, still a child. Too weak at times to place his foot where he intends to, and surrounded by a court eager to see him die, he would still want to conquer new lands, even on the other side of the ocean, if the opportunity arose.

In §3.5, the humor is broader and cruder: Even King Bimbisāra, whom the Canon usually depicts as wiser than Pasenadi, is not immune to suffering humiliating teasing from his wives.

The most extended satire in this section is §3.2, which depicts one of Pasenadi's visits to the Buddha. Despite his position, the king must still act the role of messenger for his wives. Because of his position, he finds himself surrounded by people he cannot trust—he never gets to the bottom of the question of who brought misinformation into the palace—and whose minds fasten on issues of overthrowing and banishing, most likely him. He is so preoccupied with his responsibilities that he doesn't pick up on the Buddha's gentle chiding about his servitude to the sisters Somā and Sakulā, can't stick with an issue for any length of time, sometimes can't even phrase his questions properly, and can arrive at no greater certainty about the Buddha's teachings than that they seem reasonable. From a spiritual point of view, his power and position are not assets. They're liabilities. At the end of the sutta he has to take leave of the Buddha, not because he has exhausted the issues he

would like to discuss, but because one of his courtiers tells him it's time to go. All in all, not an enviable position.

This passage also shows the dangers of living in the palace: Sañjaya the brahman gets accused of bringing misinformation into the palace, but the issue never gets resolved. In such a situation, everyone lives under a cloud of suspicion. Passage §3.6, concerning the Buddha's doctor, Jīvaka, shows how palace life can be physically dangerous as well.

4. VIEWPOINTS OPPOSED TO THE DHAMMA

Many people are surprised to learn that the Buddha would treat the opinions of other teachers as an object of satire, on the grounds that such behavior is partisan and would count as a form of wrong speech: divisive tale-bearing. However, the Canon's treatment of divisive tale-bearing shows that when a person cites the misbehavior of X to Y for the purpose of Y's genuine well-being, it does not count as divisive tale-bearing. It's an act of compassion. Because the Buddha could see that the wrong views of his opponents, if adopted, would lead the person adopting them to a bad destination, he understood that compassion required him to show how wrong those wrong views were. When there is a clear right and wrong, it's not partisan to help others see the issue clearly as well. And a very effective way of accomplishing this would be, at times, to expose wrong views to ridicule, either by pointing out their internal inconsistencies, or by examining the behavior of people who espoused them.

The prime targets of this sort of satire in the Canon are the brahmins and the Nigaṇṭhas, or Jains, but materialist views come in for some extended satire as well (§4.12). There are a few passages in which brahmanical views about the cosmos come under attack (§1.1; §4.3; §4.5; §4.6) but the primary brahmanical view subjected to ridicule is their racism: the belief that brahmins are superior to others simply by virtue of their birth. A common theme in the Buddha's treatment of brahmanical ideas of superiority is that the brahmins of the past did follow admirable customs, but that those customs have since been abandoned. His most biting version of this observation is a systematic comparison between brahmins and dogs, with dogs coming off as better brahmins than the brahmins themselves (§4.4).

As for the Nigaṇṭhas, they are satirized for their crude ideas about kamma, and in particular for their idea that old bad kamma can be burned

away through austerities (§§4.14–18). Because their beliefs can lead to pointless suffering, and because their attitudes on kamma are—superficially—so close to the Buddha’s, he went to extra lengths to show that their views were actually very different from his.

A recurring feature of the humor in this section is that people with views opposed to the Dhamma are actually most foolish—harmful to themselves and to others—when they think they are being most clever. This point applies in particular to Saccaka, with his debater’s tricks (§4.13), and to Prince Pāyāsi, with the torturous experiments he devises to “prove” whether there is a soul that can survive death (§4.12).

5. HUMAN FOIBLES

Objectively, there is nothing impressive about human weaknesses, yet they have their power over the untrained mind. It’s all too easy to give in to your own weaknesses on the grounds that they’re “only human.” In this perverse way, you grant them far more respect than they actually deserve. The best way to overcome this tendency is to look at the same weaknesses in other people in a detached way, to see how foolish and harmful they can actually be, and then to apply that same perspective to yourself. In this way, when you laugh at other people’s foolishness, it’s with the purpose of learning how to laugh at your own.

The Buddha, when discussing ordinary human weaknesses that he wanted his followers to abandon, would sometimes use stories, similes, and parables as an attractive way of pointing to how foolish such weaknesses could be.

But what is especially striking in the Canon’s use of humor around this topic is the extent to which the compilers of the Vinaya—the monastic training rules—used humor in the stories explaining the origins of many of the rules. And here the element of humor seems to serve at least four possible purposes.

First, the monastic community needed people to memorize the Vinaya. Perhaps to make up for the repetitive and detailed discussions that such people would be required to memorize, the compilers sought to reward them with entertaining stories to memorize, too.

Second, the element of humor in the origin stories helps to give the listener a detached perspective on the behavior that the rules were designed

to prevent. Having viewed other people's foibles from that sense of amused distance, the listener would be more likely to view his/her own tendencies to give in to that sort of behavior with a sense of detached distance as well. This would make the listener more willing to live by the rules forbidding that kind of behavior.

Third, it is easier to trust a body of rules if you know that the people compiling them had a sense of humor. A humorless body of rules is oppressive.

Fourth, the humor of these stories is universal: Just like the Dhamma as a whole, they address issues of human behavior that have not changed over time. This shows that the rules were formulated by people who had a sense of what is constant in human nature, thus reinforcing the message that the rules themselves are universal, and so should apply wherever the Saṅgha may go.

6. PSYCHIC POWERS

The Canon contains many discussions of the psychic powers that can be gained through the practice of concentration. And although the Buddha was able to use his psychic powers to great advantage in teaching the Dhamma (see [Mv I.15–22](#)), he also saw that the display of psychic powers could lead to damaging consequences. Cv VII.2–4 tells of the most serious case of the abuse of psychic powers, in which Devadatta, the Buddha's cousin, employs his psychic powers to win a following and ends up creating such extreme bad kamma that he is destined to hell.

Other passages, however, show the drawbacks of displaying psychic powers in a more light-hearted way, focusing on how—human foibles being what they are—psychic powers can create amusing difficulties both for those who exercise them and for those who hear about them. In this way, this topic is an extension of the previous one. And as with the previous one, many of the stories in this section come from origin stories to the monastic rules.

The use of humor in these stories serves a two-fold purpose. One, it helps to remove some of the fascination and awe that can surround psychic powers: As the Devadatta story shows, a person with such powers is not necessarily spiritually mature, and fascination with these powers can actually be an obstacle to the higher goal of release. So, to remind the reader that there is a higher goal, the compilers of the Canon can afford to treat psychic powers in

an offhand manner. By poking fun at the sorts of foolishness and controversies that can surround the use of such powers, the humorous passages dealing with these powers are aimed at preventing more of the same sort of foolishness or controversy in the future. This, in particular, is the point of §6.5, in which Ven. Mahaka displays a particularly deft psychic marvel to Citta the householder. The Canon doesn't tell whether this incident happened before or after the Buddha formulated the rule against making such displays (§6.1), but in either case Mahaka is wise enough to leave the place quickly to avoid the sort of problems that will occur if word of his attainment gets out.

Two, the use of humor in these stories helps to make them more believable. In Indian literary theory, one of the eight primary savors is the astounding. This is the savor tasted in passages that report miraculous or amazing events. However, the risk when trying to create this savor is that the author may go overboard in trying to impress the reader, and as a result appear ridiculous. Thus the compilers of the Canon add a dash of humor to their depictions of psychic powers to show that, no, they have not lost touch with reality. This, in turn, helps to situate psychic powers within the context of ordinary reality, so that people listening to these passages, when they actually encounter psychic powers in themselves or others, will maintain a firm grasp of reality as well.

7. THE ADVANTAGES OF DHAMMA PRACTICE

This section contains two passages describing the behavior and attitude of the Buddha's disciples in what Rhys-Davids called the American style (§§7.8–9).

However, in the vast majority of passages here, the Buddha uses similes and parables, often concerning animals, to present the benefits of Dhamma practice in a light-hearted way. While there can be an element of irony in the way these passages depict obstacles to the path—for example, in §7.2's depiction of the man trying to make the earth be without earth—the humor here is primarily designed to make the listener smile, in response to joy in the Dhamma, in a happy and warm-hearted way.

8. DHAMMA STRATEGIES

The Canon often describes the Buddha as a doctor, treating the illnesses of the heart and mind ([Iti 100](#), [AN 3:22](#); [AN 10:108](#)). In general terms, his four noble truths are like a doctor's approach to treating an illness: diagnosing the symptoms, finding the cause, affirming that a cure is possible, and recommending the treatment that will effect that cure. In more specific terms, the treatment offered by the Buddha's noble eightfold path is strategic, utilizing some mental qualities—such as virtue, mindfulness, and concentration—that will continue to function after awakening ([MN 79](#), [SN 54:11](#)), and others, such as craving and desire, that will eventually have to be abandoned when the path has done its work ([SN 51:15](#); [AN 3:40](#); [AN 4:159](#)). This parallels a doctor's course of treatment, which entails some treatments, such as a healthy diet, that the patient will continue to follow after the disease is cured, and others, such as medicines, that will be abandoned when the cure is complete.

To fully understand the analogy of Buddha-as-doctor, it's instructive to study how the Canon portrays the Buddha's own doctor, Jīvaka, to gain a sense of how the people of the time understood the range of skills that a good doctor possessed. And one of Jīvaka's prime skills is his ability to induce them to undergo and persist with unappealing courses of treatment. In other words, without lying, he has to trick them into doing what is in their own best interest. His wit in finding effective strategies of this sort is something that the compilers of the Canon obviously admire.

In a similar vein, the Buddha sometimes has to trick his followers into following the path, to get them to undertake and persist with a course of training that goes strongly against their defilements.

The two passages in this section provide parallel examples of how Jīvaka and the Buddha adopt this sort of approach.

Passage [§8.2](#) is the more famous of the two. In addition to showing the Buddha as a skilled strategist in teaching his own brother, Ven. Nanda, it also plays against a common assumption in ancient Indian culture: that men practicing the celibate life here in this lifetime are doing so in hopes of divine sensual pleasures in the next. The Buddha first induces Nanda to practice for the sake of nymphs after he dies, but Nanda, when he is shamed by his fellow monks, who call him a hired hand, eventually starts to practice more seriously and ultimately gains full awakening. This attainment causes him to lose

interest in nymphs entirely. In this way, the passage as a whole ranks as one of several humorous passages in the Canon—§9, below, is another—in which defilements serve as an incentive to follow a path of practice that leads ultimately beyond defilement.

9. STORIES THAT MAKE THE BUDDHA SMILE

There are three stories of this sort in the Pali suttas. In addition to the passage cited here, two entire suttas in the Majjhima Nikāya—MN 81 and MN 83—are devoted to extended stories in which the Buddha, in each case, recalls an event in a previous life that makes him smile. Ven. Ānanda, noticing the smile, asks for the reason behind the smile. The Buddha then tells the story, adding a moral at the end.

Of the three stories, the one included in this collection is the most humorous. And the humor lies in the fact that the protagonists use a defilement—conceit—to generate a competitive spirit that spurs them on to higher levels of practice, only to abandon their competitive spirit when they attain the highest goal. In this way, this story illustrates a principle articulated by Ven. Ānanda in [AN 4:159](#): that it's by relying on conceit that conceit is to be abandoned.

Even though this story of the Buddha's smile differs from the other two in that it doesn't involve one of his previous lives, all three stories are similar in that they deal with people who not only practiced the Dhamma but also incited others to practice the Dhamma as well. This sort of behavior—which the Buddha elsewhere calls acting for the benefit of both oneself and others ([AN 4:95-96](#); [AN 4:99](#))—is what makes the Buddha smile. And, of course, the smile is not ironical or satirical. It's another expression of joy in the Dhamma, and it encourages the listener to behave in a way that, if a Buddha ever learned about it, would make him smile, too.

1 : Devas, Brahmās, & Other Non-human Beings

§ 1.1 [The Buddha:] “Once, Kevaṭṭa, this train of thought arose in the awareness of a certain monk in this very Saṅgha of monks: ‘Where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?’ Then he attained to such a state of concentration that the way leading to the devas appeared in his concentrated mind. So he went to the devas of the retinue of the Four Great Kings and, on arrival, asked them, ‘Friends, where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, the devas of the retinue of the Four Great Kings said to the monk, ‘We also don’t know where the four great elements... cease without remainder. But there are the Four Great Kings who are higher and more sublime than we. They should know where the four great elements... cease without remainder.’

“So the monk went to the Four Great Kings and, on arrival, asked them, ‘Friends, where do these four great elements... cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, the Four Great Kings said to the monk, ‘We also don’t know where the four great elements... cease without remainder. But there are the devas of the Thirty-three who are higher and more sublime than we. They should know....’

“So the monk went to the devas of the Thirty-three and, on arrival, asked them, ‘Friends, where do these four great elements... cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, the devas of the Thirty-three said to the monk, ‘We also don’t know where the four great elements... cease without remainder. But there is Sakka, the deva-king, who is higher and more sublime than we. He should know....’

“So the monk went to Sakka, the deva-king, and, on arrival, asked him, ‘Friend, where do these four great elements... cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, Sakka, the deva-king, said to the monk, ‘I also don’t know where the four great elements... cease without remainder. But there are

the Yāma devas [devas of the Hours] who are higher and more sublime than I. They should know....’

“The Yāma devas said, ‘We also don’t know.... But there is the deva named Suyāma.... He should know....’

“Suyāma said, ‘I also don’t know.... But there are the Tusita devas.... They should know....’

“The Tusita devas said, ‘We also don’t know.... But there is the deva named Santusita.... He should know....’

“Santusita said, ‘I also don’t know.... But there are the Nimmānaratī devas [devas who delight in creation].... They should know....’

“The Nimmānaratī devas said, ‘We also don’t know.... But there is the deva named Sunimmita.... He should know....’

“Sunimmita said, ‘I also don’t know.... But there are the Paranimmitavasavattī devas [devas who wield control over the creations of others].... They should know....’

“The Paranimmitavasavattī devas said, ‘We also don’t know.... But there is the deva named Paranimmita Vasavatti.... He should know....’

“So the monk went to the deva Vasavatti and, on arrival, asked him, ‘Friend, where do these four great elements... cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, the deva Vasavatti said to the monk, ‘I also don’t know where the four great elements... cease without remainder. But there are the devas of Brahmā’s retinue who are higher and more sublime than I. They should know where the four great elements... cease without remainder’....

“Then the monk attained to such a state of concentration that the way leading to the devas of Brahmā’s retinue appeared in his concentrated mind. So he went to the devas of Brahmā’s retinue and, on arrival, asked them, ‘Friends, where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, the devas of Brahmā’s retinue said to the monk, ‘We also don’t know where the four great elements... cease without remainder. But there is Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. He is higher

and more sublime than we. He should know where the four great elements... cease without remainder.'

"But where, friends, is the Great Brahmā now?"

"Monk, we also don't know where Brahmā is or in what way Brahmā is. But when signs appear, light shines forth, and a radiance appears, Brahmā will appear. For these are the portents of Brahmā's appearance: Light shines forth and a radiance appears.'

"Then it was not long before Brahmā appeared.

"So the monk went to the Great Brahmā and, on arrival, said, 'Friend, where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?'

"When this was said, the Great Brahmā said to the monk, 'I, monk, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be.'

A second time, the monk said to the Great Brahmā, 'Friend, I didn't ask you if you were Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. I asked you where these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder.'

"A second time, the Great Brahmā said to the monk, 'I, monk, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be.'

"A third time, the monk said to the Great Brahmā, 'Friend, I didn't ask you if you were Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. I asked you where these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder.'

"Then the Great Brahmā, taking the monk by the arm and leading him off to one side, said to him, 'These devas of the retinue of Brahmā believe, "There is nothing that the Great Brahmā does not know. There is nothing that the Great Brahmā does not see. There is nothing of which the Great Brahmā is

unaware. There is nothing that the Great Brahmā has not realized.” That is why I did not say in their presence that I, too, don’t know where the four great elements... cease without remainder. So it’s your own wrongdoing, your own mistake, in that—bypassing the Blessed One—you searched outside for an answer to this question. Go right back to the Blessed One and, on arrival, ask him this question. However he answers you, that’s how you should remember it.’

“Then—just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—the monk disappeared from the Brahmā world and immediately appeared in front of me. Having bowed down to me, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to me, ‘Venerable sir, where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder?’

“When this was said, I said to him, ‘Once, monk, some sea-faring merchants, taking a shore-sighting bird, set out across the ocean in their ship. When they could not see the shore from their ship, they released the shore-sighting bird. It flew to the east; it flew to the south; it flew to the west; it flew to the north; it flew to straight up; it flew to the intermediate directions. If it saw the shore in any direction, it flew there and was gone. If it did not see the shore in any direction, it returned right back to the ship. In the same way, monk, having searched as far as the Brahmā world and not receiving an answer to this question, you have come right back to my presence.

““This question should not be asked in this way: Where do these four great elements—the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property—cease without remainder? Instead, the question should be asked like this:

“Where do water, earth, fire, & wind
have no footing?
Where are long & short,
coarse & fine,
fair & foul,
name & form
brought to a stop without trace?

“And the answer to that is:

“Consciousness without surface,
without end,
luminous all around:
Here water, earth, fire, & wind
have no footing.
Here long & short,
coarse & fine,
fair & foul,
here name & form
are all brought to a stop without trace.
With the cessation of (the aggregate of) consciousness
each is here brought to a stop.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Kevaṭṭa the householder
delighted in the Blessed One’s words. — [DN 11](#)

§ 1.2 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near
Rājagaha at Tapodā monastery. Then Ven. Samiddhi, as night was ending,
got up & went to the Tapodā Hot Springs to bathe his limbs. Having bathed
his limbs and gotten out of the springs, he stood wearing only his lower robe,
letting his limbs dry.

Then a certain devatā, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme
radiance lighting up the entire Tapodā Hot Springs, went to Ven. Samiddhi.
On arrival, while standing in the air, she addressed him with this verse:

“Without having enjoyed
(sensual pleasures),
you go for alms, monk.
You don’t go for alms
after having enjoyed.
Having enjoyed, monk,
then go for alms.
Don’t let time pass you by.”¹

Ven. Samiddhi:

“I don’t know my time.
My time
is hidden.
It can’t be seen.
That’s why, not having enjoyed,
I go for alms:
Don’t let my time pass me by.”

Then the devatā, coming down to earth, said to Ven. Samiddhi, “You have gone forth while young, monk—black-haired, endowed with the blessings of youth in the first stage of life—without having played with sensuality. Enjoy human sensuality, monk. Don’t drop what is visible here & now in pursuit of what’s subject to time.”

“My friend, I’m not dropping what’s visible here & now in pursuit of what’s subject to time. I’m dropping what’s subject to time in pursuit of what’s visible here & now. For the Blessed One has said that sensuality is subject to time, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks; whereas this Dhamma is well taught by the Blessed One, visible here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be experienced by the observant for themselves.”¹

“But, monk, in what way has the Blessed One said that sensuality is subject to time, of much stress, much despair, & greater drawbacks? And how is this Dhamma visible here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be experienced by the observant for themselves?”

“I’m new, my friend, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dhamma & discipline. I can’t explain it in detail. But the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened, is staying here near Rājagaha at Tapodā monastery. Having gone to him, ask him this matter. As he explains it, that’s how you should remember it.”

“Monk, it’s not easy for us to go to the Blessed One, as he is surrounded by other devas of great influence. But if you go to the Blessed One and ask him this matter, I will come along to hear the Dhamma.”

Responding to the devatā, “As you say, my friend,” Ven. Samiddhi went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there [he told the Blessed One his entire

conversation with the devatā]. “Now, venerable sir, if that devatā was telling the truth, she is not far from here.”

When this was said, the devatā said to Ven. Samiddhi, “Ask, monk! Ask! I’ve gotten through.”

Then the Blessed One recited this verse to the devatā:

“Perceiving in terms of signs, beings
take a stand on signs.
Not fully comprehending signs, they
come into the bonds
of death.

But fully comprehending signs, one
doesn’t suppose
a signifier.

Yet nothing exists for him
by which one would say,
‘To him no thought occurs.’

If you know this, yakkha, then say so.”

“I don’t understand, venerable sir, the detailed meaning of the Blessed One’s brief statement. It would be good if the Blessed One would speak in such a way that I would understand the detailed meaning of the Blessed One’s brief statement.”

The Buddha:

“Whoever supposes
‘equal,’
‘superior,’ or
‘inferior,’
by that he’d dispute.
Whereas to one unaffected by these three,
‘equal’
‘superior’
do not occur.

If you know this, yakkha, then say so.”

“I don’t understand, venerable sir, the detailed meaning of the Blessed One’s brief statement. It would be good if the Blessed One would speak in such a way that I would understand the detailed meaning of the Blessed One’s brief statement.”

The Buddha:

“Having
 shed classifications,
 gone beyond conceit,
he has here
 cut
through craving
 for name
 & form:
This one—
his bonds cut through,
free
 from trouble,
 from longing—
though they search, they can’t find him,
 human beings & devas,
 here & beyond,
 in heaven
 or any abode.

If you know this, yakkha, then say so.”

“Venerable sir, here’s how I understand the detailed meaning of the Blessed One’s brief statement:

In all the world,
 every world,
you should do no evil
with speech,
 body,
 or mind.
Having abandoned sensuality

—mindful, alert—
don't consort
with suffering & stress,
with what doesn't pertain
to the goal.” — [SN 1:20](#)

NOTE

1. This discourse also contains some word play on the words “time” (*kāla*) and “subject to time” (*kālika*). “Time” can mean not only time in the general sense, but also one’s time of death (a person who has died is said to have “done his/her time”). These two meanings of the word underlie the first exchange between Ven. Samiddhi and the devatā. “Subject to time” can mean “obtainable only after a certain time” or “good only for a certain length of time”: These meanings underlie their second exchange. There is also word play on the phrase, “visible here & now.” The devatā, assuming that Ven. Samiddhi is denying himself human sensuality for the sake of a reward after death (see [§2.3](#)), uses this phrase to describe human sensuality. Ven. Samiddhi, who has tasted the deathless, uses the same phrase to describe his actual goal: unbinding. The devatā’s inability to understand the meaning of Ven. Samiddhi’s words shows clearly that, in spite of her fortunate birth, she still has a great deal to learn.

§ 1.3 I have heard that on one occasion a certain monk was staying among the Kosalans in a forest grove. Now at that time, after his meal, returning from his almsround, he went down to a lotus pond and sniffed a red lotus.

Then the devatā inhabiting the forest grove, feeling sympathy for the monk, desiring his benefit, desiring to bring him to his senses, approached him and addressed him with this verse:

“You sniff this water-born flower
that hasn’t been given to you.
This, dear sir, is a factor of stealing.
You are a thief of a scent.”

The monk:

“I don’t take, don’t damage.
I sniff at the lotus
from far away.
So why do you call me

a thief of a scent?
One who
 digs up the stalks,
 damages flowers,
one of such ruthless behavior:
 Why don't you say it of him?"

The devatā:

"A person ruthless & grasping,
smeared like a nursing diaper:
To him
I have nothing to say.
 It's you
 to whom I should speak.
To a person unblemished,
constantly searching for purity,
a hair-tip's worth of evil
 seems as large
 as a cloud."

The monk:

"Yes, yakkha, you understand me
and show me sympathy.
Warn me again, yakkha,
whenever again
you see something like this."

The devatā:

"I don't depend on you
for my living
nor am I
your hired hand.
 You, monk,
you yourself should know
how to go to the good destination."

The monk, chastened by the devatā, came to his senses. — [*SN 9:14*](#)

§ 1.4 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha at the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary. And on that occasion Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Mahā Moggallāna were staying in Pigeon Cave. Then, on a moonlit night, Ven. Sāriputta—his head newly shaven—was sitting in the open air, having attained a certain level of concentration.

And on that occasion two yakkhas who were companions were flying from north to south on some business or other. They saw Ven. Sāriputta—his head newly shaven—sitting in the open air. Seeing him, the first yakkha said to the second, “I’m inspired to give this contemplative a blow on the head.”

When this was said, the second yakkha said to the first, “Enough of that, my good friend. Don’t lay a hand on the contemplative. He’s an outstanding contemplative, of great power & great might.”

A second time, the first yakkha said to the second, “I’m inspired to give this contemplative a blow on the head.”

A second time, the second yakkha said to the first, “Enough of that, my good friend. Don’t lay a hand on the contemplative. He’s an outstanding contemplative, of great power & great might.”

A third time, the first yakkha said to the second, “I’m inspired to give this contemplative a blow on the head.”

A third time, the second yakkha said to the first, “Enough of that, my good friend. Don’t lay a hand on the contemplative. He’s an outstanding contemplative, of great power & great might.”

Then the first yakkha, ignoring the second yakkha, gave Ven. Sāriputta a blow on the head. And with that blow he might have knocked over an elephant seven or eight cubits tall, or split a great rocky crag. But right there the yakkha—yelling, “I’m burning!”—fell into the Great Hell.

Now, Ven. Moggallāna—with his divine eye, pure and surpassing the human—saw the yakkha give Ven. Sāriputta a blow on the head. Seeing this, he went to Ven. Sāriputta and, on arrival, said to him, “I hope you are well, friend Sāriputta. I hope you are comfortable. I hope you are feeling no pain.”

“I am well, friend Moggallāna. I am comfortable. But I do have a slight headache.”

“How amazing, friend Sāriputta! How astounding! How great your power & might! Just now a yakkha gave you a blow on the head. So great was that blow that he might have knocked over an elephant seven or eight cubits tall,

or split a great rocky crag. But all you say is this: ‘I am well, friend Moggallāna. I am comfortable. But I do have a slight headache!’”

“How amazing, friend Moggallāna! How astounding! How great your power & might! Where you saw a yakkha just now, I didn’t even see a dust devil!” — [Ud 4:4](#).

§ 1.5 Now on that occasion a certain monk went to the charnel ground and took hold of discarded cloth on a body not yet decomposed. But the ghost (*peta*) of the dead one was (still) dwelling in that body. Then it said to the monk, “Venerable sir, don’t take hold of my cloak.” The monk, disregarding it, went off (with the cloak). Then the body, rising up, followed right behind the monk. Then the monk, entering his dwelling, closed the door. Then the body fell down right there. — [Pr 2](#)

2 : *Sensuality*

§ 2.1 Then Sakka the deva-king addressed Pañcasikha the gandhabba-son, “My dear Pañcasikha, the Blessed One is staying in Magadha to the east of Rājagaha in Indasāla Cave on VEDIYAKA mountain, to the north of a brahman village called Ambasaṇḍa. That being the case, we would like to go there to see that Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened.”

Responding, “As you say, auspicious one,” and taking his yellow beluva-wood lute, Pañcasikha the gandhabba-son went along with Sakka the deva-king as the king’s escort. Then—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—in the same way, Sakka the deva-king, surrounded by the devas of the Thirty-three and escorted by Pañcasikha the gandhabba-son, disappeared from the heaven of the Thirty-three and reappeared... on VEDIYAKA mountain.

And on that occasion both VEDIYAKA mountain and Ambasaṇḍa the brahman village were exceedingly aglow—such was the deva-might of the devas. All around the village, people were saying, “Tonight VEDIYAKA mountain is on fire! Tonight VEDIYAKA mountain is ablaze! Tonight VEDIYAKA mountain is burning! Why is it that tonight both VEDIYAKA mountain and Ambasaṇḍa the brahman village are exceedingly aglow?” They were terrified and their hair stood on end.

Then Sakka the deva-king addressed Pañcasikha the gandhabba-son, “It’s not easy, my dear Pañcasikha, for beings like me to approach the Blessed One when he is in jhāna, delighting in jhāna, there in the midst of seclusion. That being the case, you first charm the Blessed One, and when the Blessed One has been charmed by you, I will then approach him—the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened.”

Responding, “As you say, auspicious one,” and taking his yellow beluva-wood lute, Pañcasikha the gandhabba-son went to the Indasāla Cave and, on arrival, thinking, “Just to the extent that I am not too far from the Blessed One, and not too near to him, and he will hear my voice,” he stood to one side. As he was standing there, he took up his yellow beluva-wood lute and made it

sound, while singing these verses touching on the Buddha, touching on the Dhamma, touching on the Saṅgha, and touching on lust:

My lady SunDazzle,
I revere your father, Timbaru,
who sired such a lovely lady—
the mother of my joy.

As a breeze is pleasing to one who is sweating,
or a drink to one who thirsts,
you, radiant one, are dear to me,
as the Dhamma is to an arahant.

Like medicine for the afflicted,
like food for the hungry,
calm me, lady,
like water for a fire ablaze.

As an elephant, overcome by summer's heat,
plunges into a lotus pond—
cool, covered with stamens & pollen—
so I would plunge
into your bosom & breasts.

Like an elephant
beyond the power of the goad,
unfazed by lances & hooks,
I have no sense of what's proper to do,
intoxicated by the shape of your thighs.

My heart is filled with yearning,
my heart is utterly changed.
Like a fish having swallowed the hook
I cannot turn back.

O, lady of gorgeous thighs,
embrace me.
Embrace me,

O lady of languid eye.

Hold me tight, my lovely:
That is my highest wish.

Though small at first, my desire—
O you of wavy hair—
has grown to manifold power
like an offering to an arahant.

May the fruit of the merit
from deeds I've done for arahants
ripen in being with you,
lady lovely in every limb.

May the fruit of the merit
from deeds I've done in all the world,
ripen in being with you,
lady lovely in every limb.

Like the Buddha—through jhāna,
one-pointed, intent, & mindful,
a sage longing for the deathless—
so I long, SunDazzle, for you.

As a sage would rejoice
in gaining the supreme awakening,
so would I, my lovely,
in mingling with you.

If Sakka, lord of the Thirty-three,
were to grant me a wish,
I would choose you, my lady:
My passion is so strong.

As I would to a Sal tree
not long in bloom,
I honor & bow to your father,
O wise one,
who engendered someone like you.

When this was said, the Blessed One said to Pañcasikha the gandhabba-son, “They flow together, Pañcasikha: the sound of your words with the sound of your music, and the sound of your music with the sound of your words. Neither is the sound of your words outrun by the sound of your music, nor the sound of your music by the sound of your words. When did you compose these verses touching on the Buddha, touching on the Dhamma, touching on the Saṅgha, and touching on lust?”

“One time, venerable sir, the Blessed One was staying near Uruvelā under the goatherd’s banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River, right after his awakening. And on that occasion Timbaru, the gandhabba-king had a daughter named Lady SunDazzle, and I was in love with her. But she had the love of another. Mātali, the charioteer had a son named Sikhaṇḍi, and she was in love with him. So when I couldn’t gain her by other means, I took my yellow beluva-wood lute and went to Timbaru’s residence and, on arrival, I made my yellow beluva-wood lute sound and sang these verses touching on the Buddha, touching on the Dhamma, touching on the Saṅgha, and touching on lust. [And he repeats the verses.]

“When this was said, Lady SunDazzle said to me, ‘My dear, I have never seen that Blessed One face to face, but I have heard of him when I danced in the devas’ Sudhamma assembly hall. And because you praise that Blessed One, let us get together today.’

“And so I got together with her—not right then, but later.”

[At this point, Sakka feels that the Buddha is in the right mood to meet with him, so he has Pañcasikha announce his arrival.] — [DN 21](#)

§ 2.2 As Subhā the nun was going through Jīvaka’s delightful mango grove, a libertine [a goldsmith’s son] blocked her path, so she said to him:

‘What wrong have I done you
that you stand in my way?
It’s not proper, my friend,
that a man should touch
a woman gone forth.
I respect the Master’s message,
the training pointed out by the one Well-Gone.
I am pure, without blemish:

Why do you stand in my way?
You—your mind agitated, impassioned;
I—unagitated, unimpassioned,
with a mind entirely freed:

Why do you stand in my way?’

‘You are young & not bad-looking,
what need do you have for going forth?
Throw off your ochre robe—

Come, let’s delight in the flowering grove.
A sweetness they exude everywhere,
the trees risen-up with their pollen.
The beginning of spring is a pleasant season—

Come, let’s delight in the flowering grove.
The trees with their blossoming tips
moan, as it were, in the breeze:
What delight will you have
if you plunge into the grove alone?
Frequented by herds of wild beasts,
disturbed by elephants rutting & aroused:
You want to go

unaccompanied
into the great, lonely, frightening grove?

Like a doll made of gold, you will go about,
like a goddess in the gardens of heaven.
With delicate, smooth Kāsī fabrics,
you will shine, O beauty without compare.
I would gladly do your every bidding
if we were to dwell in the glade.

For there is no creature dearer to me
than you, O nymph with the languid regard.
If you do as I ask, happy, come live in my house.
Dwelling in the calm of a palace,

have women wait on you,
wear delicate Kāsī fabrics,
adorn yourself with garlands & creams.
I will make you many & varied ornaments

of gold, jewels, & pearls.
Climb onto a costly bed,
scented with sandalwood carvings,
with a well-washed coverlet, beautiful,
spread with a woolen quilt, brand new.

Like a blue lotus rising from the water
where no human beings dwell,
you will go to old age with your limbs unseen,
if you stay as you are in the holy life.'

'What do you assume of any essence,
here in this cemetery grower, filled with corpses,
this body destined to break up?
What do you see when you look at me,
you who are out of your mind?'

'Your eyes are like those of a fawn,
like those of a sprite in the mountains.
Seeing your eyes, my sensual delight
grows all the more.

Like tips they are, of blue lotuses,
in your golden face
—spotless:

Seeing your eyes, my sensual delight
grows all the more.

Even if you should go far away,
I will think only of your pure,
long-lashed gaze,
for there is nothing dearer to me
than your eyes, O nymph with the languid regard.'

'You want to stray from the road,
you want the moon as a plaything,
you want to jump over Mount Sineru,
you who have designs on one born of the Buddha.
For there is nothing anywhere at all
in the cosmos with its devas,
that would be an object of passion for me.

I don't even know what that passion would be,
for it's been killed, root & all, by the path.
Like embers from a pit—scattered,
like a bowl of poison—evaporated,
 I don't even see what that passion would be,
 for it's been killed, root & all, by the path.
Try to seduce one who hasn't reflected on this,
or who has not followed the Master's teaching.
But try it with this one who knows
 and you suffer.
For in the midst of praise & blame,
 pleasure & pain,
my mindfulness stands firm.
Knowing the unattractiveness
 of things compounded,
my mind cleaves to nothing at all.
I am a follower of the one Well-Gone,
riding the vehicle of the eightfold way:
My arrow removed, effluent-free,
I delight, having gone to an empty dwelling.
For I have seen well-painted puppets,
hitched up with sticks & strings,
made to dance in various ways.
When the sticks & strings are removed,
thrown away, scattered, shredded,
smashed into pieces, not to be found,
 in what will the mind there make its home?
This body of mine, which is just like that,
when devoid of dhammas doesn't function.
When, devoid of dhammas, it doesn't function,
 in what will the mind there make its home?
Like a mural you've seen, painted on a wall,
smeared with yellow orpiment,
there your vision has been distorted,
meaningless your human perception.
Like an evaporated mirage,
like a tree of gold in a dream,

like a magic show in the midst of a crowd—
 you run blind after what is unreal.
Resembling a ball of sealing wax,
set in a hollow,
with a bubble in the middle
and bathed with tears,
eye secretions are born there too:
The parts of the eye
are rolled all together
in various ways.’

Plucking out her lovely eye,
with mind unattached
she felt no regret.

‘Here, take this eye. It’s yours.’

Straightaway she gave it to him.
Straightaway his passion faded right there,
and he begged her forgiveness:

‘Be well, follower of the holy life.
 This sort of thing
 won’t happen again.
Harming a person like you
is like embracing a blazing fire.
It’s as if I have seized a poisonous snake.
So may you be well. Forgive me.’

And released from there, the nun
went to the excellent Buddha’s presence.
When she saw the mark of his excellent merit,
 her eye became
 as it was before. — *Thig 14*

§ 2.3 “Then, Vāseṭṭhas, those beings, consuming the rice ripened in unplowed ground, remained with that as their nourishment, that as their food, for a long, long time. As they, consuming the rice cooked without boiling, remained with that as their nourishment, that as their food, for a

long, long time, then to an even greater extent did coarseness descend on their bodies, to an even greater extent were beauty & ugliness discerned. In women, the female sexual organ appeared. In men, the male sexual organ appeared. The women stared excessively at the men, and the men at the women. In them, staring excessively at one another, passion was born. A fever descended on their bodies. They, as a result of that fever, engaged in sexual intercourse. And on that occasion, when (other) beings saw them engaging in sexual intercourse, some threw dust, others threw ashes, others threw cow dung, (saying,) ‘Away with you, vile ones! Away with you, vile ones! How can a being do such a thing to another being?’ Just as now, in some areas, when the bride is being led (to the groom), some throw dust, others throw ashes, others throw cow dung. They remember that ancient, original custom, but they don’t understand the meaning.” — *DN 27*

3 : *Palace Life*

§ 3.1 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattthī at Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. And on that occasion King Pasenadi Kosala had gone with Queen Mallikā to the upper palace. Then he said to her, “Mallikā, is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?”

“No, great king. There is no one dearer to me than myself. And what about you, great king? Is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?”

“No, Mallikā. There is no one dearer to me than myself.”

Then the king, descending from the palace, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “Just now, when I had gone with Queen Mallikā to the upper palace, I said to her, ‘Mallikā, is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?’

“When this was said, she said to me, ‘No, great king. There is no one dearer to me than myself. And what about you, great king? Is there anyone dearer to you than yourself?’

“When this was said, I said to her, ‘No, Mallikā. There is no one dearer to me than myself.’”

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

Searching all directions
with your awareness,
you find no one dearer
than yourself.

In the same way, others
are thickly dear to themselves.
So you shouldn’t hurt others
if you love yourself. — [*Ud 5:1*](#)

§ 3.2 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Udaññans, in the Deer Park at Kaṇṇakatthala. And on that

occasion King Pasenadi Kosala had arrived at Udañña on some business or other. So King Pasenadi Kosala said to one of his men, “Come, my good man. Go to the Blessed One and, on arrival, showing reverence with your head to his feet in my name, ask whether he is free from illness & affliction, is carefree, strong, & living in comfort, saying: ‘King Pasenadi Kosala, venerable sir, shows reverence with his head to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort.’ And then say: ‘Venerable sir, today King Pasenadi Kosala will come to see the Blessed One after his morning meal.’”

Having responded, “As you say, sire,” the man went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to him, “King Pasenadi Kosala, venerable sir, shows reverence with his head to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort.” And then he said, “Venerable sir, today King Pasenadi Kosala will come to see the Blessed One after his morning meal.”

Now, the sisters Somā and Sakulā heard, “Today, they say, King Pasenadi Kosala will go to see the Blessed One after his morning meal.” So they approached King Pasenadi while his meal was being served and on arrival said to him, “Well in that case, great king, show reverence with your head to his feet in our name, too, and ask whether he is free from illness & affliction, is carefree, strong, & living in comfort, saying: ‘The sisters Somā and Sakulā, venerable sir, show reverence with their heads to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort.’”

Then, after his morning meal, King Pasenadi Kosala went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “The sisters Somā and Sakulā, venerable sir, show reverence with their heads to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort.”

“But, great king, couldn’t the sisters Somā and Sakulā get another messenger?”

“Venerable sir, the sisters Somā and Sakulā heard, ‘Today, they say, King Pasenadi Kosala will go to see the Blessed One after his morning meal.’ So they approached me while my meal was being served and on arrival said to

me, ‘Well in that case, great king, show reverence with your head to his feet in our name, too, and ask whether he is free from illness & affliction, is carefree, strong, & living in comfort, saying: “The sisters Somā and Sakulā, venerable sir, show reverence with their heads to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort.”’ Venerable sir, the sisters Somā and Sakulā show reverence with their heads to your feet and asks whether you are free from illness & affliction, are carefree, strong, & living in comfort.”

“May the sisters Somā and Sakulā be happy, great king.”

Then King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, I have heard that ‘Gotama the contemplative says this: “It is not possible that a contemplative or brahman would claim a knowledge and vision that is all-knowing and all-seeing without exception.”’ Those who say this: are they speaking in line with what the Blessed One has said? Are they not misrepresenting the Blessed One with what is unfactual? Are they answering in line with the Dhamma, so that no one whose thinking is in line with the Dhamma would have grounds for criticizing them?”

“Great king, those who say that are not speaking in line with what I have said, and are misrepresenting me with what is untrue and unfactual.”

Then King Pasenadi Kosala turned to General Viḍḍabha: “General, who brought this topic into the palace?”

“Sañjaya, the brahman of the Ākāsa clan, great king.”

So King Pasenadi turned to one of his men, “Come, my good man. Summon Sañjaya the brahman of the Ākāsa clan, saying, ‘King Pasenadi Kosala summons you.’”

Responding, “As you say, sire,” the man went to Sañjaya the brahman of the Ākāsa clan and on arrival said to him, “King Pasenadi Kosala summons you.”

Then King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One, “Could it be that something was said by the Blessed One in reference to something else, which a person could have misunderstood? In what way does the Blessed One recall having said (such) a statement?”

“Great king, I recall having said, ‘It is not possible that a contemplative or brahman could know everything and see everything all at once.’”

“What the Blessed One says, venerable sir, seems reasonable. What the Blessed One says seems logical: ‘It is not possible that a contemplative or brahman could know everything and see everything all at once.’

“Venerable sir, there are these four castes: noble warriors, brahmans, merchants, & workers. Is there any distinction or difference among them?”

“Great king, of these four castes, two—noble warriors & brahmans—are held to be foremost in terms of receiving homage, hospitality, salutation, & polite services.”

“I’m not asking about the present life, venerable sir. I’m asking about the future life. Is there any distinction or difference among these four castes?”

“Great king, there are these five factors for exertion. Which five?”

“There is the case where a monk has conviction, is convinced of the Tathāgata’s Awakening: ‘Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of people fit to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.’

“He is free from illness & discomfort, endowed with good digestion—not too cold, not too hot, of moderate strength—fit for exertion.

“He is neither fraudulent nor deceitful. He declares himself to the Teacher or to his observant companions in the holy life in line with what he actually is.

“He keeps his persistence aroused for abandoning unskillful qualities and taking on skillful qualities. He is steadfast, solid in his effort, not shirking his duties with regard to skillful qualities.

“He is discerning, endowed with discernment leading to the arising of the goal—noble, penetrating, leading to the right ending of stress.

“These are the five factors for exertion.

“As for the four castes, great king: If they were endowed with these five factors for exertion, that would be for their long-term welfare & happiness.”

“Venerable sir, if these four castes were endowed with these five factors for exertion, would there be any distinction or difference among them in that respect?”

“I tell you, great king: The difference among them would lie in the diversity of their exertion. Suppose that there were two tamable elephants, tamable horses, or tamable oxen that were well-tamed & well-trained; and two tamable elephants, tamable horses, or tamable oxen that were untamed

& untrained. What do you think? Would the two tamable elephants, tamable horses, or tamable oxen that were well-tamed & well-trained acquire the habits of the tamed and reach the status of the tamed?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“And would the two tamable elephants, tamable horses, or tamable oxen that were untamed & untrained acquire the habits of the tamed and reach the status of the tamed?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“In the same way, great king, it is impossible that what could be attained by one who has confidence, who is free from illness, who is neither fraudulent nor deceitful, whose persistence is aroused, and who is discerning could also be attained by one who is without conviction, who is sickly, fraudulent & deceitful, lazy, and dull.”

“What the Blessed One says, venerable sir, seems reasonable. What the Blessed One says seems logical. But with regard to these four castes: if they were endowed with these five factors for exertion, and they had right exertion, would there be any distinction or difference among them in that respect?”

“I tell you, great king, that there would be no difference among them with regard to the release of one and the release of another. Suppose that a man, taking dry Sal wood, were to generate a fire and make heat appear. And suppose that another man, taking dry saka [teak?] wood, were to generate a fire and make heat appear. And suppose that another man, taking dry mango wood, were to generate a fire and make heat appear. And suppose that another man, taking dry fig wood, were to generate a fire and make heat appear. Now what do you think, great king? Among those fires generated from different kinds of wood, would there be any difference between the glow of one and the glow of another, the color of one and the color of another, the radiance of one and the radiance of another?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“In the same way, great king, in the power that is kindled by persistence and generated by exertion, I say that there is no difference with regard to the release of one and the release of another.”

“What the Blessed One says, venerable sir, seems reasonable. What the Blessed One says seems logical. But, venerable sir, are there devas?”

“But why do you ask, ‘But, venerable sir, are there devas?’?”

“Whether the devas come back to this life, venerable sir, or whether they don’t.”

“Those devas who are afflicted come back to this life, whereas those devas who are unafflicted don’t come back to this life.”

When this was said, General Viḍūḍabha said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, can the afflicted devas oust or expel the unafflicted devas from that place?”

Then the thought occurred to Ven. Ānanda, “This General Viḍūḍabha is the son of King Pasenadi Kosala, and I am the son of the Blessed One. Now is the time for the son to counsel the son.” So Ven. Ānanda turned to General Viḍūḍabha and said, “In that case, general, I will cross-question you. Answer as you see fit. Through the extent of land conquered by King Pasenadi Kosala—where he exercises sovereign & independent kingship—is he able to oust or expel a contemplative or brahman from that place, regardless of whether that person has merit or not, or follows the holy life or not?”

“Sir, through the extent of land conquered by King Pasenadi Kosala—where he exercises sovereign & independent kingship—he is able to oust or expel a contemplative or brahman from that place, regardless of whether that person has merit or not, or follows the holy life or not.”

“And what do you think, general? Through the extent of land not conquered by King Pasenadi Kosala—where he does not exercise sovereign & independent kingship—is he able to oust or expel a contemplative or brahman from that place, regardless of whether that person has merit or not, or follows the holy life or not?”

“Sir, through the extent of land not conquered by King Pasenadi Kosala—where he does not exercise sovereign & independent kingship—he is not able to oust or expel a contemplative or brahman from that place, regardless of whether that person has merit or not, or follows the holy life or not.”

“And what do you think, general? Have you heard of the devas of the Thirty-three?”

“Yes, sir, I have heard of the devas of the Thirty-three, as has King Pasenadi Kosala.”

“And what do you think, general? Could King Pasenadi Kosala oust or expel the devas of the Thirty-three from that place?”

“Sir, King Pasenadi Kosala can’t even see the devas of the Thirty-three. How could he oust or expel them from that place?”

“In the same way, general, afflicted devas, who will come back to this life, can’t even see the unafflicted devas who don’t come back to this life. How could they oust or expel them from that place?”

Then King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, what is the name of this monk?”

“His name is Ānanda [Joy], great king.”

“What a joy he is! What a true joy! But, venerable sir, are there Brahmās?”

“But why do you ask, ‘But, venerable sir, are there Brahmās?’?”

“Whether the Brahmās come back to this life, venerable sir, or whether they don’t.”

“Those Brahmās who are afflicted come back to this life, whereas those Brahmās who are unafflicted don’t come back to this life.”

Then a man said to King Pasenadi Kosala, “Great king, Sañjaya the brahman of the Ākāsa clan has come.”

Then King Pasenadi Kosala said to Sañjaya the brahman of the Ākāsa clan, “Who brought that topic into the royal palace?”

“General Viḍūḍabha, great king.”

General Viḍūḍabha said, “Sañjaya the brahman of the Ākāsa clan, great king.”

Then a man said to King Pasenadi Kosala, “Time to go, great king.”

So King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, we have asked the Blessed One about omniscience, the Blessed One has answered about omniscience, and that is pleasing & agreeable to us, and we are gratified because of it. We have asked the Blessed One about the purity of the four castes, the Blessed One has answered about the purity of the four castes, and that is pleasing & agreeable to us, and we are gratified because of it. We have asked the Blessed One about the higher devas, the Blessed One has answered about the higher devas, and that is pleasing & agreeable to us, and we are gratified because of it. We have asked the Blessed One about the higher Brahmās, the Blessed One has answered about the higher Brahmās, and that is pleasing & agreeable to us, and we are gratified because of it. Whatever we have asked the Blessed One about, that he has answered, and

that is pleasing & agreeable to us, and we are gratified because of it. Now, venerable sir, we must go. Many are our duties, many our responsibilities.”

“Then do, great king, what you think it is now time to do.”

Then King Pasenadi Kosala, delighting in and approving of the Blessed One’s words, got up from his seat, bowed down to the Blessed One and—keeping him to his right—departed. — [MN 90](#)

§ 3.3 As he was sitting to one side, King Pasenadi Kosala said to the Blessed One: “Just now, venerable sir, as I was sitting in judgment, I saw that even affluent nobles, affluent brahmans, & affluent householders—rich, with great wealth & property, with vast amounts of gold & silver, vast amounts of valuables & commodities, vast amounts of wealth & grain—tell deliberate lies with sensuality as the cause, sensuality as the reason, simply for the sake of sensuality. Then the thought occurred to me: ‘I’ve had enough of this judging! Let some other fine fellow be known for his judgments!’” — [SN 3:7](#)

§ 3.4 So King Koravya sat down on the seat made ready. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Raṭṭhapāla, “There are cases where, having suffered these four kinds of loss, men shave off their hair & beard, put on the ochre robe, and go forth from the home life into homelessness. Which four? Loss through aging, loss through illness, loss of wealth, & loss of relatives.... But Master Raṭṭhapāla has suffered none of these. What did he know or see or hear that Master Raṭṭhapāla went forth from the home life into homelessness?”

“Great king, there are four Dhamma summaries stated by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened. Having known & seen & heard them, I went forth from the home life into homelessness. Which four?

“‘The world is swept away. It does not endure’: This is the first Dhamma summary stated by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened. Having known & seen & heard it, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.

“‘The world is without shelter, without protector’: This is the second Dhamma summary....

“‘The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind’: This is the third Dhamma summary....

“‘The world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave to craving’: This is the fourth Dhamma summary....

“These, great king, are the four Dhamma summaries stated by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened. Having known & seen & heard them, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.”

“Master Raṭṭhapāla, you say, ‘The world is swept away. It does not endure.’ Now how is the meaning of this statement to be understood?”

“What do you think, great king? When you were twenty or twenty-five years old—an expert elephant rider, an expert horseman, an expert charioteer, an expert archer, an expert swordsman—were you strong in arm & strong in thigh, fit, & seasoned in warfare?”

“Yes, Master Raṭṭhapāla, when I was twenty or twenty-five years old... I was strong in arm & strong in thigh, fit, & seasoned in warfare. It was as if I had supernormal power. I do not see anyone who was my equal in strength.”

“And what do you think, great king? Are you even now as strong in arm & strong in thigh, as fit, & as seasoned in warfare?”

“Not at all, Master Raṭṭhapāla. I’m now aged, old, elderly, advanced in years, having come to the last stage of life, 80 years old. Sometimes, thinking, ‘I will place my foot here,’ I place it somewhere else.”

“It was in reference to this, great king, that the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened, said: ‘The world is swept away. It does not endure.’ Having known & seen & heard this, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.”

“It’s amazing, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It’s astounding, how well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘The world is swept away. It does not endure.’ For the world really is swept away, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It does not endure.

“Now, in this royal court there are elephant troops & cavalry & chariot troops & infantry that will serve to defend us from dangers. And yet you say, ‘The world is without shelter, without protector.’ How is the meaning of this statement to be understood?”

“What do you think, great king? Do you have any recurring illness?”

“Yes, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I have a recurring wind-illness. Sometimes my friends & advisors, relatives & blood-kinsmen, stand around me saying, ‘This time King Koravya will die. This time King Koravya will die.’”

“And what do you think, great king? Can you say to your friends & advisors, relatives & blood-kinsmen, ‘My friends & advisors, relatives & blood-kinsmen are commanded: All of you who are present, share out this pain so that I may feel less pain’? Or do you have to feel that pain all alone?”

“Oh, no, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I can’t say to my friends & advisors, relatives & blood-kinsmen, ‘All of you who are present, share out this pain so that I may feel less pain.’ I have to feel that pain all alone.”

“It was in reference to this, great king, that the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened, said: ‘The world is without shelter, without protector.’ Having known & seen & heard this, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.”

“It’s amazing, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It’s astounding, how well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘The world is without shelter, without protector.’ For the world really is without shelter, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It is without protector.

“Now, in this royal court there is a great deal of gold & silver stashed away underground & in attic vaults. And yet you say, ‘The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind.’ How is the meaning of this statement to be understood?”

“What do you think, great king? As you now enjoy yourself well-supplied & replete with the pleasures of the five senses, can you say, ‘Even in the afterlife I will enjoy myself in the same way, well-supplied & replete with the very same pleasures of the five senses’? Or will this wealth fall to others, while you pass on in accordance with your kamma?”

“Oh, no, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I can’t say, ‘Even in the afterlife I will enjoy myself in the same way, well-supplied & replete with the very same pleasures of the five senses.’ This wealth will fall to others, while I pass on in accordance with my kamma.”

“It was in reference to this, great king, that the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened, said: ‘The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind.’ Having known & seen & heard this, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.”

“It’s amazing, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It’s astounding, how well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘The world is without ownership. One has to pass on, leaving everything

behind.’ For the world really is without ownership, Master Raṭṭhapāla. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind.

“Now, Master Raṭṭhapāla, you say, ‘The world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave to craving.’ How is the meaning of this statement to be understood?”

“What do you think, great king? Do you now rule over the prosperous country of Kuru?”

“That is so, Master Raṭṭhapāla. I rule over the prosperous country of Kuru.”

“What do you think, great king? Suppose a trustworthy, reliable man of yours were to come to you from the east. On arrival he would say to you, ‘May it please your majesty to know, I have come from the east. There I saw a great country, powerful & prosperous, populous & crowded with people. Plenty are the elephant troops there, plenty the cavalry troops, chariot troops, & infantry troops. Plenty is the ivory-work there, plenty the gold & silver, both worked & unworked. Plenty are the women for the taking. It is possible, with the forces you now have, to conquer it. Conquer it, great king!’ What would you do?”

“Having conquered it, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I would rule over it.”

“Now what do you think, great king? Suppose a trustworthy, reliable man of yours were to come to you from the west... the north... the south... the other side of the ocean. On arrival he would say to you, ‘May it please your majesty to know, I have come from the other side of the ocean. There I saw a great country, powerful & prosperous, populous & crowded with people. Plenty are the elephant troops there, plenty the cavalry troops, chariot troops, & infantry troops. Plenty is the ivory-work there, plenty the gold & silver, both worked & unworked. Plenty are the women for the taking. It is possible, with the forces you now have, to conquer it. Conquer it, great king!’ What would you do?”

“Having conquered it, Master Raṭṭhapāla, I would rule over it, too.”

“It was in reference to this, great king, that the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened, said: ‘The world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave to craving.’ Having known & seen & heard this, I went forth from the home life into homelessness.”

“It’s amazing, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It’s astounding, how well that has been said by the Blessed One who knows & sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened: ‘The world is insufficient, insatiable, a slave to craving.’ For the world really is insufficient, Master Raṭṭhapāla. It’s insatiable, a slave to craving.” — [MN 82](#)

§ 3.5 Now on that occasion King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha was sick with a hemorrhoid. His cloth was stained with blood. His queens, seeing it, teased him: “His majesty is now menstruating. His majesty is having his first period. It won’t be long before his majesty gives birth.”

The king was embarrassed by that. So he said to Prince Abhaya, “I say, Abhaya, we are suffering from the sort of illness that our cloth is stained with blood. My queens, seeing it, tease me: ‘His majesty is now having his period. His majesty is menstruating. It won’t be long before his majesty gives birth.’ Please find the sort of doctor who could treat me.”

“Your majesty, there is this doctor of ours, Jīvaka, who is young & talented. He will treat your majesty.”

“Very well then, Abhaya, command doctor Jīvaka. He will treat me.”

So Prince Abhaya commanded Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “Go, Jīvaka, and treat the king.”

Responding, “As you say, your highness,” to Prince Abhaya, and taking some medicine under his fingernail, Jīvaka Komārabhacca went to King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha and, on arrival, said to him, “Let me see your illness, your majesty.” And he dried up the king’s hemorrhoid with a single application.

So King Seniya Bimbisāra—being cured, having ordered 500 of his women to dress up with all their jewelry and then to remove it and put it into a pile—said to Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “That, I say, Jīvaka—all the jewelry of the 500 women—is yours.”

“Enough, your majesty. May your majesty simply remember my service.”

“Very well then, Jīvaka, care for me, for the women in the palace, and for the Saṅgha of monks, headed by the Buddha.”

“As you say, your majesty,” Jīvaka Komārabhacca responded to King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha. — [*Mv VIII.1.14–15*](#)

§ 3.6 Now on that occasion King Pajjota of Ujjeni was sick with jaundice. Many great doctors, the foremost in all directions, having come to treat him, couldn’t cure him of his illness. Taking a great deal of money, they left.

So King Pajjota sent a messenger to the presence of King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha, “We, your majesty, are sick with this sort of illness. It

would be good if your majesty would command doctor Jīvaka. He will treat me.”

So King Seniya Bimbisāra commanded Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “Go, I say, Jīvaka. Having gone to Ujjeni, treat King Pajjota.”

Responding, “As you say, your majesty,” to King Seniya Bimbisāra, and having gone to Ujjeni, Jīvaka Komārabhacca went to King Pajjota and, on arrival, having observed his symptoms, said to him, “Your majesty, I will concoct some ghee, and your majesty will drink it.”

“Enough, I say, Jīvaka. Whatever can cure (me) without ghee, do that. Ghee is disgusting to me. Loathsome.”

The thought occurred to Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “The disease of this king is of a sort that cannot be cured without ghee. What if I were to concoct ghee with an astringent color, astringent smell, astringent taste?”

So, with various medicines, he concocted ghee with an astringent color, astringent smell, astringent taste.

Then the thought occurred to him, “This ghee, when drunk & digested by the king, will make him belch. The king is vicious. He could have me killed. What if I were to take leave as a precaution?”

So Jīvaka Komārabhacca went to King Pajjota and, on arrival, said to him, “Your majesty, we doctors, you know, at this sort of time, dig up roots and gather medicines. It would be good if your majesty were to command at the stables & city gates, ‘Let Jīvaka go by whatever mount he wants, through any gate he wants, at any time he wants, and to enter at any time he wants.’”

So King Pajjota commanded at the stables and city gates: “Let Jīvaka go by whatever mount he wants, through any gate he wants, at any time he wants, and to enter at any time he wants.”

Now at that time King Pajjota had a little she-elephant named Bhaddavatikā who was a fifty-leaguer [could travel fifty leagues in a day].

Then Jīvaka Komārabhacca offered the ghee to King Pajjota, (saying,) “Drink the astringent, your majesty.” Then, having gotten King Pajjota to drink the ghee and having gone to the elephant hall, he fled the city on the little she-elephant Bhaddavatikā.

Then, when the ghee was drunk and digested by King Pajjota, he belched. He said to his people, “I have been made to drink ghee by that vile Jīvaka! Very well then, I say, go find doctor Jīvaka!”

“He has fled the city on the little she-elephant Bhaddavatikā, your majesty.”

Now at that time King Pajjota had a slave named Kāka, a sixty-leaguer sired by a non-human being. So King Pajjota commanded him, “I say, Kāka, go turn doctor Jīvaka back, (saying,) ‘Teacher, the king has ordered you to be turned back.’ And you know, Kāka, these doctors have many tricks. Don’t accept anything from him.”

Then Kāka the slave caught up with Jīvaka Komārabhacca while on the road at Kosambī, having breakfast. He said to him, “Teacher, the king has ordered you to be turned back.”

“Wait, Kāka, I say, while I eat. And come, now. You eat, too.”

“No, teacher. I was commanded by the king: ‘And you know, Kāka, these doctors have many tricks. Don’t accept anything from him.’”

Now, on that occasion Jīvaka Komārabhacca was eating an emblic myrobalan while inserting medicine in it with his fingernail and drinking water. So he said to Kāka the slave, “Come now, I say, Kāka. Eat some emblic myrobalan and drink some water, too.”

The Kāka the slave, (thinking,) “This doctor is eating emblic myrobalan and drinking water; it shouldn’t do anything bad,” ate half an emblic myrobalan and drank water. And the half of the emblic myrobalan, being eaten by him, purged him right then & there. So he said to Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “Teacher, will I live?”

“I say, Kāka, don’t be afraid. You will soon be well, and so will the king. The king is vicious. He could have me killed, so I won’t turn back.” Handing the little she-elephant Bhaddavatikā over to Kāka, Jīvaka Komārabhacca left for Rājagaha. Traveling by stages, he reached Rājagaha and King Seniya Bimbisāra, and on arrival told the king what had happened.

“You did well, I say, Jīvaka, in not turning back. The king is vicious. He could have had you killed.”

Then King Pajjota, having been cured of his illness, sent a messenger to the presence of Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “Let Jīvaka come. I am giving a reward.”

“Enough, your majesty. May your majesty simply remember my service.”

— [*Mv VIII.1.23–29*](#)

§ 3.7 “Monks, there are these ten dangers for one who enters the king’s inner palace. Which ten?

1) “There is the case where the king is on a couch together with the queen. A monk enters there. Either the queen, seeing the monk, smiles; or the monk, seeing the queen, smiles. The thought occurs to the king, ‘Surely they’ve done it, or are going to do it.’ ...

2) “And furthermore, the king is busy, with much to do. Having gone to a certain woman, he forgets about it. On account of that, she conceives a child. The thought occurs to him, ‘No one enters here but the one gone forth. Could this be the work of the one gone forth?’ ...

3) “And furthermore, some valuable in the king’s inner palace disappears. The thought occurs to the king, ‘No one enters here but the one gone forth. Could this be the work of the one gone forth?’ ...

4) “And furthermore, secret consultations in the confines of the inner palace get spread abroad. The thought occurs to the king, ‘No one enters here but the one gone forth. Could this be the work of the one gone forth?’ ...

5) “And furthermore, in the king’s inner palace the son is estranged from the father, or the father from the son. The thought occurs to them, ‘No one enters here but the one gone forth. Could this be the work of the one gone forth?’ ...

6 & 7) “And furthermore, the king establishes one from a low position in a high position... (or) one from a high position in a low position. The thought occurs to those displeased by this, ‘The king is on familiar terms with one gone forth. Could this be the work of the one gone forth?’ ...

8) “And furthermore, the king sends the army out at the wrong time. The thought occurs to those displeased by this, ‘The king is on familiar terms with one gone forth. Could this be the work of the one gone forth?’ ...

9) “And furthermore, the king sends the army out at the right time, but has it turn around mid-way. The thought occurs to those displeased by this, ‘The king is on familiar terms with one gone forth. Could this be the work of the one gone forth?’ ...

10) “And furthermore, monks, the king’s inner palace is crowded with elephants... horses... chariots. There are enticing sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations unsuitable for one gone forth. This, monks, is the tenth danger for one who enters the king’s inner palace.” — [Pc 83](#)

4 : *Opposing Viewpoints*

§ 4.1 “Once, monks, in this same Sāvattthī, there was a certain king, and the king said to a certain man, ‘Come, my good man. Gather together all the people in Sāvattthī who have been blind from birth.’”

“Responding, ‘As you say, your majesty,’ to the king, the man—having rounded up all the people in Sāvattthī who had been blind from birth—went to the king and on arrival said, ‘Your majesty, the people in Sāvattthī who have been blind from birth have been gathered together.’

“‘Very well then, I say, show the blind people an elephant.’

“Responding, ‘As you say, your majesty,’ to the king, the man showed the blind people an elephant. To some of the blind people he showed the elephant’s head, saying, ‘This, blind people, is what an elephant is like.’ To some of them he showed the elephant’s ear, saying, ‘This, blind people, is what an elephant is like.’ To some of them he showed the elephant’s tusk... the elephant’s trunk... the elephant’s body... the elephant’s foot... the elephant’s hindquarters... the elephant’s tail... the tuft at the end of the elephant’s tail, saying, ‘This, blind people, is what an elephant is like.’

“Then, having shown the blind people the elephant, the man went to the king and on arrival said, ‘Your majesty, the blind people have seen the elephant. May your majesty do what you think it is now time to do.’

“Then the king went to the blind people and on arrival asked them, ‘Blind people, have you seen the elephant?’

“‘Yes, your majesty. We have seen the elephant.’

“‘Now tell me, blind people, what the elephant is like.’

“The blind people who had been shown the elephant’s head said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like a jar.’

“Those who had been shown the elephant’s ear said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like a winnowing basket.’

“Those who had been shown the elephant’s tusk said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like a plowshare.’

“Those who had been shown the elephant’s trunk said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like the pole of a plow.’

“Those who had been shown the elephant’s body said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like a granary.’

“Those who had been shown the elephant’s foot said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like a post.’

“Those who had been shown the elephant’s hindquarters said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like a mortar.’

“Those who had been shown the elephant’s tail said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like a pestle.’

“Those who had been shown the tuft at the end of the elephant’s tail said, ‘The elephant, your majesty, is just like a broom.’

“Saying, ‘The elephant is like this, it’s not like that. The elephant’s not like that, it’s like this,’ they struck one another with their fists. That gratified the king.

“In the same way, monks, the wanderers of other sects are blind & eyeless. They don’t know what is beneficial and what is harmful. They don’t know what is the Dhamma and what is non-Dhamma. Not knowing what is beneficial and what is harmful, not knowing what is Dhamma and what is non-Dhamma, they keep on arguing, quarreling, & disputing, wounding one another with weapons of the mouth, saying, ‘The Dhamma is like this, it’s not like that. The Dhamma’s not like that, it’s like this.’”

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

With regard to these things
they’re attached—
some contemplatives & brahmans.
They quarrel & fight—
people seeing one side. — [*Ud 6:4*](#)

§ 4.2 Thus the Blessed One answered, having been asked by Sakka the deva-king. Gratified, Sakka was delighted in & expressed his approval of the Blessed One’s words: “So it is, O Blessed One. So it is, O One Well-gone. Hearing the Blessed One’s answer to my question, my doubt is now cut off,

my perplexity is overcome.... Whereas other outside contemplatives & brahmans gave me no chance to ask them these questions, the Blessed One has answered at length, so that he has removed the arrow of my uncertainty & perplexity.”

“Deva-king, do you recall having asked other contemplatives & brahmans these questions?”

“Yes, venerable sir, I recall having asked other contemplatives & brahmans these questions.”

“If it’s no inconvenience, could you tell me how they answered?”

“It’s no inconvenience when sitting with the Blessed One or one who is like him.”

“Then tell me, deva-king.”

“Having gone to those whom I considered to be contemplatives & brahmans living in isolated dwellings in the wilderness, I asked them these questions. But when asked by me, they were at a loss. Being at a loss, they asked *me* in return, ‘What is your name?’

“Being asked, I responded, ‘I, dear sir, am Sakka, the deva-king.’

“So they questioned me further, ‘But what kamma did you do to attain to this state?’

“So I taught them the Dhamma as far as I had heard & mastered it. And they were gratified with just this much: ‘We have seen Sakka, the deva-king, and he has answered our questions!’ So, instead of my becoming their disciple, they simply became mine. But I, venerable sir, am the Blessed One’s disciple, a stream-winner, steadfast, never again destined for states of woe, headed for self-awakening.” — [*DN 21*](#)

§ 4.3 “Monks, there ultimately comes a time when, with the passing of a long stretch of time, this world devolves. When the world is devolving, beings for the most part head toward the Radiant (brahmās). There they stay: mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, coursing through the air, established in beauty for a long stretch of time. Then there ultimately comes a time when, with the passing of a long stretch of time, this world evolves. When the world is evolving, an empty Brahma palace appears. Then a certain being—from the exhaustion of his life span or the exhaustion of his merit—falls from the company of the Radiant and re-arises in the empty Brahmā

palace. And there he still stays mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, coursing through the air, established in beauty for a long stretch of time.

“After dwelling there alone for a long time, he experiences displeasure & agitation: ‘O, if only other beings would come to this world!’

“Then other beings, through the ending of their life span or the ending of their merit, fall from the company of the Radiant and reappear in the Brahmā palace, in the company of that being. And there they still stay mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, coursing through the air, established in beauty for a long stretch of time.

“Then the thought occurred to the being who reappeared first: ‘I am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. These beings were created by me. Why is that? First the thought occurred to me, “O, if only other beings would come to this world!” And thus my direction of will brought these beings to this world.’ As for the beings who reappear later, this thought occurred to them: ‘This is Brahmā... Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. We were created by this Brahmā. Why is that? We saw that he appeared here before, while we appeared after.’

“Now in that case, monks, the being who appeared first was longer-living, more beautiful, and more influential. The beings who appeared after were short-living, less beautiful, and less influential.

“And there is the possibility that one of those beings, falling from that company, comes to this world. Coming to this world, he goes forth from the home life into homelessness. Having gone forth from the home life into homelessness, he—through ardency, through exertion, through commitment, through heedfulness, and through right attention—reaches the sort of awareness-concentration whereby he, with his concentrated mind, remembers that previous lifetime but not any before it. So he says, ‘This Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, is the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, All-Powerful, the Sovereign Lord, the Maker, Creator, Chief, Appointer and Ruler, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. We were created by this Brahmā. He is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity. As for us, who were created by that Brahmā, we are inconstant, not everlasting, short-lived, subject to falling and coming to this world.’ — [DN1](#)

§ 4.4 “Monks, these five ancient brahmanical traditions are now observed among dogs but not among brahmans. Which five?

“In the past, brahman males mated only with brahman females and not with non-brahman females. At present, brahman males mate with brahman females and with non-brahman females. At present, male dogs mate only with female dogs and not with female non-dogs. This is the first ancient brahmanical tradition that is now observed among dogs but not among brahmans.

“In the past, brahman males mated with brahman females only in-season and not out-of-season. At present, brahman males mate with brahman females in-season and out-of-season. At present, male dogs mate with female dogs only in-season and not out-of-season. This is the second ancient brahmanical tradition that is now observed among dogs but not among brahmans.

“In the past, brahman males did not buy or sell brahman females, but took up cohabitation for the sake of reproduction simply through mutual attraction. At present, brahman males buy and sell brahman females, and take up cohabitation for the sake of reproduction simply through mutual attraction. At present, male dogs do not buy or sell female dogs, but take up cohabitation for the sake of reproduction simply through mutual attraction. This is the third ancient brahmanical tradition that is now observed among dogs but not among brahmans.

“In the past, brahmans did not make a stash of wealth, grain, silver, or gold. At present, brahmans make stashes of wealth, grain, silver, & gold. At present, dogs do not make a stash of wealth, grain, silver, or gold. This is the fourth ancient brahmanical tradition that is now observed among dogs but not among brahmans.

“In the past, brahmans searched for alms for their morning meal in the morning, and for their evening meal in the evening. At present, brahmans, having eaten as much as they like, swelling their bellies, leave taking the leftovers. At present, dogs search for alms for their morning meal in the morning, and for their evening meal in the evening. This is the fifth ancient brahmanical tradition that is now observed among dogs but not among brahmans.

“These, monks, are the five ancient brahmanical traditions that are now observed among dogs but not among brahmans.” – [AN 5:191](#)

§ 4.5 On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Nāḷandā in the Pāvārika Mango Grove. Then Asibandhakaputta the headman went to the Blessed One and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: “The brahmans of the Western lands, venerable sir—those who carry water pots, wear garlands of water plants, purify with water, & worship fire—can take (the spirit of) a dead person, lift it out, instruct it, & send it to heaven. But the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened, can arrange it so that all the world, at the break-up of the body, after death, reappears in a good destination, a heavenly world.”

“Very well, then, headman, I will question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? There is the case where a man is one who takes life, steals, indulges in illicit sex; is a liar, one who speaks divisive speech, harsh speech, & idle chatter; is greedy, bears thoughts of ill-will, & holds to wrong views. Then a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart (saying,) ‘May this man, at the break-up of the body, after death, reappear in a good destination, the heavenly world!’ What do you think? Would that man—because of the prayers, praise, & circumambulation of that great crowd of people—at the break-up of the body, after death, reappear in a good destination, a heavenly world?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“Suppose a man were to throw a large boulder into a deep lake of water, and a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart (saying,) ‘Rise up, O boulder! Come floating up, O boulder! Come float to the shore, O boulder!’ What do you think? Would that boulder—because of the prayers, praise, & circumambulation of that great crowd of people—rise up, come floating up, or come float to the shore?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“So it is with any man who takes life, steals, indulges in illicit sex; is a liar, one who speaks divisive speech, harsh speech, & idle chatter; is greedy, bears thoughts of ill-will, & holds to wrong views. Even though a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart—(saying,) ‘May this man, at the break-up of the body, after death, reappear in a good destination, a heavenly

world!’—still, at the break-up of the body, after death, he would reappear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell.

“Now what do you think? There is the case where a man is one who refrains from taking life, from stealing, & from indulging in illicit sex; he refrains from lying, from speaking divisive speech, from harsh speech, & from idle chatter; he is not greedy, bears no thoughts of ill-will, & holds to right view. Then a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart (saying,) ‘May this man, at the break-up of the body, after death, reappear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell!’ What do you think? Would that man—because of the prayers, praise, & circumambulation of that great crowd of people—at the break-up of the body, after death, reappear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“Suppose a man were to throw a jar of ghee or a jar of oil into a deep lake of water, where it would break. There the shards & jar-fragments would go down, while the ghee or oil would come up. Then a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart (saying,) ‘Sink, O ghee/oil! Submerge, O ghee/oil! Go down, O ghee/oil!’ What do you think? Would that ghee/oil, because of the prayers, praise, & circumambulation of that great crowd of people sink, submerge, or go down?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“So it is with any man who refrains from taking life, from stealing, & from indulging in illicit sex; refrains from lying, from speaking divisive speech, from harsh speech, & from idle chatter; is not greedy, bears no thoughts of ill-will, & holds to right view. Even though a great crowd of people, gathering & congregating, would pray, praise, & circumambulate with their hands palm-to-palm over the heart—(saying,) ‘May this man, at the break-up of the body, after death, reappear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell!’—still, at the break-up of the body, after death, he would reappear in a good destination, a heavenly world.” — [*SN 42:6*](#)

§ 4.6 *Puṇṇikā*:

I’m a water-carrier, cold,

always going down to the water
from fear of my mistresses' beatings,
harassed by their anger & words.

But you, brahman,

what do you fear
that you're always going down to the water
with shivering limbs, feeling great cold?

The Brahman:

Puṇṇikā, surely you know.
You're asking one doing skillful kamma
& warding off evil.
Whoever, young or old, does evil kamma
is, through water ablution,
from evil kamma set free.

Puṇṇikā:

Who taught you this
—the ignorant to the ignorant—
'One, through water ablution,
is from evil kamma set free?'
In that case, they'd all go to heaven:
all the frogs, turtles,
serpents, crocodiles,
& anything else that lives in the water.
Sheep-butchers, pork-butchers,
fishermen, trappers,
thieves, executioners,
& any other evil doers,
would, through water ablution,
be from evil kamma set free.
If these rivers could carry off
the evil kamma you've done in the past,
they'd carry off your merit as well,
and then you'd be
completely left out. — *Thig 12*

§ 4.7 Then the brahman student Assalāyana went with a large group of brahmans to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: “Master Gotama, the brahmans say, ‘Brahmans are the superior caste; any other caste is inferior. Only brahmans are the fair caste; any other caste is dark. Only brahmans are pure, not non-brahmans. Only brahmans are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’ What does Master Gotama have to say with regard to that?”

“But, Assalāyana, the brahmans’ brahman-women are plainly seen having their periods, becoming pregnant, giving birth, and nursing (their children). And yet the brahmans, being born through the birth canal, say, ‘Brahmans are the superior caste; any other caste is inferior. Only brahmans are the fair caste; any other caste is dark. Only brahmans are pure, not non-brahmans. Only brahmans are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’”

“Even though Master Gotama says that, still the brahmans think, ‘Brahmans are the superior caste... the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.’” ...

“What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it only a brahman who is capable of taking a loofah & bath powder, going to a river, and scrubbing off dust & dirt, and not a noble warrior, not a merchant, not a worker?”

“No, Master Gotama. Even a noble warrior.... Even a brahman.... Even a merchant.... Even a worker.... (Members of) all four castes are capable of taking a loofah & bath powder, going to a river, and scrubbing off dust & dirt.”

“So what strength is there, Assalāyana, what assurance, when the brahmans say, ‘Brahmans are the superior caste... Only brahmans are pure, not non-brahmans. Only brahmans are the sons & offspring of Brahmā: born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā’?”

— [MN 93](#)

§ 4.8 Then Puṇṇa Koliyaputta, an ox-practice ascetic, and Seniya, a naked dog-practice ascetic, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, Puṇṇa Koliyaputta the ox-practice ascetic bowed down to the Blessed One and sat to one side, whereas Seniya, the naked dog-practice ascetic, exchanged courteous

greetings with the Blessed One and, after an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, sat down to one side, hunched up like a dog.

As they were sitting there, Puṇṇa Koliyaputta the ox-practice ascetic said to the Blessed One, “This Seniya, a naked dog-practice ascetic, does what is hard to do. He eats food thrown on the ground. He has for a long time undertaken and perfectly conformed to that dog-practice. What is his destination? What his future course?”

“Enough, Puṇṇa. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.”

A second time... A third time Puṇṇa Koliyaputta the ox-practice ascetic said to the Blessed One, “This Seniya, a naked dog-practice ascetic, does what is hard to do. He eats food thrown on the ground. He has undertaken and perfectly conformed to that dog-practice. What is his destination? What his future course?”

“Apparently, Puṇṇa, I don’t get leave from you [to avoid the matter by saying], ‘Enough, Puṇṇa. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.’ So I will simply answer you. There is the case where a certain person develops the dog-practice fully and without lapse, develops the dog-habit fully and without lapse, develops the dog-mind fully and without lapse, develops dog-behavior fully and without lapse. Having developed the dog-practice fully and without lapse, the dog-habit fully and without lapse, the dog-mind fully and without lapse, dog-behavior fully and without lapse, he—with the breakup of the body, after death—reappears in the company of dogs.

”But if he is of a view such as this: ‘By this habit or practice or asceticism or holy life I will become one deva or another,’ that is his wrong view. For a person of wrong view, Puṇṇa, there is one of two destinations, I tell you: hell or the animal womb. Thus when succeeding, Puṇṇa, the dog-practice leads to the animal womb; when failing, to hell.”

When this was said, Seniya, the naked dog-practice ascetic, sobbed & burst into tears. So the Blessed One said to Puṇṇa Koliyaputta, the ox-practice ascetic, “That was what I didn’t get leave from you, Puṇṇa [to avoid the matter by saying], ‘Enough, Puṇṇa. Put that aside. Don’t ask me that.’”

“I’m not crying, venerable sir, because of what the Blessed One said to me, but simply because I have for a long time undertaken and perfectly conformed to this dog-practice.” —MN 57

§ 4.9 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Park. Then in the early morning, having adjusted his under robe and carrying his bowl & outer robe, he went into Kapilavatthu for alms. Having gone for alms in Kapilavatthu, after the meal, returning from his alms round, he went to the Great Wood for the day's abiding. Plunging into the Great Wood, he sat down at the root of a young clump of bamboo for the day's abiding.

Daṇḍapānin ["Stick-in-hand"] the Sakyan, out roaming & rambling for exercise, also went to the Great Wood. Plunging into the Great Wood, he went to the Blessed One under the young clump of bamboo. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he stood to one side. As he was standing there, he said to the Blessed One, "What is the contemplative's doctrine? What does he proclaim?"

"The sort of doctrine, friend, where one does not keep quarreling with anyone in the cosmos with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk; the sort (of doctrine) where perceptions no longer obsess the brahman who remains dissociated from sensuality, free from perplexity, his uncertainty cut away, devoid of craving for becoming & non-. Such is my doctrine; such is what I proclaim."

When this was said, Daṇḍapānin the Sakyan—shaking his head, wagging his tongue, raising his eyebrows so that his forehead was wrinkled in three furrows—left, leaning on his stick." — [MN 18](#)

§ 4.10 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha on Vulture's Peak Mountain, in the Boar's Cave. Then LongNails the wanderer went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he stood to one side. As he was standing there, he said to the Blessed One, "Master Gotama, I am of the view, of the opinion, that 'All is not pleasing to me.'"

"But this view of yours, Aggivessana—'All is not pleasing to me'—is even that not pleasing to you?" — [MN 74](#)

§ 4.11 [King Ajātasattu, speaking to the Buddha:] "Another time I went to Sañjaya Velaṭṭhaputta and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with

him. After an exchange of friendly greetings and courtesies, I sat to one side. As I was sitting there I asked him: ‘Venerable Sañjaya, there are these common craftsmen elephant-trainers, horse-trainers, charioteers, archers, standard bearers, camp marshals, supply corps officers, high royal officers, commandos, military heroes, armor-clad warriors, leather-clad warriors, domestic slaves, confectioners, barbers, bath attendants, cooks, garland-makers, laundrymen, weavers, basket-makers, potters, calculators, accountants, and any other craftsmen of a similar sort. They live off the fruits of their crafts, visible in the here & now. They give happiness & pleasure to themselves, to their parents, wives, & children, to their friends & colleagues. They put in place an excellent presentation of offerings to contemplatives & brahmans, leading to heaven, resulting in happiness, conducive to a heavenly rebirth. Is it possible, venerable sir, to point out a similar fruit of the contemplative life, visible in the here & now?’

“When this was said, Sañjaya Velaṭṭhaputta said to me, ‘If you ask me if there exists another world (after death), if I thought that there exists another world, would I declare that to you? I don’t think so. I don’t think in that way. I don’t think otherwise. I don’t think not. I don’t think not not. If you asked me if there isn’t another world... both is and isn’t... neither is nor isn’t... if there are beings who transmigrate... if there aren’t... both are and aren’t... neither are nor aren’t... if the Tathāgata exists after death... doesn’t... both... neither exists nor exists after death, would I declare that to you? I don’t think so. I don’t think in that way. I don’t think otherwise. I don’t think not. I don’t think not not.’

“Thus, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, Sañjaya Velaṭṭhaputta answered with evasion. Just as if a person, when asked about a mango, were to answer with a breadfruit; or, when asked about a breadfruit, were to answer with a mango; in the same way, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, Sañjaya Velaṭṭhaputta answered with evasion. The thought occurred to me: ‘This—among these contemplatives & brahmans—is the most foolish and confused of all. How can he, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here & now, answer with evasion?’ Still the thought occurred to me: ‘How can anyone like me think of disparaging a contemplative or brahman living in his realm?’ Yet I neither delighted in Sañjaya Velaṭṭhaputta’s words nor did I protest against them. Neither delighting nor protesting, I was dissatisfied.

Without expressing dissatisfaction, without accepting his teaching, without adopting it, I got up from my seat and left.” — [DN2](#)

§ 4.12 [Prince Pāyāsi:] “There is the case, Master Kassapa, where I have friends, colleagues, & relatives who take life, take what is not given, engage in illicit sex, tell lies, speak divisively, speak harshly, engage in idle chatter, are excessively greedy, malevolent, and hold to wrong views. Then, at a later time, they become sick & in pain, severely ill. When I know, ‘They will not recover from this sickness,’ I go to them and say, ‘There are some contemplatives & brahmans who teach this doctrine, who hold to this view: “Those who take life, take what is not given, engage in illicit sex, tell lies, speak divisively, speak harshly, engage in idle chatter, are excessively greedy, malevolent, and hold to wrong views—at the break-up of the body, after death, will appear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell.” You, my good men, take life... hold to wrong views. If what those good contemplatives & brahmans say is true, then you—at the break-up of the body, after death—will appear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. So if, at the break-up of the body, after death, you appear in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell, having come from there, inform me: “There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions.” You, my good men, are trustworthy & responsible. Whatever you have seen will be just as if I have seen it myself.’

“But they, having responded, ‘As you say,’ neither come to inform me nor do they send a messenger.

“This is the reason, Master Kassapa, for which I believe, ‘There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.’”

[Ven. Kumāra Kassapa:] “Very well, prince, in that case, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit.

“What do you think, prince? Suppose that your men—having caught a thief, a wrong-doer—present him to you, (saying,) ‘Here is a thief, a wrong-doer for you, venerable sir. Decree for him whatever punishment you wish.’ And you might say to them, ‘Very well then, my good men, having bound him with a stout rope with his arms pinned tightly against his back, and having shaved him bald, march him to a harsh-sounding drum from street to street,

crossroads to crossroads, evict him out the south gate of the city and there, to the south of the city, in the execution ground, cut off his head.’

“They—responding, ‘Very good,’ to you—having bound that man with a stout rope... would evict him out the south gate of the city and there, to the south of the city, would sit him down in the execution ground. Now, would that thief get leave from the executioners by saying, ‘Wait, my good executioners, until I return from visiting my friends, colleagues, & relatives in that village or town over there’? Or would the executioners cut off his head right while it was babbling?”

“Master Kassapa, he wouldn’t get leave from the executioners... They would cut off his head right while it was babbling.”

“So Prince, when even a human thief can’t get leave from human executioners, ‘Wait, my good executioners, until I return from visiting my friends, colleagues, & relatives in that village or town over there,’ how would your friends, colleagues, & relatives who take life... and hold to wrong views, on the break-up of the body, after death, having appeared in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell, get leave from the hell-wardens by saying, ‘Wait, my good hell-wardens, while we go inform Prince Pāyāsi: “There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions”’?”

“It’s from this line of reasoning, prince, that you can believe, ‘There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions.’”

“Even though you say that, Master Kassapa, I still believe, ‘There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.’

“Do you have a line of reasoning for believing that...?”

“Yes...”

“How so?”

“There is the case, Master Kassapa, where I have friends, colleagues, & relatives who refrain from taking life, from taking what is not given, from engaging in illicit sex, from telling lies, from speaking divisively, from speaking harshly, from engaging in idle chatter, who are not excessively greedy, not malevolent, and hold to right views. Then, at a later time, they become sick & in pain, severely ill. When I know, ‘They will not recover from

this sickness,' I go to them and say, 'There are some contemplatives & brahmans who teach this doctrine, who hold to this view: "Those who refrain from taking life... and who hold to right views—at the break-up of the body, after death, will appear in a good destination, a heavenly world." You, my good men, refrain from taking life... and who hold to right views. If what those good contemplatives & brahmans say is true, then you—at the break-up of the body, after death—will appear in a good destination, a heavenly world. So if, at the break-up of the body, after death, you appear in a good destination, a heavenly world, having come from there, inform me: "There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions." You, my good men, are trustworthy & responsible. Whatever you have seen will be just as if I have seen it myself.'

"But they, having responded, 'As you say,' neither come to inform me nor do they send a messenger.

"This is the reason, Master Kassapa, for which I believe, "There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions."

"Very well, prince, in that case I will give you an analogy, for it is by means of analogies that some observant men understand the meaning of what is being said.

"Suppose a man had fallen head and all into a cesspool, and you were to command your men, 'Very well then, my good men, pull that man out of the cesspool.'

"They—responding, 'Very good,' to you—would pull that man out of the cesspool. Then you would tell them, 'Very well, then, scrape the excrement thoroughly off that man's body with bamboo scrapers' ... 'scrub his body well three times with yellow loam' ... 'having anointed him with oil, give him a good bath three times with fine soap powder' ... 'trim his hair & beard' ... 'offer him expensive garlands, expensive ointments, & expensive clothes.' They would offer the man expensive garlands, expensive ointments, & expensive clothes. Then you would tell them, 'Very well then, having led him up to the palace, provide him with the five strings of sensuality.' They, having led the man up to the palace, would provide him with the five strings of sensuality.

"Now, what do you think, prince? Would that man—well-bathed, well-anointed, his hair & beard trimmed, ornamented with garlands & ornaments, dressed in white clothes, having been led up to the excellence of

the upper palace, enjoying himself well-supplied & replete with the five strings of sensuality—want to be submerged again in that cesspool?”

“No, Master Kassapa. Why is that? Because the cesspool is filthy—not only filthy, but also reckoned as filthy, foul-smelling & reckoned as foul-smelling, disgusting & reckoned as disgusting, loathsome & reckoned as loathsome.”

“In the same way, prince, human beings are, for devas, filthy & reckoned as filthy, foul-smelling & reckoned as foul-smelling, disgusting & reckoned as disgusting, loathsome & reckoned as loathsome. For devas, the smell of human beings wafts up 100 leagues. So how would your friends who refrain from taking life... and who hold right views, at the break-up of the body, after death, appearing in a good destination, a heavenly world, come back & inform you, ‘There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions’?

“It’s from this line of reasoning, prince, that you can believe, ‘There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions.’”

“Even though you say that, Master Kassapa, I still believe, ‘There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.’

“Do you have a line of reasoning for believing that...?”

“Yes...”

“How so?”

“There is the case, Master Kassapa, where I have friends, colleagues, & relatives who refrain from taking life... and hold to right views. Then, at a later time, they become sick & in pain, severely ill. When I know, ‘They will not recover from this sickness,’ I go to them and say, ‘There are some contemplatives & brahmans who teach this doctrine, who hold to this view: “Those who refrain from taking life... and who hold to right views—at the break-up of the body, after death, will appear in a good destination, a heavenly world, in the company of the devas of the Thirty-three.” You, my good men, refrain from taking life... and who hold to right views. If what those good contemplatives & brahmans say is true, then you—at the break-up of the body, after death—will appear in a good destination, a heavenly world, in the company of the devas of the Thirty-three. So if, at the break-up of the body, after death, you appear in a good destination, a heavenly world, as

companions of the devas of the Thirty-three, having come from there, inform me: “There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions.” You, my good men, are trustworthy & responsible. Whatever you have seen will be just as if I have seen it myself.’

“But they, having responded, ‘As you say,’ neither come to inform me nor do they send a messenger.

“This is the reason, Master Kassapa, for which I believe, “There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.”

“Very well, prince, in that case, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit.

“One human century, prince, is a single day & night for the devas of the Thirty-three. Thirty of those days are a month. Twelve of those months are a year. And 1,000 of those divine years is the average life-span of the devas of the Thirty-three. Suppose that your friends, colleagues, & relatives... having appeared in a good destination, a heavenly world, as companions of the devas of the Thirty-three, were to think, ‘Let’s enjoy ourselves, well-supplied & replete with the five divine strings of sensuality for two or three days, and then we’ll go inform Prince Pāyāsi, “There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions.” Would they come to inform you, “There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions’?”

“No, Master Kassapa. We would have been long-since dead.” ...

“It’s from this line of reasoning, prince, that you can believe, “There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions.”

“Even though you say that, Master Kassapa, I still believe, “There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.’

“Do you have a line of reasoning for believing that...?”

“Yes...”

“How so?”

“There is the case, Master Kassapa, where my men—having caught a thief, a wrong-doer—present him to me, (saying,) ‘Here is a thief, a wrong-doer for

you, venerable sir. Decree for him whatever punishment you wish.’ And I say, ‘Very well then, my good men, having placed this man while still alive in a clay jar, having sealed the mouth, having covered it with a damp skin, having plastered it with a thick layer of damp clay, having set it in a furnace, light the fire.’

“They—responding, ‘Very good,’ to me—having placed the man while still alive in a clay jar, having sealed the mouth, having covered it with a damp skin, having plastered it with a thick layer of damp clay, having set it in a furnace, light the fire. When we know, ‘The man has died,’ then—removing the jar, breaking through the seal, opening the mouth—we look carefully, (thinking,) ‘Maybe we’ll see his soul escaping.’ But we don’t see his soul escaping...”

“There is the case, Master Kassapa, where my men—having caught a thief, a wrong-doer—present him to me, (saying,) ‘Here is a thief, a wrong-doer for you, venerable sir. Decree for him whatever punishment you wish.’ And I say, ‘Very well then, my good men, having weighed this man with a scale while still alive, having strangled him to death with a bowstring, weigh him with the scale again.’

“They—responding, ‘Very good,’ to me—having weighed the man with a scale while still alive, having strangled him to death with a bowstring, weigh him with the scale again. When he is alive, he is lighter, more flexible, and more malleable. But when he has died, he is heavier, stiffer, and less malleable.

“This is the reason, Master Kassapa, for which I believe, “There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.” ...

“There is the case, Master Kassapa, where my men—having caught a thief, a wrong-doer—present him to me, (saying,) ‘Here is a thief, a wrong-doer for you, venerable sir. Decree for him whatever punishment you wish.’ And I say, ‘Very well then, my good men, take this man’s life without damaging his outer skin, inner skin, flesh, tendons, bones, & bone marrow, and maybe we’ll see his soul escaping.’

“They—responding, ‘Very good,’ to me—take his life without damaging his outer skin, inner skin, flesh, tendons, bones, & bone marrow. When he is half-dead, I say to them, ‘Very well, then, my good men, lay this man on his back, and maybe we’ll see his soul escaping.’ They lay the man on his back, but

we don't see his soul escaping. 'In that case, lay him face down, and maybe we'll see his soul escaping.' They lay him face down, but we don't see his soul escaping. 'Turn him on one side... turn him on the other side... Stand him up... Stand him upside down... Hit him with your hand... Hit him with a stone... Hit him with a stick... Hit him with a knife... Shake him down, shake him from side to side, shake him up, and maybe we'll see his soul escaping.' They shake him down, shake him from side to side, shake him up, but we don't see his soul escaping.' And even though he still has eyes, and there are forms, he is not sensitive to that medium; he still has ears, and there are sounds, he is not sensitive to that medium; he has a nose... a tongue... a body, and there are tactile objects, but he is not sensitive to that medium.

"This is the line of reasoning, Master Kassapa, why I believe, 'There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.'"

"Very well, prince, in that case I will give you an analogy, for it is by means of analogies that some observant men understand the meaning of what is being said.

"Once, prince, a conch-trumpeter, carrying his conch-trumpet, went to an outlying district. He went to a certain village and, on arrival, stood in the middle of the village, blew his conch-trumpet three times and, placing it on the ground, sat to one side. The thought occurred to the people in the outlying district, 'Of what is that the sound—so delightful, so pleasing, so bewitching, so captivating, so compelling?' Gathering around the conch-trumpeter, they asked him, 'Of what is that the sound—so delightful, so pleasing, so bewitching, so captivating, so compelling?'

"That is called a conch-trumpet, whose sound is so delightful, so pleasing, so bewitching, so captivating, so compelling.'

"They lay the conch-trumpet on its back (and said), 'Speak, good conch-trumpet! Speak, good conch-trumpet!' but the conch-trumpet didn't make a sound.

"They turned the conch-trumpet face down... turned it on one side... turned it on the other side... stood it up... stood it upside down... hit it with a hand... hit it with a stone... hit it with a stick... hit it with a knife... shook it down, shook it from side to side, shook it up, (and said,) 'Speak, good conch-trumpet! Speak, good conch-trumpet!' but the conch-trumpet didn't make a sound.

“Then the thought occurred to the conch-trumpeter, ‘What fools these people in the outlying district are, in that they would search for the sound of a conch-trumpet in such an inappropriate way!’ As they looked on, he picked up the conch-trumpet, blew on it three times, and then, carrying it with him, left.

“Then the thought occurred to the people of the outlying district, ‘So it seems that this thing called a conch-trumpet, when accompanied by a man, accompanied by effort, & accompanied by wind, makes a sound. But when not accompanied by a man or by effort or by wind, the conch-trumpet doesn’t make a sound.’

“In the same way, prince, this body—when accompanied by life-force, accompanied by warmth, & accompanied by consciousness—goes and comes back, stands, sits, and lies down, sees forms with the eye, hears sounds with the ear, smells aromas with the nose, tastes flavors with the tongue, touches tactile objects with the body, and cognizes ideas with the intellect. But when it is not accompanied by life-force, not accompanied by warmth, & not accompanied by consciousness, it doesn’t go or come back, doesn’t stand, sit, or lie down, doesn’t see forms with the eye, doesn’t hear sounds with the ear, doesn’t smell aromas with the nose, doesn’t taste flavors with the tongue, doesn’t touch tactile objects with the body, and doesn’t cognize ideas with the intellect. It’s from this line of reasoning that you can believe, ‘There is another world, there are spontaneously reborn beings, there is the fruit & result of good & bad actions.’

“Even though you say that, Master Kassapa, I still believe, ‘There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.’

“Do you have a line of reasoning for believing that...?”

“Yes...”

“How so?”

“There is the case, Master Kassapa, where my men—having caught a thief, a wrong-doer—present him to me, (saying,) ‘Here is a thief, a wrong-doer for you, venerable sir. Decree for him whatever punishment you wish.’ And I say, ‘Very well then, my good men, cut open this man’s outer skin, and perhaps we’ll see his soul.’ They cut open the man’s outer skin, but we don’t see his soul. Then I say, ‘Very well then, my good men, cut open this man’s inner skin... his flesh... his tendons... his bones... his bone marrow. Perhaps we’ll see his soul.’ They cut open the man’s bone marrow, but we don’t see his soul.

“This is the line of reasoning, Master Kassapa, why I believe, ‘There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.’”

“Very well, prince, in that case I will give you an analogy, for it is by means of analogies that some observant men understand the meaning of what is being said.

“Once, prince, there was a coiled-haired fire worshiper who lived in the wilderness in a leaf hut. Then a caravan migrated away from a certain country and, having spent one night around the fire worshiper, left. The thought occurred to the coiled-haired fire worshiper, ‘What if I were to go to the caravan camp? Perhaps I might find something useful there.’ So, getting up early, the coiled-haired fire worshiper went to the caravan camp and, on arrival, saw an abandoned baby boy there, lying on its back. On seeing it, the thought occurred to him, ‘It wouldn’t be fitting for me if a human being died while I was looking on. What if I, taking this baby back to the hermitage, were to take care of him, feed him, and bring him up?’ So the coiled-haired fire worshiper, taking the baby back to the hermitage, took care of him, fed him, and brought him up.

“When the boy was ten or twelve years of age, the coiled-haired fire worshiper had some business to do in the countryside, so he said to the boy, ‘I want to go to the countryside, my son. Tend to the fire, my son. Don’t let the fire go out. If the fire should go out, this is the ax, these are the sticks, this is the fire-starter. Having started a fire, tend to the fire.’

“Then the coiled-haired fire worshiper, having instructed the boy in this way, went into the countryside. As the boy was absorbed in play, the fire went out. The thought occurred to him, ‘Father said this to me: “Tend to the fire, my son. Don’t let the fire go out. If the fire should go out, this is the ax, these are the sticks, this is the fire-starter. Having started a fire, tend to the fire.” What if I, having started a fire, were to tend to the fire?’ So he cut open the fire-starter with the ax, (thinking,) ‘Perhaps I’ll get fire.’ But he didn’t get fire. He sliced the fire-starter into two pieces... three pieces... four pieces... five pieces... ten pieces... twenty pieces... he made it into shavings. Having made it into shavings, he pounded them in a mortar. Having pounded them in a mortar, he winnowed them before a high wind, (thinking,) ‘Perhaps I’ll get fire.’ But he didn’t get fire.

“Then the coiled-haired fire worshiper, having finished his business in the countryside, went to the hermitage and, on arrival, said to the boy, ‘My son, you let the fire go out?’ [And the boy told him what had happened.]

“Then the thought occurred to the coiled-hair fire worshiper, ‘What a fool, this boy! How inexperienced, in that he would search for fire in such an inappropriate way!’ So, while the boy looked on, he got (another) fire-starter, started a fire, and said to the boy, ‘This, my son, is how a fire is to be started, not the foolish, inexperienced, inappropriate way you looked for fire.’

“In the same way, prince, you are looking for the next world in a foolish, inexperienced, inappropriate way. Relinquish your evil viewpoint, prince! Relinquish your evil viewpoint, prince! Don’t let it lead to your long-term harm & suffering!”

“Even though you say this, Master Kassapa, I can’t relinquish this evil viewpoint. King Pasenadi of Kosala knows of me, as do kings further away, that ‘Prince Pāyāsi holds to this doctrine, holds to this view: “There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.”’ If I relinquish this evil viewpoint, they will say this of me, ‘What a fool is Prince Pāyāsi, how inexperienced, in that he held to what was bad to hold.’ I will stick with it out of anger. I will stick with it out of contempt. I will stick with it out of spite.” ...

“Very well, prince, in that case I will give you an analogy, for it is by means of analogies that some observant men understand the meaning of what is being said.

“Once, prince, a certain swineherd went from his village to another village. There he saw a heap of discarded dried dung. On seeing it, the thought occurred to him, ‘This heap of discarded dried dung would be food for my pigs. What if I were to take this dried dung from here?’ So, having spread out his upper robe, having heaped the dried dung on it, having tied it into a bundle, having lifted it onto his head, he went back. While he was going along the road, a great out-of-season shower fell. So he went along all smeared, carrying his burden of dung, oozing & dripping with dung, even to the tips of his nails.

“People seeing him said, ‘Are you crazy? Are you mad? How can you, all smeared, carry a burden of dung, oozing & dripping with dung, even to the tips of your nails?’

“You’re the ones who are crazy! You’re the ones who are mad! This is food for my pigs!”

“In the same way, prince, you speak, as it were, like the dung-carrier. Relinquish your evil viewpoint, prince! Relinquish your evil viewpoint, prince! Don’t let it lead to your long-term harm & suffering!”

“Even though you say this, Master Kassapa, I can’t relinquish this evil viewpoint. King Pasenadi of Kosala knows of me, as do kings further away, that ‘Prince Pāyāsi holds to this doctrine, holds to this view: “There is no other world, there are no spontaneously reborn beings, there is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.” If I relinquish this evil viewpoint, they will say this of me, ‘What a fool is Prince Pāyāsi, how inexperienced, in that he held to what was bad to hold.’ I will stick with it out of anger. I will stick with it out of contempt. I will stick with it out of spite.” ...

“Very well, prince, in that case I will give you an analogy, for it is by means of analogies that some observant men understand the meaning of what is being said.

“Once, prince, the inhabitants of a certain countryside migrated away. Then one friend said to his friend, ‘Come, friend, let’s go to that countryside. Perhaps we’ll gain some wealth.’

“‘As you say, friend,’ the other friend responded to him.

“So they went to the countryside, to a certain village, and there they saw a heap of discarded hemp. On seeing it, one friend said to the other, ‘Here is a heap of discarded hemp. So then: You tie up a bundle of hemp, and I’ll tie up a bundle of hemp, and then each of us, carrying a bundle of hemp, will go along.’

“Responding, ‘As you say, friend,’ the other friend tied up a bundle of hemp.

“Then, each of them carrying a bundle of hemp, they arrived at another village. There they saw a heap of discarded hemp thread. On seeing it, the first friend said to the other friend, ‘This heap of discarded hemp thread is what we wanted the hemp for. So then: You throw away your bundle of hemp, and I’ll throw away my bundle of hemp, and each of us, carrying a bundle of hemp thread, will go along.’

“‘This bundle of hemp has been brought with difficulty and is well tied up. It’s enough for me. You do as you think best.’

“So the first friend, throwing away his bundle of hemp, took a bundle of hemp thread. Then they arrived at another village, and there they saw a heap of discarded hemp cloth. On seeing it, the first friend said to the other friend, ‘This heap of discarded hemp cloth is what we wanted the hemp & hemp thread for. So then: You throw away your bundle of hemp, and I’ll throw away my bundle of hemp thread, and each of us, carrying a bundle of hemp cloth, will go along.’

“‘This bundle of hemp has been brought with difficulty and is well tied up. It’s enough for me. You do as you think best.’

“So the first friend, throwing away his bundle of hemp thread, took a bundle of hemp cloth. Then they arrived at another village, and there they saw a heap of discarded wool... wool thread... wool cloth... cotton... cotton thread... cotton cloth... iron... copper... tin... lead... silver... gold. On seeing it, the first friend said to the other friend, ‘This heap of discarded gold is what we wanted the hemp & hemp thread & hemp cloth & wool & wool thread & wool cloth & cotton & cotton thread & cotton cloth & iron & copper & tin & lead & silver for. So then: You throw away your bundle of hemp, and I’ll throw away my bundle of silver, and each of us, carrying a bundle of gold, will go along.’

“‘This bundle of hemp has been brought with difficulty and is well tied up. It’s enough for me. You do as you think best.’

“So the first friend, throwing away his bundle of silver, took a bundle of gold.

“They returned to their own village. There the friend who came carrying the bundle of hemp gave no delight to his mother & father, to his wife & children, to his friends & colleagues, nor did he gain any joy or happiness from it himself. But as for the friend who came carrying the bundle of gold, he gave delight to his mother & father, to his wife & children, to his friends & colleagues, and he gained joy & happiness from it himself.

“In the same way, prince, you speak, as it were, like the hemp-carrier. Relinquish your evil viewpoint, prince! Relinquish your evil viewpoint, prince! Don’t let it lead to your long-term harm & suffering!”

“Actually, I was gratified and won over by Master Kassapa’s very first analogy. It’s just that, wanting to hear the artfulness of his responses to questions, I thought I should treat him as an opponent.

“Magnificent, Master Kassapa! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to set out a lamp in the darkness so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Kassapa—through many lines of reasoning—made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Saṅgha of monks. May Master Kassapa remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge, from this day forward, for life.”

— DN 23

§ 4.13 Now on that occasion, 500 Licchavis had gathered at a meeting hall on some business or other. So Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son went to those Licchavis and, on arrival, said to them, “Come out, good Licchavis! Come out, good Licchavis! Today will be my discussion with Gotama the contemplative! If he takes the position with me that was taken with me by his famous disciple, the monk named Assaji, then just as a strong man, seizing a long-haired ram by the hair, would drag him to and drag him fro and drag him all around, in the same way I, statement by statement, will drag Gotama the contemplative to and drag him fro and drag him all around. Just as a strong distillery worker, throwing a large distiller’s strainer into a deep water tank and grabbing it by the corners, would drag it to and drag it fro and drag it all around, in the same way I, statement by statement, will drag Gotama the contemplative to and drag him fro and drag him all around. Just as a strong distillery ruffian, grabbing a horse-hair strainer by the corners, would shake it down and shake it out and thump it, in the same way I, statement by statement, will shake Gotama the contemplative down and shake him out and thump him. Just as a sixty-year old elephant, plunging into a deep pond, would amuse itself playing the game of hemp-washing, in the same way I will amuse myself playing the game of hemp-washing Gotama the contemplative, as it were. Come on out, good Licchavis! Come on out, good Licchavis! Today will be my discussion with Gotama the contemplative!”

Then some of the Licchavis said, “Who is Gotama the contemplative that he will refute the statement of Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son? It’s Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son who will refute the statement of Gotama the contemplative.” Some of the Licchavis said, “Who is Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son that he will refute the statement of Gotama the contemplative? It’s Gotama the contemplative who will refute the statement of Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son.”

So Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son, surrounded by 500 Licchavis, went to the Gabled Hall in the Great Forest.

Now on that occasion a large number of monks were doing walking meditation in the open air. So Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son went up to the monks and said, “Where, masters, is Master Gotama now? We want to see Master Gotama.”

“The Blessed One, Aggivessana, having plunged into the Great Forest, is sitting under a certain tree for the day’s abiding.”

Then Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son together with a large group of Licchavis plunged into the Great Forest and went to the Blessed One. On arrival, he exchanged courteous greetings with the Blessed One. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. Some of the Licchavis, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. Some of the Licchavis exchanged courteous greetings with the Blessed One and, after an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, sat to one side. Some of the Licchavis, having raised their hands palm-to-palm in front of the chest, sat to one side. Some of the Licchavis, after announcing their name and clan, sat to one side. Some of the Licchavis, staying silent, sat to one side.

As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “I would like to question Master Gotama on a certain point, if Master Gotama would grant me the favor of an answer to the question.”

“Ask, Aggivessana, as you see fit.”

“How does Master Gotama discipline his disciples? Or what part of his instruction is generally presented to his disciples?”

“Aggivessana, I discipline my disciples in this way; this part of my instruction is generally presented to my disciples: ‘Form is inconstant. Feeling is inconstant. Perception is inconstant. Fabrications are inconstant. Consciousness is inconstant. Form is not-self. Feeling is not-self. Perception is not-self. Fabrications are not-self. Consciousness is not-self. All fabrications are inconstant. All phenomena are not-self.’ This, Aggivessana, is the way in which I discipline my disciples; this part of my instruction is generally presented to my disciples.”

“A simile occurs to me, Master Gotama.”

“Let it occur to you, Aggivessana.”

“Just as any seeds that exhibit growth, increase, & proliferation, all do so in dependence on the earth; or just as any activities requiring strength that are done, all are done in dependence on the earth; in the same way, Master Gotama, an individual with form as self, taking a stance on form, produces merit or demerit. An individual with feeling as self... with perception as self... with fabrications as self... with consciousness as self, taking a stance on consciousness, produces merit or demerit.”

“Then, Aggivessana, are you saying, ‘Form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, fabrications are my self, consciousness is my self?’”

“Yes, Master Gotama, I’m saying that ‘Form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, fabrications are my self, consciousness is my self.’ As does this great multitude.”

“What does this great multitude have to do with you? Please focus just on your own assertion.”

“Yes, Master Gotama, I’m saying that ‘Form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, fabrications are my self, consciousness is my self.’”

“Very well then, Aggivessana, I will cross-question you on this matter. Answer as you see fit. What do you think? Would a consecrated, noble-warrior king—such as King Pasenadi of Kosala or King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha—wield the power in his own domain to execute those who deserve execution, to fine those who deserve to be fined, and to banish those who deserve to be banished?”

“Yes, Master Gotama, he would wield the power in his own domain to execute those who deserve execution, to fine those who deserve to be fined, and to banish those who deserve to be banished. Even these oligarchic groups, such as the Vajjians & Mallans, wield the power in their own domains to execute those who deserve execution, to fine those who deserve to be fined, and to banish those who deserve to be banished, to say nothing of a consecrated, noble-warrior king such as King Pasenadi of Kosala, or King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha. He would wield it, and he would deserve to wield it.”

“What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, ‘Form is my self,’ do you wield power over that form: ‘May my form be thus, may my form not be thus?’”

When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son was silent.

A second time, the Blessed One said to Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son: “What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, ‘Form is my self,’ do you wield power over that form: ‘May my form be thus, may my form not be thus?’”

When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son was silent a second time.

Then the Blessed One said to him, “Answer now, Aggivessana. This is not the time to be silent. When anyone doesn’t answer when asked a legitimate question by the Tathāgata up to three times, his head splits into seven pieces right here.”

Now on that occasion the spirit [*yakkha*] Vajirapāṇin [Thunderbolt-in-Hand], carrying an iron thunderbolt, was poised in the air above Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son, (thinking,) “If Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son doesn’t answer when asked a legitimate question by the Blessed One up to three times, I will split his head into seven pieces right here.”

The Blessed One saw the spirit Vajirapāṇin, as did Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son. So Saccaka—afraid, terrified, his hair standing on end—seeking shelter in the Blessed One, seeking a cave/asylum in the Blessed One, seeking refuge in the Blessed One—said to the Blessed One, “Let Master Gotama ask me. I will answer.”

“What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, ‘Form is my self,’ do you wield power over that form: ‘May my form be thus, may my form not be thus?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“Pay attention, Aggivessana, and answer (only) after having paid attention! What you said after isn’t consistent with what you said before, nor is what you said before consistent with what you said after.

“What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, ‘Feeling is my self... Perception is my self... Fabrications are my self... Consciousness is my self,’ do you wield power over that consciousness: ‘May my consciousness be thus, may my consciousness not be thus?’”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“Pay attention, Aggivessana, and answer (only) after having paid attention! What you said after isn’t consistent with what you said before, nor is what you said before consistent with what you said after.

“What do you think, Aggivessana? Is form constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, Master Gotama.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“...Is feeling constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.”...

“...Is perception constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.”...

“...Are fabrications constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.”...

“What do you think, Aggivessana? Is consciousness constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, Master Gotama.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, Master Gotama.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, Master Gotama.”

“What do you think, Aggivessana? When one adheres to stress, holds to stress, is attached to stress, and envisions of stress that ‘This is mine; this is my self; this is what I am,’ would he comprehend stress or dwell having totally destroyed stress?”

“How could that be, Master Gotama? No, Master Gotama.”

“That being the case, Aggivessana, don’t you adhere to stress, hold to stress, aren’t you attached to stress, and don’t you envision of stress that ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“How could that not be the case, Master Gotama? Yes, Master Gotama.”

“Suppose a man—in need of heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood—were to enter a forest taking a sharp ax. There he would see a large plantain trunk: straight, young, immature. He would cut it at the root and, having cut it at the root, cut off the crown. Having cut off the crown, he would unfurl the leaf sheaths. Unfurling the leaf sheaths, he

wouldn't even find sapwood there, to say nothing of heartwood. In the same way, Aggivessana, when you are interrogated, rebuked, & pressed by me with regard to your own statement, you are empty, void, mistaken. But it was you who made this statement before the assembly in Vesālī: 'I see no contemplative or brahman, the head of an order, the head of a group, or even one who claims to be an arahant, rightly self-awakened, who—engaged in debate with me—would not shiver, quiver, shake, & break out in sweat under the armpits. Even if I were to engage a senseless stump in debate, it—engaged with me in debate—would shiver, quiver, & shake, to say nothing of a human being.' But now some drops of sweat coming out of your forehead, drenching your upper robe, are landing on the ground, whereas now I have no sweat on my body." And the Blessed One uncovered his golden-colored body to the assembly.

When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son fell silent, abashed, sitting with his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words.

Then Dummukha [BadMouth] the Licchavi-son—sensing that Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son was silent, abashed, sitting with his shoulders drooping, his head down, brooding, at a loss for words—said to the Blessed One, "Venerable sir, a simile has occurred to me."

"Let it occur to you, Dummukha," the Blessed One said.

"Suppose, venerable sir, that not far from a village or town was a pond. There in it was a crab. Then a number of boys & girls, leaving the village or town, would go to the pond and, on arrival, would go down to bathe in it. Taking the crab out of the water, they would place it on the ground. And whenever the crab extended a leg, the boys or girls would cut it off, break it, and smash it with sticks or stones right there, so that the crab—with all its legs cut off, broken, & smashed—would be unable to get back in the water as before. In the same way, whatever Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son's writhings, capers, & contortions, the Blessed One has cut them off, broken them, and smashed them all, so that Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son is now unable to approach the Blessed One again for the purpose of debate."

When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha-son said to Dummukha the Licchavi-son, "Just you wait, Dummukha. Just you wait, Dummukha. You're a big-mouth, Dummukha. We're not taking counsel with you. We're here taking counsel with Master Gotama." [Then, turning to the Buddha,] "Let that

be, Master Gotama, our words & those of other ordinary contemplatives & brahmans—prattled prattling, as it were.” — [MN 35](#)

§ 4.14 On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Nālandā in the Pāvārika Mango Grove. Then Asibandhakaputta the headman, a disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas, went to the Blessed One and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there the Blessed One said to him: “Headman, how does Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teach the Dhamma to his disciples?”

“Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teaches the Dhamma to his disciples in this way, venerable sir: ‘All those who take life are destined for a plane of deprivation, are destined for hell. All those who steal... All those who indulge in illicit sex... All those who tell lies are destined for a plane of deprivation, are destined for hell. Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led (to a state of rebirth).’ That’s how Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta teaches the Dhamma to his disciples.”

“If it’s true that ‘Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led (to a state of rebirth),’ then no one is destined for a plane of deprivation or destined to hell in line with Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta’s words. What do you think, headman? If a man is one who takes life, then taking into consideration time spent doing & not doing, whether by day or by night, which time is more: the time he spends taking life or the time he spends not taking life?”

“If a man is one who takes life, venerable sir, then taking into consideration time spent doing & not doing, whether by day or by night, then the time he spends taking life is less, and the time he spends not taking life is certainly more. If it’s true that ‘Whatever one keeps doing frequently, by that is one led (to a state of rebirth),’ then no one is destined for a plane of deprivation or destined to hell in line with Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta’s words.”

— [SN 42:8](#)

§ 4.15 [The Buddha:] “So I asked them further, ‘Friend Nigaṇṭhas, what do you think? When there is fierce striving, fierce exertion, do you feel fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment? And when there is no fierce striving, no fierce exertion, do you feel no fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment?’

“‘Yes, friend...’

“... Then it’s not proper for you to assert that, “Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain—all is caused by what was done in the past.” ...

“If it were the case that when there was fierce striving, fierce exertion, you felt fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment; and when there was no fierce striving, no fierce exertion, you still felt fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment, then—that being the case—it would be proper for you to assert that, “Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain—all is caused by what was done in the past....” But because when there is fierce striving, fierce exertion, you feel fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment; and when there was no fierce striving, no fierce exertion, you feel no fierce, sharp, racking pains from harsh treatment, then—that being the case—it is not proper for you to assert that, “Whatever a person experiences—pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain—all is caused by what was done in the past.” — [MN101](#)

§ 4.16 “Once, Mahānāma, when I was staying near Rājagaha on Vulture Peak Mountain, a number of Nigaṇṭhas were at Black Rock on the slopes of Isigili, practicing continuous standing: rejecting seats, experiencing fierce, sharp, racking pains due to exertion. So, emerging from my seclusion in the late afternoon, I went to the Nigaṇṭhas at Black Rock on the slopes of Isigili and on arrival asked them, ‘Why are you practicing continuous standing: rejecting seats, experiencing fierce, sharp, racking pains due to exertion?’ When this was said, the Nigaṇṭhas said to me, ‘Friend, the Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta is all-knowing, all-seeing, and claims total knowledge & vision thus: “Whether I am walking or standing, sleeping or awake, knowledge & vision are continuously & continually established in me.” He has told us, “Nigaṇṭhas, there are evil actions that you have done in the past. Exhaust them with these painful austerities. When in the present you are restrained in body, restrained in speech, and restrained in mind, that is the non-doing of evil action for the future. Thus, with the destruction of old actions through asceticism, and with the non-doing of new actions, there will be no flow into the future. With no flow into the future, there is the ending of action. With the ending of action, the ending of stress. With the ending of stress, the ending of feeling. With the ending of feeling, all suffering & stress will be exhausted.” We approve of that (teaching), prefer it, and are gratified by it.’

“When this was said, I asked them, ‘But friends, do you know that you existed in the past, and that you did not not exist?’

“No, friend.’

“And do you know that you did evil actions in the past, and that you did not not do them?’

“No, friend.’

“And do you know that you did such-and-such evil actions in the past?’

“No, friend.’

“And do you know that so-and-so much stress has been exhausted, or that so-and-so much stress remains to be exhausted, or that with the exhaustion of so-and-so much stress all stress will be exhausted?’

“No, friend.’

“But do you know what is the abandoning of unskillful qualities and the attainment of skillful qualities in the here-&-now?’

“No, friend.’

“So, friends, it seems that you don’t know that you existed in the past, and that you did not not exist; you don’t know that you did evil actions in the past, and that you did not not do them; you don’t know that you did such-and-such evil actions in the past; you don’t know that so-and-so much stress has been exhausted, or that so-and-so much stress remains to be exhausted, or that with the exhaustion of so-and-so much stress all stress will be exhausted; you don’t know what is the abandoning of unskillful qualities and the attainment of skillful qualities in the here-&-now. That being the case, those in the world who are murderers, bloody-handed doers of what is cruel, when they are later reborn among human beings, go forth with the Nigaṇṭhas.’

“But, friend Gotama, it’s not the case that pleasure is to be attained through pleasure. Pleasure is to be attained through pain. For if pleasure were to be attained through pleasure, then King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha would attain pleasure, for he lives in greater pleasure than you, friend Gotama.’

“Surely the venerable Nigaṇṭhas said that rashly and without reflecting... for instead, I should be asked, “Who lives in greater pleasure: King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or Master Gotama?”

“Yes, friend Gotama, we said that rashly and without reflecting... but let that be. We now ask you, Master Gotama: Who lives in greater pleasure: King

Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or Master Gotama?’

“In that case, Nigaṇṭhas, I will question you in return. Answer as you like. What do you think? Can King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha—without moving his body, without uttering a word—dwell sensitive to unalloyed pleasure for seven days & nights?’

“No, friend.”

“... for six days & nights.... for five days & nights... for a day & a night?’

“No, friend.”

“Now, I—without moving my body, without uttering a word—can dwell sensitive to unalloyed pleasure for a day and a night... for two days & nights... for three... four... five... six... seven days & nights. So what do you think? That being the case, who dwells in greater pleasure: King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha or me?’

“That being the case, Master Gotama dwells in greater pleasure than King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha.” — [MN 14](#).

§ 4.17 “Such is the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas. And, such being the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas, ten legitimate deductions can be drawn that give grounds for censuring them.

“[1] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on what was done in the past, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have done bad things in the past, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[2] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on the creative act of a supreme god, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have been created by an evil supreme god, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[3] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on sheer luck, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have evil luck, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[4] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on birth, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have had an evil birth, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[5] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on efforts in the here-&-now, then obviously the Nigaṇṭhas have evil efforts in the here-&-now, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains.

“[6] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on what was done in the past, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“[7] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on the creative act of a supreme god, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“[8] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on sheer luck, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“[9] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on birth, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“[10] If beings experience pleasure & pain based on efforts in the here-&-now, the Nigaṇṭhas deserve censure. Even if not, they still deserve censure.

“Such is the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas, monks. And, such being the teaching of the Nigaṇṭhas, these ten legitimate deductions can be drawn that give grounds for censuring them. This is how striving is fruitless, how exertion is fruitless.” — [*MN 101*](#)

§ 4.18 Now on that occasion Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta arrived at Macchikāsaṇḍa together with a large company of Nigaṇṭhas. Citta the householder heard, “Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta, they say, has arrived at Macchikāsaṇḍa together with a large company of Nigaṇṭhas.” So together with a large number of lay followers he went to Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta said to him, “Householder, are you convinced with Gotama the contemplative’s saying, ‘There is a concentration without directed thought and evaluation; there is the cessation of directed thought & evaluation?’”

“No, venerable sir, I don’t go by conviction in the Blessed One’s saying, ‘There is a concentration without directed thought and evaluation; there is the cessation of directed thought & evaluation.’”

When this was said, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta gazed smugly at his own following and said, “See that, venerable sirs? How straightforward is this Citta the householder! How unfraudulent is this Citta the householder! How undeceitful is this Citta the householder! Whoever would imagine that directed thought & evaluation could be made to cease might imagine that the wind could be bound by a net. Whoever would imagine that directed thought

& evaluation could be made to cease might imagine that he could enclose the current of the Ganges with his fist.”

[Citta:] “What do you think, venerable sir? Which is more exquisite: knowledge or conviction?”

“Knowledge is more exquisite than conviction, householder.”

“Venerable sir, whenever I want, I—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, enter & remain in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Whenever I want, I—with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, enter & remain in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. Whenever I want, I—with the fading of rapture—remain equanimous, mindful, & alert, and sense pleasure with the body, and I enter & remain in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ Whenever I want, I—with the abandoning of pleasure & pain, as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—enter & remain in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

“Thus knowing, thus seeing, venerable sir, I don’t go by conviction in any other contemplative’s or brahman’s saying, ‘There is a concentration without directed thought and evaluation; there is the cessation of directed thought & evaluation.’

When this was said, Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta looked askance at his own following and said, “See that, venerable sirs? How unstraightforward is this Citta the householder! How fraudulent is this Citta the householder! How deceitful is this Citta the householder!”

“First, venerable sir, I learned this statement from you: ‘See that, venerable sirs? How straightforward is this Citta the householder! How unstraightforward is this Citta the householder! How undeceitful is this Citta the householder!’ But now I learn this statement: ‘See that, venerable sirs? How unstraightforward is this Citta the householder! How fraudulent is this Citta the householder! How deceitful is this Citta the householder!’ If your first statement is true, then your last statement is false. But if your last statement is true, then your first statement is false.” — SN 41:8

§ 4.19 Then Pañcakaṅga went to Uggāhamāna and, on arrival, greeted him courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat down to one side. As he was sitting there, Uggāhamāna said to him, “I describe an individual endowed with four qualities as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. Which four? There is the case where he does no evil action with his body, speaks no evil speech, resolves on no evil resolve, and maintains himself with no evil means of livelihood. An individual endowed with these four qualities I describe as being consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments.”

Then Pañcakaṅga neither delighted in Uggāhamāna’s words nor did he protest against them. Neither delighting nor protesting, he got up from his seat & left, thinking, “I will learn the meaning of this statement in the Blessed One’s presence.”

Then he went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, after bowing down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he told the Blessed One the entire conversation he had had with Uggāhamāna.

When this was said, the Blessed One said to Pañcakaṅga: “In that case, carpenter, then according to Uggāhamāna’s words a stupid baby boy, lying on its back, is consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments. For even the thought ‘body’ does not occur to a stupid baby boy lying on its back, so from where would it do any evil action with its body, aside from a little kicking? Even the thought ‘speech’ does not occur to it, so from where would it speak any evil speech, aside from a little crying? Even the thought ‘resolve’ does not occur to it, so from where would it resolve on any evil resolve, aside from a little bad temper? Even the thought ‘livelihood’ does not occur to it, so from where would it maintain itself with any evil means of livelihood, aside from its mother’s milk? So, according to Uggāhamāna’s words, a stupid baby boy, lying on its back, is consummate in what is skillful, foremost in what is skillful, an invincible contemplative attained to the highest attainments.”

— [MN 78](#)

§ 4.20 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then Anāthapiṇḍika the

householder left Sāvattthī in the middle of the day to see the Blessed One, but the thought then occurred to him, “Now is not the right time to see the Blessed One, for he is in seclusion. And it is not the right time to see the mind-developing monks, for they are in seclusion. What if I were to visit the park of the wanderers of other persuasions?” So he headed to the park of the wanderers of other persuasions.

Now on that occasion the wanderers of other persuasions had come together in a gathering and were sitting, discussing many kinds of bestial topics, making a great noise and racket. They saw Anāthapiṇḍika the householder coming from afar, and on seeing him, hushed one another: “Be quiet, good sirs. Don’t make any noise. Here comes Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, a disciple of the contemplative Gotama. He is one of those disciples of the contemplative Gotama, clad in white, who lives in Sāvattthī. These people are fond of quietude, trained in quietude, and speak in praise of quietude. Maybe, if he perceives our group as quiet, he will consider it worth his while to come our way.” So the wanderers fell silent.

Then Anāthapiṇḍika the householder went to where the wanderers of other persuasions were staying. On arrival he greeted them courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the wanderers said to him, “Tell us, householder, what views the contemplative Gotama has.”

“Venerable sirs, I don’t know entirely what views the Blessed One has.”

“Well, well. So you don’t know entirely what views the contemplative Gotama has. Then tell us what views the monks have.”

“I don’t even know entirely what views the monks have.”

“So you don’t know entirely what views the contemplative Gotama has or even that the monks have. Then tell us what views you have.”

“It wouldn’t be difficult for me to expound to you what views I have. But please let the venerable ones expound each in line with his position, and then it won’t be difficult for me to expound to you what views I have.”

When this had been said, one of the wanderers said to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, “The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless. This is the sort of view I have.”

Another wanderer said to Anāthapiṇḍika, “The cosmos is not eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless. This is the sort of view I have.”

Another wanderer said, “The cosmos is finite...” “The cosmos is infinite...” “The soul & the body are the same...” “The soul is one thing and the body another...” “After death a Tathāgata exists...” “After death a Tathāgata does not exist...” “After death a Tathāgata both does & does not exist...” “After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless. This is the sort of view I have.”

When this had been said, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder said to the wanderers, “As for the venerable one who says, ‘The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless. This is the sort of view I have,’ his view arises from his own inappropriate attention or in dependence on the words of another. Now this view has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated. Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated, that is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. This venerable one thus adheres to that very stress, submits himself to that very stress.” [Similarly for the other positions.]

When this had been said, the wanderers said to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, “We have each & every one expounded to you in line with our own positions. Now tell us what views you have.”

“Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated, that is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. Whatever is stress is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. This is the sort of view I have.”

“So, householder, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated, that is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. You thus adhere to that very stress, submit yourself to that very stress.”

“Venerable sirs, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently originated, that is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stress. Whatever is stress is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. Having seen this well with right discernment as it has come to be, I also discern the higher escape from it as it has come to be.”

When this was said, the wanderers fell silent, abashed, sitting with their shoulders drooping, their heads down, brooding, at a loss for words.

— [AN 10:93](#)

5 : Human Foibles

§ 5.1 “Once, monks, in this same Sāvattthī, there was a lady of a household named Vedehikā. This good report about Lady Vedehikā had circulated: ‘Lady Vedehikā is gentle. Lady Vedehikā is even-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is calm.’ Now, Lady Vedehikā had a slave named Kālī who was diligent, deft, & neat in her work. The thought occurred to Kālī the slave, ‘This good report about my Lady Vedehikā has circulated: “Lady Vedehikā is even-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is gentle. Lady Vedehikā is calm.” Now, is anger present in my lady without showing, or is it absent? Or is it just because I’m diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn’t show? Why don’t I test her?’

“So Kālī the slave got up after daybreak. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: ‘Hey, Kālī!’

“‘Yes, madam?’

“‘Why did you get up after daybreak?’

“‘No reason, madam.’

“‘No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up after daybreak?’ Angered & displeased, she scowled.

Then the thought occurred to Kālī the slave: ‘Anger is present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it’s just because I’m diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn’t show. Why don’t I test her some more?’

“So Kālī the slave got up later in the day. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: ‘Hey, Kālī!’

“‘Yes, madam?’

“‘Why did you get up later in the day?’

“‘No reason, madam.’

“‘No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up later in the day?’ Angered & displeased, she grumbled.

Then the thought occurred to Kālī the slave: ‘Anger is present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it’s just because I’m diligent, deft, &

neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn't show. Why don't I test her some more?

"So Kālī the slave got up even later in the day. Then Lady Vedehikā said to her: 'Hey, Kālī!'

"Yes, madam?"

"Why did you get up even later in the day?"

"No reason, madam.'

"No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up even later in the day?" Angered & displeased, she grabbed hold of a rolling pin and gave her a whack over the head, cutting it open.

Then Kālī the slave, with blood streaming from her cut-open head, went and denounced her mistress to the neighbors: 'See, ladies, the gentle one's handiwork? See the even-tempered one's handiwork? See the calm one's handiwork? How could she, angered & displeased with her only slave for getting up after daybreak, grab hold of a rolling pin and give her a whack over the head, cutting it open?'

"After that this evil report about Lady Vedehikā circulated: 'Lady Vedehikā is vicious. Lady Vedehikā is foul-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is violent.'

"In the same way, monks, a monk may be ever so gentle, ever so even-tempered, ever so calm, as long as he is not touched by disagreeable aspects of speech. But it is only when disagreeable aspects of speech touch him that he can truly be known as gentle, even-tempered, & calm. I don't call a monk easy to admonish if he is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish only by reason of robes, almsfood, lodging, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick. Why is that? Because if he doesn't get robes, almsfood, lodging, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick, then he isn't easy to admonish and doesn't make himself easy to admonish. But if a monk is easy to admonish and makes himself easy to admonish purely out of esteem for the Dhamma, respect for the Dhamma, reverence for the Dhamma, then I call him easy to admonish. Thus, monks, you should train yourselves: 'We will be easy to admonish and make ourselves easy to admonish purely out of esteem for the Dhamma, respect for the Dhamma, reverence for the Dhamma.' That's how you should train yourselves." — [*MN 21*](#)

§ 5.2 "Monks, gains, offerings, & fame are a cruel thing, a harsh, bitter obstacle to the attainment of the unexcelled rest from bondage. Suppose

there were a beetle, a dung-eater, full of dung, gorged with dung, with a huge pile of dung in front of him. He, because of that, would look down on other beetles: ‘Yes, sirree! I am a dung-eater, full of dung, gorged with dung, with a huge pile of dung in front of me!’ In the same way, there is the case where a certain monk—conquered by gains, offerings, & fame, his mind consumed—adjusts his lower robe and, taking his bowl & outer robe, goes into a village or town for alms. Having eaten there as much as he likes—full of almsfood & invited again for the next day—he goes to the monastery and, in the midst of a group of monks, boasts, ‘I have eaten as much as I like, I am full of almsfood & have been invited again for tomorrow. I am a recipient of robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for curing illness. These other monks, though, have next to no merit, next to no influence. They aren’t recipients of robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for curing illness.’ Conquered by gains, offerings, & fame, his mind consumed, he looks down on other well-behaved monks. That will be for this worthless man’s long-term suffering & harm. That’s how cruel gains, offerings, & fame are: a harsh, bitter obstacle to the attainment of the unexcelled rest from bondage.

“So you should train yourselves: ‘We will put aside any gains, offerings, & fame that have arisen; and we will not let any gains, offerings, & fame that have arisen keep our minds consumed.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.” — [SN17:5](#)

§ 5.3 “Once, monks, a large family of turtles had lived for a long time in a certain freshwater lake. Then one turtle said to another, ‘My dear turtle, don’t go to that area.’ But the turtle went to that area, and because of that a hunter lanced him with a harpoon. So he went back to the first turtle. The first turtle saw him coming from afar, and on seeing him said to him, ‘I hope, dear turtle, that you didn’t go to area.’

“‘I went to that area, dear turtle.’

“‘Then I hope you haven’t been wounded or hurt.’

“‘I haven’t been wounded or hurt, but there’s this cord that keeps dragging behind me.’

“‘Yes, dear turtle, you’re wounded, you’re hurt. It was because of that cord that your father & grandfather fell into misfortune & disaster. Now go, dear turtle. You are no longer one of us.’

“The hunter, monks, stands for Māra, the Evil One. The harpoon stands for gains, offerings, & fame. The cord stands for delight & passion. Any monk who relishes & revels in gains, offerings, & fame that have arisen is called a monk lanced by the harpoon, who has fallen into misfortune & disaster. The Evil One can do with him as he will. That’s how cruel gains, offerings, & fame are: a harsh, bitter obstacle to the attainment of the unexcelled rest from bondage.

“So you should train yourselves: ‘We will put aside any gains, offerings, & fame that have arisen; and we will not let any gains, offerings, & fame that have arisen keep our minds consumed.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.” — [SN 17:3](#)

§ 5.4 “Monks, there are these eight grounds for laziness. Which eight?

“There is the case where a monk has some work to do. The thought occurs to him: ‘I will have to do this work. But when I have done this work, my body will be tired. Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. He doesn’t make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the first ground for laziness.

“Then there is the case where a monk has done some work. The thought occurs to him: ‘I have done some work. Now that I have done work, my body is tired. Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. He doesn’t make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the second ground for laziness.

“Then there is the case where a monk has to go on a journey. The thought occurs to him: ‘I will have to go on this journey. But when I have gone on the journey, my body will be tired. Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. He doesn’t make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the third ground for laziness.

“Then there is the case where a monk has gone on a journey. The thought occurs to him: ‘I have gone on a journey. Now that I have gone on a journey, my body is tired. Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. He doesn’t make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-

unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the fourth ground for laziness.

“Then there is the case where a monk, having gone for alms in a village or town, does not get as much coarse or refined food as he would like for his fill. The thought occurs to him: ‘I, having gone for alms in a village or town, have not gotten as much coarse or refined food as I would like for my fill. This body of mine is tired & unsuitable for work. Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. He doesn’t make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the fifth ground for laziness.

“Then there is the case where a monk, having gone for alms in a village or town, gets as much coarse or refined food as he would like for his fill. The thought occurs to him: ‘I, having gone for alms in a village or town, have gotten as much coarse or refined food as I would like for my fill. This body of mine is heavy & unsuitable for work—stuffed with beans, as it were. Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. He doesn’t make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the sixth ground for laziness.

“Then there is the case where a monk comes down with a slight illness. The thought occurs to him: ‘I have come down with a slight illness. There’s a need to lie down.’ So he lies down. He doesn’t make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the seventh ground for laziness.

“Then there is the case where a monk has recovered from his illness, not long after his recovery. The thought occurs to him: ‘I have recovered from my illness. It’s not long after my recovery. This body of mine is weak & unsuitable for work. Why don’t I lie down?’ So he lies down. He doesn’t make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the eighth ground for laziness.

“These are the eight grounds for laziness.

“There are these eight grounds for the arousal of energy. Which eight?

“There is the case where a monk has some work to do. The thought occurs to him: ‘I will have to do this work. But when I am doing this work, it will not be easy to attend to the Buddha’s message. Why don’t I make an effort beforehand for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-

yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?’ So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the first ground for the arousal of energy.

“Then there is the case where a monk has done some work. The thought occurs to him: ‘I have done some work. While I was doing work, I couldn’t attend to the Buddha’s message. Why don’t I make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?’ So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the second ground for the arousal of energy.

“Then there is the case where a monk has to go on a journey. The thought occurs to him: ‘I will have to go on this journey. But when I am going on the journey, it will not be easy to attend to the Buddha’s message. Why don’t I make an effort beforehand for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?’ So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the third ground for the arousal of energy.

“Then there is the case where a monk has gone on a journey. The thought occurs to him: ‘I have gone on a journey. While I was going on the journey, I couldn’t attend to the Buddha’s message. Why don’t I make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?’ So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the fourth ground for the arousal of energy.

“Then there is the case where a monk, having gone for alms in a village or town, does not get as much coarse or refined food as he would like for his fill. The thought occurs to him: ‘I, having gone for alms in a village or town, have not gotten as much coarse or refined food as I would like for my fill. This body of mine is light & suitable for work. Why don’t I make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?’ So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the fifth ground for the arousal of energy.

“Then there is the case where a monk, having gone for alms in a village or town, gets as much coarse or refined food as he would like for his fill. The thought occurs to him: ‘I, having gone for alms in a village or town, have gotten as much coarse or refined food as I would like for my fill. This body of mine is light & suitable for work. Why don’t I make an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?’ So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the sixth ground for the arousal of energy.

“Then there is the case where a monk comes down with a slight illness. The thought occurs to him: ‘I have come down with a slight illness. Now, there’s the possibility that it could get worse. Why don’t I make an effort beforehand for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?’ So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the seventh ground for the arousal of energy.

“Then there is the case where a monk has recovered from his illness, not long after his recovery. The thought occurs to him: ‘I have recovered from my illness. It’s not long after my recovery. Now, there’s the possibility that the illness could come back. Why don’t I make an effort beforehand for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized?’ So he makes an effort for the attaining of the as-yet-unattained, the reaching of the as-yet-unreached, the realization of the as-yet-unrealized. This is the eighth ground for the arousal of energy.

“These are the eight grounds for the arousal of energy.” – [AN 8:95](#)

§ 5.5 “Monks, I will teach you the eight unruly horses and eight faults in horses, the eight unruly men and eight faults in men. Listen and pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, venerable sir,” the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said: “Now, which are the eight unruly horses and eight faults in horses?

“There is the case where some unruly horses—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—back up and push the chariot back with their

hindquarters. Some unruly horses are like this. This is the first fault in a horse.

“Then again, some unruly horses—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—jump back and hit the carriage railing, breaking the triple bar. Some unruly horses are like this. This is the second fault in a horse.

“Then again, some unruly horses—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—kick the chariot pole and stomp on it. Some unruly horses are like this. This is the third fault in a horse.

“Then again, some unruly horses—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—go off the road and make the chariot turn over. Some unruly horses are like this. This is the fourth fault in a horse.

“Then again, some unruly horses—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—rear up and paw the air. Some unruly horses are like this. This is the fifth fault in a horse.

“Then again, some unruly horses—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—not heeding the goad, bite through the bit with their teeth and go where they will. Some unruly horses are like this. This is the sixth fault in a horse.

“Then again, some unruly horses—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—go neither forward nor back, but stand right there like a post. Some unruly horses are like this. This is the seventh fault in a horse.

“Then again, some unruly horses—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—draw in their forefeet, draw in their hindfeet, and sit down right there on their four feet. Some unruly horses are like this. This is the eighth fault in a horse.

“These, monks, are the eight unruly horses and eight faults in horses.”

“And which are the eight unruly men and eight faults in men?”

“There is the case where the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, denies the offense, (saying,) ‘I don’t remember. I don’t remember.’ He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—backs up and pushes the chariot back with its hindquarters. Some unruly men are like this. This is the first fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, attacks the accuser: ‘What use is there in your

speaking, you incompetent fool! Think of yourself as worthy to be spoken to.’ He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—jumps back and hits the carriage railing, breaking the triple bar. Some unruly men are like this. This is the second fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, accuses the accuser in return: ‘You, too, have committed an offense of this name. You make amends for it first.’ He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—kicks the chariot pole and stomps on it. Some unruly men are like this. This is the third fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, wanders from one thing to another, straying outside the topic, displaying anger, irritation, & sulkiness. He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—goes off the road and makes the chariot turn over. Some unruly men are like this. This is the fourth fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, speaks waving his arms around in the midst of the Saṅgha. He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—rears up and paws the air. Some unruly men are like this. This is the fifth fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, not heeding the Saṅgha, not heeding his accuser, goes off where he will, still an offender. He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—not heeding the goad, bites through the bit with its teeth and goes where it will. Some unruly men are like this. This is the sixth fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, (saying,) neither ‘I’ve committed an offense’ nor ‘I haven’t committed an offense,’ vexes the Saṅgha by falling silent. He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told ‘Go!’ by the charioteer—goes neither forward nor back, but stands right there like a post. Some unruly men are like this. This is the seventh fault in a man.

“Then again, the monks accuse a monk of an offense. He, being accused of an offense by the monks, says this: ‘Why do you venerable ones persecute me

so much? I'll disavow the training and return to the lower life.' On having disavowed the training and returned to the lower life he says, 'I hope you venerable ones are gratified now!' He, I tell you, is just like the unruly horse who—when goaded, ordered, and told 'Go!' by the charioteer—draws in its forefeet, draws in its hind feet, and sits down right there on its four feet. Some unruly men are like this. This is the eighth fault in a man.

"These, monks, are the eight unruly men and eight faults in men."

— [AN 8:14](#)

§ 5.6 "Monks, it is just as if a donkey were following right after a herd of cattle, saying, 'I too am a cow! I too am a cow!' Its color is not that of a cow, its voice is not that of a cow, its hoof is not that of a cow, and yet it still keeps following right after the herd of cattle, saying, 'I too am a cow! I too am a cow!' In the same way, there is the case where a certain monk follows right after the Saṅgha of monks, saying, 'I too am a monk! I too am a monk!' He doesn't have the other monks' desire for undertaking the training in heightened virtue, doesn't have their desire for undertaking the training in heightened mind [concentration], doesn't have their desire for undertaking the training in heightened discernment, and yet he still keeps following right after the Saṅgha of monks, saying, 'I too am a monk! I too am a monk!'"

"So you should train yourselves: 'Strong will be our desire for undertaking the training in heightened virtue; strong will be our desire for undertaking the training in heightened mind; strong will be our desire for undertaking the training in heightened discernment.' That is how you should train yourselves." — [AN 3:83](#)

§ 5.7 Then Ven. Upāli went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, "Lord, I want to spend time in isolated wilderness & forest lodgings."

"Upāli, it's not easy to endure isolated wilderness & forest lodgings. It's not easy to maintain seclusion, not easy to enjoy being alone. The forests, as it were, plunder the mind of a monk who has not gained concentration. Whoever would say, 'I, without having gained concentration, will spend time in isolated wilderness & forest lodgings,' of him it can be expected that he will sink to the bottom or float away.

"Imagine, Upāli, a great freshwater lake. Then there would come a great bull elephant, seven or seven and a half cubits tall. The thought would occur

to him, ‘What if I were to plunge into this freshwater lake, to playfully squirt water into my ears and along my back, and then—having playfully squirted water into my ears and along my back, having bathed & drunk & come back out—to go off as I please?’ So, having plunged into the freshwater lake, he would playfully squirt water into his ears and along his back, and then—having playfully squirted water into his ears and along his back, having bathed & drunk & come back out—he would go off as he pleased. Why is that? Because his large body finds a footing in the depth.

“Then a rabbit or a cat would come along. The thought would occur to it, ‘What’s the difference between me and a bull elephant? What if I were to plunge into this freshwater lake, to playfully squirt water into my ears and along my back, and then—having playfully squirted water into my ears and along my back, having bathed & drunk & come back out—to go off as I please?’ So, without reflecting, he jumps rashly into the freshwater lake, and of him it can be expected that he will either sink to the bottom or float away. Why is that? Because his small body doesn’t find a footing in the depth.

“In the same way, whoever would say, ‘I, without having gained concentration, will spend time in isolated wilderness & forest lodgings,’ of him it can be expected that he will sink to the bottom or float away.”

— [AN10:99](#)

§ 5.8 [*From the origin story to the rule against building an excessively large hut without a sponsor.*] Now on that occasion the monks of Āḷavī were having huts built from their own begging—having no sponsors, destined for themselves, not to any standard measurement—that did not come to completion. They were continually begging, continually hinting: ‘Give a man, give labor, give an ox, give a wagon, give a machete, give an ax, give an adz, give a spade, give a chisel, give rushes, give reeds, give grass, give clay.’ People, harassed with the begging, harassed with the hinting, on seeing monks would feel apprehensive, alarmed, would run away; would take another route, face another direction, close the door. Even on seeing cows, they would run away, imagining them to be monks.

Then Ven. Mahā Kassapa, having come out of his Rains retreat at Rājagaha, set out for Āḷavī. After wandering by stages he arrived at Āḷavī, where he stayed at the Chief Shrine. Then in the early morning, having put on his robes and carrying his bowl & outer robe, he went into Āḷavī for alms. The people, on seeing Ven. Mahā Kassapa, were apprehensive, alarmed, ran away,

took another route, faced another direction, closed the door. Then Ven. Mahā Kassapa, having gone for alms, after his meal, returning from his alms round, addressed the monks: “Before, friends, Āḷavī was a good place for alms. Alms food was easy to come by; it was easy to maintain oneself by gleanings & patronage. But now Āḷavī is a bad place for alms. Alms food is hard to come by; it isn’t easy to maintain oneself by gleanings or patronage. What is the cause, what is the reason why Āḷavī is now a bad place for alms? ...”

Then the monks told Ven. Mahā Kassapa about that matter.

Then the Blessed One, having stayed at Rājagaha as long as he liked, left for Āḷavī. After wandering by stages he arrived at Āḷavī, where he stayed at the Chief Shrine. Then Ven. Mahā Kassapa went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he told the Blessed One about that matter. Then the Blessed One, because of that issue, because of that affair, had the Saṅgha of monks convened and asked the Āḷavī monks, “They say that you are having huts built from your own begging—having no sponsors, destined for yourselves, not to any standard measurement—that do not come to completion; that you are continually begging, continually hinting: ‘Give a man, give labor, give an ox, give a wagon, give a machete, give an ax, give an adz, give a spade, give a chisel, give rushes, give reeds, give grass, give clay’; that people, harassed with the begging, harassed with the hinting, on seeing monks feel apprehensive, alarmed, run away; take another route, face another direction, close the door; that even on seeing cows, they run away, imagining them to be monks: Is this true?”

“Yes, venerable sir. It is true.”

So the Blessed One rebuked them: “Misguided men, it’s unseemly, unbecoming, unsuitable, and unworthy of a contemplative; improper and not to be done.... Haven’t I taught the Dhamma in many ways for the sake of dispassion and not for passion; for unfettering and not for fettering; for letting go and not for clinging? Yet here, while I have taught the Dhamma for dispassion, you set your heart on passion; while I have taught the Dhamma for unfettering, you set your heart on being fettered; while I have taught the Dhamma for letting go, you set your heart on clinging. Haven’t I taught the Dhamma in various ways for the fading of passion, the sobering of pride, the subduing of thirst, the destruction of attachment, the severing of the round, the depletion of craving, dispassion, cessation, unbinding? Haven’t I

advocated abandoning sensual pleasures, understanding sensual perceptions, subduing sensual thirst, destroying sensual preoccupations, calming sensual fevers?... Misguided men, this neither inspires faith in the faithless nor increases the faithful. Rather, it inspires lack of faith in the faithless and wavering in some of the faithful.”

Then, having given a Dhamma talk on what is seemly & becoming for monks, he addressed the monks:

“Once, monks, there were two brothers who were hermits living on the banks of the Ganges. Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, coming up out of the river Ganges, went to the younger hermit and, on arrival, having encircled him seven times with his coils, stood spreading his great hood above his head. Then the younger hermit, through fear of the nāga, became thin, wretched, unattractive, & jaundiced, his body covered with veins. The elder brother, seeing his younger brother thin... his body covered with veins, asked him, ‘Why are you thin... your body covered with veins?’

“Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, coming up out of the river Ganges, comes to me and, on arrival, having encircled me seven times with his coils, stands spreading his great hood above my head. Through fear of the nāga I have become thin... my body covered with veins.’

“But do you want that nāga not to return?”

“I want the nāga not to return.’

“Do you see that this nāga has anything?”

“I see that he is ornamented with a jewel on his throat.’

“Then beg the nāga for the jewel, saying, ‘Good sir, give me your jewel. I want your jewel.’”

“Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, coming up out of the river Ganges, went to the younger hermit and, on arrival, stood to one side. As he was standing there, the younger hermit said to him, ‘Good sir, give me your jewel. I want your jewel.’ Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, thinking, ‘The monk is begging for my jewel. The monk wants my jewel,’ hurried off. Then a second time, the nāga-king, coming up out of the river Ganges, went toward the younger hermit. Seeing him from afar, the younger hermit said to him, ‘Good sir, give me your jewel. I want your jewel.’ Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, thinking, ‘The monk is begging for my jewel. The monk wants my jewel,’ hurried off. Then a third time, the nāga-king came up out of the river Ganges.

Seeing him come up out of the river Ganges, the younger hermit said to him, 'Good sir, give me your jewel. I want your jewel.'

"Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, addressed the younger hermit with this verse:

My food & drink
are produced grandly, abundantly,
by means of this jewel.

I won't give it to you.
You're one who asks
too much.
Nor will I come to your hermitage.

Like a youth with a sharp sword in his hand,
you scare me, begging for my stone.

I won't give it to you.
You're one who asks
too much.
Nor will I come to your hermitage.

"Then Maṇikaṇṭha, the nāga-king, thinking, 'The monk is begging for my jewel. The monk wants my jewel,' went away. And having gone away, he never again returned. Then the younger hermit, from not seeing that lovely nāga, became even thinner, more wretched, unattractive, & jaundiced, his body covered with veins. His older brother saw that he was even thinner... his body covered with veins, and on seeing him, he asked him, 'Why are you even thinner... your body covered with veins?'

"'It's from not seeing that lovely nāga that I am even thinner... my body covered with veins.'

"Then the elder hermit addressed the younger hermit with this verse:

Don't beg for what you covet
from one who is dear.

Begging too much
is detested.

The nāga, begged by a brahman for his jewel,
went away from there,

never again to be seen.

“Monks, begging is unpleasant, hinting is unpleasant even to those who are common animals—how much more so to human beings?”

“Once, monks, a monk lived on the slopes of the Himalayas in a forest grove. Not far from the grove was a broad, low-lying marsh. A great flock of birds, after feeding all day in the marsh, went to roost in the grove at nightfall. The monk was annoyed by the noise of that flock of birds.

“So he came to me and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, I said to him, ‘I hope, monk, that you are well, that you are getting along, that you have completed your journey with little fatigue. Where have you come from?’

“I am well, venerable sir, am getting along, and have completed my journey with little fatigue. Venerable sir, there is a large forest grove on the slopes of the Himalayas, and not far from it is a broad, low-lying marsh. A great flock of birds, after feeding all day in the marsh, goes to roost in the grove at nightfall. That is why I have come to see the Blessed One—because I am annoyed by the noise of that flock of birds.’

“Monk, you want those birds to go away for good?”

“Yes, venerable sir, I want them to go away for good.’

“Then go back there, enter the forest, and in the first watch of the night make this announcement three times: “Listen to me, good birds. I want a feather from everyone roosting in this forest. Each of you give me one feather.” In the second watch... In the third watch of the night make this announcement three times: “Listen to me, good birds. I want a feather from everyone roosting in this forest. Each of you give me one feather.” ... [The monk did as he was told.] Then the flock of birds, thinking, ‘The monk begs for a feather, the monk wants a feather,’ left the forest. And after they were gone, they never again returned. Monks, begging is unpleasant, hinting is unpleasant even to these common animals—how much more so to human beings?” — *Sg*6

§ 5.9 *[From the origin story to the rule against insulting another monk.]* “Once, monks, a certain brahman in Takkasilā had an ox named Nandivīsāla. Then Nandivīsāla said to the brahman, ‘Go, brahman, and make a bet for 1,000

[gold pieces] with the financier: “My ox will draw 100 carts tied to one another.”

“So the brahman made a bet for 1,000 with the financier: ‘My ox will draw 100 carts tied to one another.’ Then, having tied 100 carts to one another, having yoked Nandivīsāla the ox, the brahman said, ‘Pull, you brute! Drag them, you brute!’ So Nandivīsāla just stood right there.

“Then the brahman, having lost 1,000, was brooding. So Nandivīsāla said to him, ‘Why, brahman, are you brooding?’

“‘Because, good sir, I lost 1,000 because of you.’

“‘But why, brahman, did you disgrace me, who am not a brute, by calling me a brute? Go, brahman, and make a bet for 2000 with the financier: “My ox will drag 100 carts tied to one another,” and don’t disgrace me, who am not a brute, by calling me a brute.’

“So the brahman made a bet for 2,000 with the financier: ‘My ox will drag 100 carts tied to one another.’ Then, having tied 100 carts to one another, having yoked Nandivīsāla the ox, the brahman said, ‘Pull, civilized one! Drag them, civilized one!’ And Nandivīsāla drew the 100 carts tied to one another.

Speak what’s appealing,
not what’s unappealing, ever.

For the one who spoke what was appealing,
he dragged the heavy load
and brought him wealth,
having abandoned his mood because of that.

“Even then, monks, abuse & insult were unappealing to me. So how much less now would they be appealing—abuse & insult?” — [Pc 2](#)

§ 5.10 *[From the origin story to the rule against telling a lie.]* Now at that time (the monk) Hatthaka the Sakyan had been overthrown in debate. In discussions with adherents of other religions, he conceded points after having denied them, denied them after having conceded them, evaded one question with another, told deliberate lies, made an appointment (for a debate) but then didn’t keep it. The adherents of other religions criticized and complained and spread it about, “How can this Hatthaka the Sakyan, in discussions with us, concede points after having denied them, deny them

after having conceded them, evade one question with another, tell deliberate lies, and make an appointment (for a debate) but then not keep it?”

The monks heard them... and having approached Hatthaka the Sakyan, asked him: “Is it true, friend Hatthaka, that in discussions with adherents of other religions, you conceded points after having denied them, denied them after having conceded, evaded one question with another, told deliberate lies, made an appointment (for a debate) but then didn’t keep it?”

“Those adherents of other religions have to be beaten in *some* way or another. You can’t just give them the victory!” — [PC1](#)

§ 5.11 *[From the origin story to the rule against asking for too much cloth when one’s robes have been lost, stolen, or destroyed.]* Now on that occasion some group-of-six monks, having approached monks whose robes had been snatched away, said, “Friends, the Blessed One has allowed those whose robes are snatched away or destroyed to ask an unrelated man or woman householder for robe-cloth. Ask for robe-cloth, friends.”

“Never mind, friends. We have already received (enough) robe-cloth.”

“We are asking for your sake, friends.”

“Then go ahead and ask.”

So the group-of-six monks, having approached unrelated householders, said, “Monks have come whose robes were snatched away. Give robe-cloth for them.” And they asked for a lot of robe-cloth. Then a certain man, sitting in a meeting hall, said to another man, “Master, monks have come whose robes were snatched away. I gave robe-cloth for them.”

And he said, “I gave, too.”

And another said, “I gave, too.”

So they criticized and complained and spread it about: “How can these Sakyan-son monks, not knowing moderation, ask for a lot of robe-cloth? Will the Sakyan-son monks deal in the cloth business? Or will they set up a shop?”

— [NP7](#)

§ 5.12 *[From the origin story to the rule against carrying wool for more than three leagues.]* Now on that occasion wool accrued to a monk as he was on the road in the Kosalan districts, going to Sāvattthī. So, tying the wool into a bundle with his upper robe, he went along his way. People who saw him teased him,

“How much did you pay for it, venerable sir? How much will the profit be?”

— [NP16](#)

§ 5.13 *[From the origin story to the rule against going to watch a battle.]* Then a certain group-of-six monk, having gone to the battlefield, was pierced by an arrow. People teased him: “We hope (the battle) was well fought, venerable sir. How many points did you get?” — [Pc 50](#)

§ 5.14 *[From the origin story to the rule allowing monks to close the door when lying down during the day.]* Now on that occasion a certain monk had gone to the Gabled Hall in the Great Wood at Vesālī to pass the day and was sleeping, having left the door open. His various limbs were stiff with the ‘wind forces’ [i.e., he had an erection]. And at that time a large company of women bearing garlands & scents came to the park, headed for the dwelling. Seeing the monk, they sat down on his male organ and, having taken their pleasure and remarking, “What a bull of a man, this one!” they picked up their garlands & scents, and left. — [Pr 1](#)

§ 5.15 *[From the origin story to the rule against causing an intentional emission of semen.]* Now at that time Ven. Seyyasaka was leading the celibate life dissatisfied. Because of this, he was thin, wretched, unattractive, & pale, his body covered with veins. Ven. Udāyin saw that Ven. Seyyasaka was thin... his body covered with veins. On seeing him, he said to him, “Seyyasaka, my friend, why are you thin... your body covered with veins? Could it be that you’re leading the celibate life dissatisfied?”

“Yes, friend.”

“In that case, eat as you like and sleep as you like and bathe as you like; and having eaten, slept, and bathed as you like, when dissatisfaction arises and lust assails the mind, emit semen having attacked with your hand.”

“But is it okay to do that?”

“Of course. I do it myself.”

So then Ven. Seyyasaka ate as he liked and slept as he liked... and when dissatisfaction arose and lust assailed his mind, he would emit semen having attacked with his hand. Then it wasn’t long before he became attractive, with rounded features, a clear complexion, and very bright skin. So the monks who were his friends said to him, “Before, friend Seyyasaka, you were thin... your body covered with veins. But now you are attractive, with rounded

features, a clear complexion, and very bright skin. Could it be that you're taking medicine?"

"No, I'm not taking medicine, my friends. I just eat as I like and sleep as I like... and when dissatisfaction arises and lust assails my mind, I emit semen having attacked with my hand."

"But do you emit semen having attacked with the same hand you use to eat the gifts of the faithful?"

"Yes, my friends." — [Sg1](#)

§ 5.16 [*From the origin story to the rule forbidding a monk from getting a nun to wash his used robe.*] Now on that occasion Ven. Udāyin's wife had gone forth among the nuns. She often went to his place, and he often went to hers. One day he went to her place for a meal-donation. Dressing early in the morning, taking his bowl and (outer) robe, he went to her and on arrival sat down in front of her, exposing his penis. She sat down in front of him, exposing her vagina. He, impassioned, stared at her vagina. Semen was released from his penis. He said to her, "Go and fetch some water, sister. I'll wash my lower robe."

"Give it here, master. I'll wash it."

Then she took some of the semen in her mouth and inserted some of it in her vagina. With that, she conceived a child.

The nuns said, "This nun has been practicing unchastity. She's pregnant."

"It's not that I've been practicing unchastity." And she told them what had happened. The nuns criticized and complained and spread it about, "How can this Master Udāyin get a nun to wash his used robe?" — [NP4](#)

§ 5.17 [*From the origin story forbidding a monk from sewing a robe for a nun unrelated to him.*] Now on that occasion Ven. Udāyin had become accomplished in making robes. A certain nun went to him and on arrival said, 'It would be good, venerable sir, if you sewed me a robe.' So Ven. Udāyin, having sewed a robe for the nun, having dyed it well and stitched it nicely, having embroidered an obscene design in the middle and having folded it up, placed it to one side. Then the nun went to him and on arrival said, "Where is the robe, venerable sir?"

"Here you are, sister. Take this robe as it is folded and place it aside. When the Saṅgha of nuns comes for exhortation, put it on and come behind them."

So the nun took the robe as it was folded and placed it aside. When the Saṅgha of nuns came for exhortation, she put it on and came behind them. People criticized and complained and spread it about, “How brazen these nuns are, how mischievous and shameless, in that they embroider an obscene design on a robe!”

The nuns said, “Whose work is this?”

“Master Udāyin’s,” the nun answered.

“A thing like this wouldn’t be attractive even from those who are brazen, mischievous, and shameless, much less from Master Udāyin.” — [Pc 26](#)

§ 5.18 *[From the origin story to the rule forbidding a nun from formally confessing her offenses to a monk.]* Now on that occasion nuns—on seeing a monk along a main road, in a side road, or at a crossroads—having placed their bowls on the ground, having arranged their upper robes over one shoulder, kneeling down with hands raised palm-to-palm over the heart, confessed their offenses. People were offended and annoyed and spread it about, “Those are the mistresses of these; these are the lovers of those. Having scorned them last night, they are now asking their forgiveness.” — [Cv X.6.2](#)

§ 5.19 *[From the origin story to the rule against eating food that has not been formally offered by a lay person.]* Now on that occasion a certain monk, living entirely off of what was thrown away, was staying in a cemetery. Not wanting to receive gifts from people, he himself took the offerings for dead ancestors—left in cemeteries, under trees, and on thresholds—and ate them. People criticized and complained and spread it about, “How can this monk himself take our offerings for our dead ancestors and eat them? He’s robust, this monk. He’s strong. Perhaps he feeds on human flesh.” — [Pc 40](#)

§ 5.20 *[From the origin story to the rules governing the protocols that monks should follow while living in the wilderness.]* Now on that occasion a number of monks were living in the wilderness. They neither had drinking water set out nor washing water set out nor fire set out nor fire-generating sticks set out. They did not know the zodiac asterisms [the major stars used to mark the progress of the moon through the sky], they did not know the cardinal directions. Thieves, on coming there, said to them, “Is there drinking water, venerable sirs?”

“No, friends.”

“Is there washing water, venerable sirs? Is there fire, venerable sirs? Are there fire-generating sticks, venerable sirs?”

“No, friends.”

“With what (constellation) is there a lunar conjunction today, venerable sirs?”

“We don’t know, friends.”

“Which direction is this, venerable sirs?”

“We don’t know, friends.”

Then the thieves, (thinking,) “These people have neither drinking water nor washing water nor fire nor fire-generating sticks; they don’t know the zodiac asterisms, they don’t know the cardinal directions; these are thieves, not monks,” gave them a good beating and left. — *Cv VIII.6.1*

6 : Psychic Powers

§ 6.1 [From the origin story to the rule forbidding monks from displaying psychic powers to lay people.] Now on that occasion a costly block of sandalwood, from sandalwood heartwood, accrued to the Rājagaha financier. The thought occurred to him, “What if I were to have an alms bowl carved from this block of sandalwood? The chips will be for my own enjoyment, and I’ll give the bowl as a gift.” So the financier, having had a bowl carved from the block of sandalwood, having looped a string around it, having hung it from the top of a bamboo pole, having had the bamboo pole fastened on top of a series of bamboo poles, one on top of another, announced: “Any brahman or contemplative who is a worthy one [*arahant*] with psychic powers: Fetch down the bowl and it is given to you.”

Then Pūraṇa Kassapa went to the Rājagaha financier and, on arrival, said to him, “Because I am a worthy one with psychic powers, give me the bowl.” “If, venerable sir, you are a worthy one with psychic powers, fetch down the bowl and it is given to you.”

Then Makkhali Gosāla ... Ajita Kesakambalin ... Pakudha Kaccāyana ... Sañjaya Velaṭṭhaputta ... Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta went to the Rājagaha financier and, on arrival, said to him, “Because I am a worthy one with psychic powers, give me the bowl.” “If, venerable sir, you are a worthy one with psychic powers, fetch down the bowl and it is given to you.”

Now on that occasion Ven. Mahā Moggallāna and Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, each having dressed early in the morning, each taking his robe and bowl, had gone into Rājagaha for alms. Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja was a worthy one with psychic powers, and Ven. Mahā Moggallāna was a worthy one with psychic powers. Then Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja said to Ven. Mahā Moggallāna: “Go, friend Moggallāna, and fetch down the bowl. That bowl is yours.” Then Ven. Mahā Moggallāna said to Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja: “Go, friend Bhāradvāja, and fetch down the bowl. That bowl is yours.”

So Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, rising up into the sky, took the bowl and circled three times around Rājagaha. Now at that time the Rājagaha financier was standing in his house compound with his wife & children, paying

homage with his hands palm-to-palm over his heart, (saying,) “May Master Bhāradvāja land right here in our house compound.” So Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja landed in the financier’s house compound. Then the financier, having taken the bowl from Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja’s hand, having filled it with costly non-staple foods, presented it to Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja. Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, taking the bowl, returned to the monastery.

People, hearing that “Master Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, they say, has fetched down the financier’s bowl,” followed right after him, making a shrill noise, a great noise. The Blessed One, hearing the shrill noise, the great noise, asked Ven. Ānanda, “Ānanda, what is that shrill noise, that great noise?”

“Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja has fetched down the Rājagaha financier’s bowl, venerable sir. People, hearing that ‘Master Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja, they say, has fetched down the financier’s bowl,’ are following right after him, making a shrill noise, a great noise. That is the shrill noise, the great noise, that the Blessed One (hears).”

Then the Blessed One, with regard to this cause, to this incident, had the Saṅgha of monks convened and questioned Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja: “Is it true, as they say, Bhāradvāja, that you fetched down the financier’s bowl?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

The Awakened One, the Blessed One, rebuked him: “It’s not appropriate, Bhāradvāja, not fitting for a contemplative, improper, and not to be done. How can you display a superior human state, a wonder of psychic power, to lay people for the sake of a miserable wooden bowl? Just as a woman might expose her sexual organ for the sake of a miserable wooden coin, so too have you displayed a superior human state, a wonder of psychic power, to lay people for the sake of a miserable wooden bowl.” — [Cv V.8](#)

§ 6.2 *[From the origin story to the rule against drinking alcoholic beverages.]*
Then Ven. Sāgata went to the hermitage of the coiled-hair ascetic of Ambatittha, and on arrival—having entered the fire building and arranged a grass mat—sat down cross-legged with his body erect and mindfulness to the fore. The nāga [living in the fire building] saw that Ven. Sāgata had entered and, on seeing him, was upset, disgruntled, and emitted smoke. Ven. Sāgata emitted smoke. The nāga, unable to bear his rage, blazed up. Ven. Sāgata, entering the fire element, blazed up. Then Ven. Sāgata, having consumed the nāga’s fire with his own fire, left for Bhaddavatikā.

Then the Blessed One, having stayed at Bhaddavatikā as long as he liked, left on a walking tour to Kosambī. The lay followers of Kosambī heard, “They say that Ven. Sāgata did battle with the Ambatittha nāga!”

Then the Blessed One, having toured by stages, came to Kosambī. The Kosambī lay followers, after welcoming the Blessed One, went to Ven. Sāgata and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there they said to him, “What, venerable sir, is something the masters like that is hard for you to get? What can we prepare for you?”

When this was said, some group-of-six monks said to the Kosambī lay followers, “Friends, there is a strong liquor called pigeon’s liquor [the color of pigeons’ feet, according to the Commentary] that the monks like and is hard for them to get. Prepare that.”

Then the Kosambī lay followers, having prepared pigeon’s liquor in house after house, and seeing that Ven. Sāgata had gone out for alms, said to him, “Master Sāgata, drink some pigeon’s liquor! Master Sāgata, drink some pigeon’s liquor.” Then Ven. Sāgata, having drunk pigeon’s liquor in house after house, passed out at the city gate as he was leaving the city.

Then the Blessed One, leaving the city with a number of monks, saw that Ven. Sāgata had passed out at the city gate. On seeing him, he addressed the monks, saying, “Monks, pick up Sāgata.”

Responding, “As you say, venerable sir,” to the Blessed One, the monks took Ven. Sāgata to the monastery and laid him down with his head toward the Blessed One. Then Ven. Sāgata turned around and went to sleep with his feet toward the Blessed One. So the Blessed One addressed the monks, saying, “In the past, wasn’t Sāgata respectful to the Tathāgata and deferential?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“But is he respectful to the Tathāgata and deferential now?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“And didn’t Sāgata do battle with the Ambatittha nāga?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“But could he do battle with even a salamander now?”

“No, venerable sir.” — [Pc 51](#)

§ 6.3 *[From the origin story to the rule against keeping tonics—such as honey, butter, or sugar—for more than seven days.]* Now on that occasion, early in the morning, Ven. Pilindavaccha adjusted his under robe and—carrying his bowl & robes—went into Pilinda Village for alms. And at that time in the village there was a festival. Little girls—ornamented & garlanded—were playing.

As he was going through Pilinda Village for alms without bypassing a donor, Ven. Pilindavaccha came to the house of a certain monastery attendant and, on arrival, sat down on a seat made ready. And at that time, the daughter of the monastery attendant's wife, seeing other little girls ornamented & garlanded, was crying, "Give me an ornament! Give me a garland!"

So Ven. Pilindavaccha said to the monastery attendant's wife, "What is this little girl crying about?"

"Venerable sir, this little girl, seeing other little girls ornamented & garlanded, is crying, 'Give me an ornament! Give me a garland!' But from where is there an ornament for those of us who are poor? From where a garland?"

Then Ven. Pilindavaccha, taking a circle of grass, said to the monastery attendant's wife, "Now set this circle of grass on this little girl's head."

Then the monastery attendant's wife, taking that circle of grass, set it on the little girl's head. It became a garland of gold: beautiful, attractive, exquisite. There was no garland of gold like it even in the king's harem.

People said to King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha, "In the house of that monastery attendant over there is a garland of gold: beautiful, attractive, exquisite. There is no garland of gold like it even in your majesty's harem. So from where did that poor man (get it)? It must have been taken by theft."

So King Seniya Bimbisāra had the monastery attendant's family imprisoned.

Then a second time, early in the morning, Ven. Pilindavaccha adjusted his under robe and—carrying his bowl & robes—went into Pilinda Village for alms. As he was going through Pilinda Village for alms without bypassing a donor, he came to the house of the monastery attendant and, on arrival, asked the neighbors, "Where has the monastery attendant's family gone?"

"Venerable sir, the king has had them imprisoned on account of that garland of gold."

Then Ven. Pilindavaccha went to the residence of King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha and, on arrival, sat down on a seat made ready. Then King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha went to Ven. Pilindavaccha and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Ven. Pilindavaccha said to him: “Why, great king, has the monastery attendant’s family been imprisoned?”

“Venerable sir, in the monastery attendant’s house was a garland of gold: beautiful, attractive, exquisite. There is no garland of gold like it even in our own harem. So from where did that poor man (get it)? It must have been taken by theft.”

Then Ven. Pilindavaccha willed that the palace of King Seniya Bimbisāra be gold. And it became made entirely of gold. “But from where did you get so much of this gold, great king?”

(Saying,) “I understand, venerable sir. This is simply the master’s psychic power,” the king had the monastery attendant’s family released.

The people, saying, “A psychic wonder, a superior human feat, they say, was displayed to the king and his retinue by Master Pilindavaccha,” were pleased and delighted. They presented Ven. Pilindavaccha with the five tonics: ghee, fresh butter, oil, honey, and sugar.

Now ordinarily Ven. Pilindavaccha was already a receiver of the five tonics, so he distributed his gains among his company, who came to live in abundance. They put away their gains, having filled pots and pitchers. They hung up their gains in windows, having filled water strainers and bags. These kept oozing and seeping, and their dwellings were crawling and creeping with rats. People, engaged in a tour of the dwellings and seeing this, criticized and complained and spread it about, “These Sakyan-son monks have inner storerooms like the king.” — [*NP 23*](#)

§ 6.4 *[From the origin story to the rules governing the protocols for monks to follow when newly arriving at a monastery.]* As for those monks who came at night, Ven. Dabba Mallaputta would enter the fire element for them [so that his finger would glow, like a lamp] and by that light would assign them dwellings—so much so that monks arrived at night on purpose, thinking, “We will see the marvel of Ven. Dabba Mallaputta’s psychic power.” Approaching him, they said, “Friend Dabba, assign us dwellings.”

Ven. Dabba Mallaputta said, “Where would you like? Where shall I assign them?”

Then they named a distant place on purpose: “Friend Dabba, assign us a dwelling on Vulture’s Peak Mountain. Friend Dabba, assign us a dwelling on Robber’s Cliff....”

So Ven. Dabba Mallaputta, entering the fire element for them, went before them with his finger glowing, while they followed right behind him with the help of his light. — *Cv IV.4.4*

§ 6.5 When the night had passed, the senior monks adjusted their lower robes in the early morning and—taking their bowls & outer robes—went to Citta’s residence. There they sat down on seats made ready. Then Citta the householder, with his own hand, served & satisfied them with exquisite milk-rice mixed with ghee. When the senior monks had finished eating and had rinsed their bowls & hands, they got up from their seats and left. Citta the householder, having said, “Give away the rest,” followed behind the senior monks.

Now on that occasion it was hot & sweltering. The senior monks went along with their bodies melting, as it were, from the meal they had finished. And on that occasion Ven. Mahaka was the most junior of all the monks in that Saṅgha. He said to the senior monk: “Wouldn’t it be nice, venerable elder, if a cool wind were to blow, and there were a thundering cloud, and rain would fall in scattered drops?”

“Yes, friend Mahaka, that would be nice....”

Then Ven. Mahaka willed a psychic feat such that a cool wind blew, a thundering cloud developed, and the rain fell in scattered drops. The thought occurred to Citta the householder, “Such is the psychic power of the most junior of all the monks in this Saṅgha!”

Then when Ven. Mahaka reached the monastery/park, he said to the senior monk, “Is that enough, venerable sir?”

“That’s enough, friend Mahaka—what you have done, what you have offered.”

Then the monks went to their separate dwellings, and Ven. Mahaka went to his.

Then Citta the householder went to Ven. Mahaka and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to him, “It would be good, venerable sir, if Master Mahaka would show me a superior human attainment, a miracle of psychic power.”

“In that case, householder, spread out your upper robe on the porch and put a pile of grass on it.”

Responding, “As you say, venerable sir,” to Ven. Mahaka, Citta the householder spread out his upper robe on the porch and put a pile of grass on it.

Then Ven. Mahaka, having entered his dwelling and bolted the door, willed a psychic feat such that flame shot through the keyhole and the space around the door, burning up the grass but not the robe.

Then Citta the householder, having shaken out the robe, stood to one side—in awe, his hair standing on end. Ven. Mahaka came out of his dwelling and said, “Is that enough, householder?”

“That’s enough, venerable sir—what you have done, what you have offered. May Master Mahaka delight in the charming Wild Mango Grove at Macchikāsaṇḍa. I will be responsible for your robes, almsfood, lodgings, & medicinal requisites.”

“That is admirably said, householder.”

Then Ven. Mahaka—having set his lodging in order and taking his bowl & robes—left Macchikāsaṇḍa. And in leaving Macchikāsaṇḍa, he was gone for good and never returned. — [SN 41:4](#)

§ 6.6 [*From the origin story to the rule against making false claims to superior human states.*] Then Ven. Mahā Moggallāna, as he was descending Vulture Peak Mountain, smiled at a certain place. Ven. Lakkhaṇa said to him, “Friend Moggallāna, what is the reason, what is the cause for your smile?”

“This is not the time, friend Lakkhaṇa, to answer this question. Ask me in the presence of the Blessed One.”

So Ven. Lakkhaṇa and Ven. Mahā Moggallāna... went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, Ven. Lakkhaṇa said to Ven. Mahā Moggallāna, “Just now, friend Moggallāna... you smiled. What was the reason, what was the cause for your smile?”

“Just now, my friend... I saw a man immersed head and all in a pit of excrement, feeding on excrement with both hands. The thought occurred to me, “Isn’t it amazing, isn’t it astounding, that there is a being even like this....”

Monks criticized and complained and spread it about, “Ven. Moggallāna is boasting of a superior human state!”

Then the Blessed One said to the monks, “Actually, monks, there *are* disciples of vision and knowledge who will know or see or bear witness like this. Once I myself saw that being but I didn’t disclose it. Had I disclosed it, others would not have believed me... and that would have been to their long-term pain and detriment. That being, monks, was once a corrupted brahman right in this very same Rājagaha. He, in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, having invited a Saṅgha of monks to a meal, having filled a trough with excrement and announcing the time, said, “Venerable sirs, eat from this and take with you as much as you like.” Having been boiled in hell as a result of that action for many years, many hundreds of years, many thousands of years, many hundreds of thousands of years, he is now—through the remainder of the result of that very same action—experiencing existence as an individual like this. Moggallāna spoke truly, monks. There is no offense for him.” — [Pr 4](#)

§ 6.7 [*From the origin story to the rule forbidding a monk from exhorting nuns after sunset.*] Now on that occasion it was Ven. Cūḷapanthaka’s turn to exhort the nuns. The nuns said, “Today the exhortation won’t be effective, for Master Cūḷapanthaka will simply say the same old stanza over and over again.”

Then the nuns went to Ven. Cūḷapanthaka and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, Ven. Cūḷapanthaka said to them, “Are you all present, sisters?”

“Yes, venerable sir, we are all present.”

“Are the eight rules of respect being kept up?”

“Yes, venerable sir, they are being kept up.”

Having introduced (the exhortation, saying,) “This, sisters, is the exhortation,” he said this stanza over and over again:

Heightened in mind & heedful,
the sage trained in sagacity’s ways:
He has no sorrows, one who is Such,

calmed & ever mindful.

The nuns said (to one another), “Didn’t we say so? Today the exhortation won’t be effective, for now Master Cūḷapanthaka will simply say the same old stanza over and over again.”

Ven. Cūḷapanthaka heard the nuns’ conversation. Rising up into the air, he walked back and forth in space, in the sky, stood, sat, lay down, emitted smoke, emitted flames, and disappeared, saying the same old stanza and many other sayings of the Buddha. The nuns said, “Isn’t it amazing? Isn’t it astounding? Never before has there been an exhortation as effective as Master Cūḷapanthaka’s!”

Then Ven. Cūḷapanthaka, having exhorted the nuns until nightfall, dismissed them: “You may go, sisters.” So the nuns—the gates of the city being closed—spent the night outside the city walls and entered the city only after daybreak. People criticized and complained and spread it about, “These nuns are unchaste. Having spent the night with the monks in the monastery, only now are they entering the city.” — [Pc 22](#)

7: *Advantages of Dhamma Practice*

§ 7.1 “Once, monks, the devas & asuras were arrayed for battle, and in that battle the asuras won and the devas were defeated. Defeated, the devas retreated, heading north, with the asuras pursuing right behind them. Then Sakka, the deva-king, addressed Mātali, his charioteer, with a verse:

‘There are bird-nests, Mātali, in the silk-cotton wood.
Avoid them with your chariot-pole.
I’d rather give up our lives to the asuras.
Don’t let the birds become nest-less.’

“Responding, ‘As you say, your lordship,’ to Sakka the deva-king, Mātali the charioteer turned around the chariot yoked with thoroughbreds, together with its 1,000-fold army.

“Then the thought occurred to the asuras, ‘Now Sakka the deva-king has turned around his chariot yoked with thoroughbreds, together with its 1,000-fold army. The devas are going to do battle with the asuras a second time!’ Terrified, the asuras retreated into their asura-city.

“And that’s how Sakka the deva-king won a victory through the Dhamma itself.” — *SN 11:7*

§ 7.2 “Monks, suppose that a man were to come along carrying a hoe & a basket, saying, ‘I will make this great earth be without earth.’ He would dig here & there, scatter soil here & there, spit here & there, urinate here & there, saying, ‘Be without earth. Be without earth.’ Now, what do you think? Would he make this great earth be without earth?”

“No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because this great earth is deep & enormous. It can’t easily be made to be without earth. The man would reap only a share of weariness & disappointment.”

“In the same way, monks, there are these five aspects of speech by which others may address you: timely or untimely, true or false, affectionate or harsh, beneficial or unbeneficial, with a mind of goodwill or with inner hate.

Others may address you in a timely way or an untimely way. They may address you with what is true or what is false. They may address you in an affectionate way or a harsh way. They may address you in a beneficial way or an unbeneficial way. They may address you with a mind of goodwill or with inner hate. In any event, you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic to that person’s welfare, with a mind of goodwill, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading him with an awareness imbued with goodwill and, beginning with him, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with goodwill equal to the great earth—abundant, enlarged, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.” — [MN 21](#)

§ 7.3 “Once, monks, a hawk suddenly swooped down on a quail and seized it. Then the quail, as it was being carried off by the hawk, lamented, ‘O, just my bad luck and lack of merit that I was wandering out of my proper range and into the territory of others! If only I had kept to my proper range today, to my own ancestral territory, this hawk would have been no match for me in battle.’

“‘But what is your proper range?’ the hawk asked. ‘What is your own ancestral territory?’

“‘A newly plowed field with clumps of earth all turned up.’

“So the hawk, without bragging about its own strength, without mentioning its own strength, let go of the quail. ‘Go, quail, but even when you have gone there you won’t escape me.’

“Then the quail, having gone to a newly plowed field with clumps of earth all turned up and climbing up on top of a large clump of earth, stood taunting the hawk, ‘Now come and get me, you hawk! Now come and get me, you hawk!’

“So the hawk, without bragging about its own strength, without mentioning its own strength, folded its two wings and suddenly swooped down toward the quail. When the quail knew, ‘The hawk is coming at me full speed,’ it slipped behind the clump of earth, and right there the hawk shattered its own breast.

“This is what happens to anyone who wanders into what is not his proper range and is the territory of others.

“And what, for a monk, is not his proper range and is the territory of others? The five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable by the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Sounds cognizable by the ear... Aromas cognizable by the nose... Flavors cognizable by the tongue... Tactile sensations cognizable by the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. These, for a monk, are not his proper range and are the territory of others.

“Wander, monks, in what is your proper range, your own ancestral territory. In one who wanders in what is his proper range, his own ancestral territory, Māra gains no opening, Māra gains no foothold. And what, for a monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory? The four establishings of mindfulness. Which four? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. This, for a monk, is his proper range, his own ancestral territory.” — [SN 47:6](#)

§ 7.4 “Endowed with eight qualities, monks, a king’s auspicious thoroughbred steed is worthy of a king, is a king’s asset, counts as a very limb of his king. Which eight?

[1] “There is the case where a king’s auspicious thoroughbred steed is well-born on both sides, his mother’s & his father’s; he is born in the country where other auspicious thoroughbred steeds are born.

[2] “When given food, whether fresh or dried, he eats it carefully, without scattering it around.

[3] “He feels disgust at sitting or lying down in urine or excrement.

[4] “He is composed & easy to live with, and doesn’t harass the other horses.

[5] “Whatever tricks or deceits or wiles or subterfuges he has, he shows them as they actually are to his trainer, so that his trainer can try to straighten them out.

[6] “When in harness he gives rise to the thought, ‘Whether the other horses want to pull or not, I’ll pull here.’

[7] “When going, he goes the straight path.

[8] “He is steadfast and remains steadfast to the end of life & death.

“Endowed with these eight qualities, a king’s auspicious thoroughbred steed is worthy of a king, is a king’s asset, counts as a very limb of his king.

“In the same way, a monk endowed with eight qualities is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, an incomparable field of merit for the world. Which eight?

[1] “There is the case where a monk is virtuous. He dwells restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in his behavior & sphere of activity. He trains himself, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults.

[2] “When given food, whether coarse or refined, he eats it carefully, without complaining.

[3] “He feels disgust at bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, mental misconduct, at the development of evil, unskillful (mental) qualities.

[4] “He is composed & easy to live with, and doesn’t harass the other monks.

[5] “Whatever tricks or deceits or wiles or subterfuges he has, he shows them as they actually are to the Teacher or to his observant companions in the holy life, so that the Teacher or his observant companions in the holy life can try to straighten them out.

[6] “When in training he gives rise to the thought, ‘Whether the other monks want to train or not, I’ll train here.’

[7] “When going, he goes the straight path; here the straight path is this: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

[8] “He dwells with his persistence aroused, (thinking,) ‘Gladly would I let the flesh & blood in my body dry up, leaving just the skin, tendons, & bones, but if I have not attained what can be reached through human steadfastness, human persistence, human striving, there will be no relaxing my persistence.’”

“Endowed with these eight qualities, a monk is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, an incomparable field of merit for the world.” — [AN 8:13](#)

§ 7.5 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Kosambī at Ghosita’s monastery. And on that occasion the Blessed One lived hemmed in with monks, nuns, male & female lay followers, kings, royal ministers, sectarians, & their disciples. Hemmed in, he lived unpleasantly and not in ease. The thought occurred to him: “I now live hemmed in by monks, nuns, male & female lay followers, kings, royal ministers, sectarians, & their disciples. Hemmed in, I live unpleasantly and not in ease. What if I were to live alone, apart from the crowd?”

So, early in the morning, the Blessed One adjusted his under robe and—carrying his bowl & robes—went into Kosambī for alms. Then, having gone for alms in Kosambī, after the meal, returning from his alms round, he set his own lodgings in order and, carrying his bowl & robes, without telling his attendant, without informing the Saṅgha of monks—alone & without a companion—left on a wandering tour toward Palileyyaka. After wandering by stages, he reached Palileyyaka. There he stayed in Palileyyaka in the protected forest grove at the root of the auspicious sal tree.

It so happened that a certain bull elephant was living hemmed in by elephants, cow-elephants, calf-elephants, & baby elephants. He fed off grass with cut-off tips. They chewed up his stash of broken-off branches. He drank disturbed water. And when he came up from his bathing-place, cow-elephants went along, banging up against his body. Hemmed in, he lived unpleasantly and not in ease. The thought occurred to him: “I now live hemmed in by elephants, cow-elephants, calf-elephants, & baby elephants. I feed off grass with cut-off tips. They chew up my stash of broken-off branches. I drink disturbed water. And when I come up from my bathing place, cow-elephants go along, banging up against my body. Hemmed in, I live unpleasantly and not in ease. What if I were to live alone, apart from the crowd?”

So the bull elephant, leaving the herd, went to Palileyyaka, to the protected forest grove and the root of the auspicious sal tree—to where the Blessed One was staying. There he kept the grass down in the area where the Blessed One was staying, and brought drinking water and washing water for the Blessed One with his trunk.

Then, when the Blessed One was alone in seclusion, this train of thought appeared to his awareness: “Before, I lived hemmed in by monks, nuns, male & female lay followers, kings, royal ministers, sectarians, & their disciples.

Hemmed in, I lived unpleasantly and not in ease. But now I live not hemmed in by monks, nuns, male & female lay followers, kings, royal ministers, sectarians, & their disciples. Not hemmed in, I live pleasantly and in ease.”

And this train of thought appeared to the awareness of the bull elephant, “Before, I lived hemmed in by elephants, cow-elephants, calf-elephants, & baby elephants. I fed off grass with cut-off tips. They chewed up my stash of broken-off branches. I drank disturbed water. And when I came up from my bathing place, cow-elephants went along, banging up against my body. Hemmed in, I lived unpleasantly and not in ease. But now I live not hemmed in by elephants, cow-elephants, calf-elephants, & baby elephants. I feed off grass with uncut tips. They don’t chew up my stash of broken-off branches. I drink undisturbed water. When I come up from my bathing place, cow-elephants don’t go along, banging up against my body. Not hemmed in, I live pleasantly and in ease.” — [Ud4:5](#)

§ 7.6 “Monks, when elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants go ahead of a wilderness tusker foraging for food and break off the tips of the grasses, the wilderness tusker feels irritated, upset, & disgusted. When elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants devour the wilderness tusker’s bunches of branches, he feels irritated, upset, & disgusted. When elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants go ahead of the wilderness tusker on his way down to his bath and stir up the mud in the water with their trunks, he feels irritated, upset, & disgusted. When cow-elephants go along as the wilderness tusker is bathing and bang up against his body, he feels irritated, upset, & disgusted.

“Then the thought occurs to the wilderness tusker, ‘I now live hemmed in by elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants. I feed off grass with broken-off tips. My bunches of branches are devoured. I drink muddied water. Even when I bathe, cow-elephants go along and bang up against my body. What if I were to live alone, apart from the crowd?’

“So at a later time he lives alone, apart from the crowd. He feeds off grass with unbroken tips. His bunches of branches are undevoured. He drinks unmuddied water. When he bathes, cow-elephants don’t go along and bang up against his body. The thought occurs to him, ‘Before, I lived hemmed in by elephants & cow-elephants & calf-elephants & baby elephants. I fed off grass with broken-off tips. My bunches of branches were devoured. I drank

muddied water. Even when I bathed, cow-elephants would go along and bang up against my body. But now I live alone, apart from the crowd. I feed off grass with unbroken tips. My bunches of branches are undevoured. I drink unmuddied water. When I bathe, cow-elephants don't go along and bang up against my body.' Breaking off a branch with his trunk and scratching his body with it, gratified, he allays his itch.

In the same way, when a monk lives hemmed in with monks, nuns, male & female lay followers, kings, royal ministers, sectarians, & their disciples, the thought occurs to him, 'I now live hemmed in by monks, nuns, male & female lay followers, kings, royal ministers, sectarians, & their disciples. What if I were to live alone, apart from the crowd?'

"So he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a wilderness, the shade of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a forest grove, the open air, a heap of straw. After his meal, returning from his alms round, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and brings mindfulness to the fore....

"Having abandoned these five hindrances—corruptions of awareness that weaken discernment—then quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities, he enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. Gratified, he allays his itch. [Similarly with the remaining concentration attainments.]"

— [AN 9:40](#)

§ 7.7 "Monks, there are these five warrior-like individuals who can be found existing among the monks. Which five?

[1] "There is the case of the monk who, on seeing a cloud of dust, falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the cloud of dust for him? There is the case of the monk who hears, 'In that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion.' On hearing this, he falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the cloud of dust. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who, on seeing a cloud of dust, falters, faints, doesn't steel himself, can't engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the

first type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[2] “And further, there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy’s banner, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the top of the banner for him? There is the case of the monk who not only hears that ‘In that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion.’ He sees for himself that in that village or town over there is a woman or girl who is shapely, good-looking, charming, endowed with the foremost lotus-like complexion. On seeing her, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the top of the banner. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, but on seeing the top of the enemy’s banner, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the second type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[3] “And further, there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy’s banner, but on hearing the tumult (of the approaching forces), he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. What is the tumult for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building. A woman approaches him and giggles at him, calls out to him, laughs aloud, & teases him. On being giggled at, called out to, laughed at, & teased by the woman, he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t continue in the holy life. Declaring his weakness in the training, he leaves the training and returns to the lower life. That, for him, is the tumult. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust & the top of the enemy’s banner, but on hearing the tumult he falters, faints, doesn’t steel himself, can’t engage in the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the third type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[4] “And further, there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy’s banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. What is the hand-to-hand combat for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building. A woman approaches him and sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, throws herself all over him. When she sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, and throws herself all over him, he—without renouncing the training, without declaring his weakness—engages in sexual intercourse. This, for him, is hand-to-hand combat. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy’s banner, & the tumult, but when in hand-to-hand combat he is struck and falls wounded. Some individuals are like this. This is the fourth type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

[5] “And further, there is the case of the monk who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy’s banner, the tumult, & hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. What is victory in the battle for him? There is the case of the monk who has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling. A woman approaches him and sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, throws herself all over him. When she sits down right next to him, lies down right next to him, and throws herself all over him, he extricates himself, frees himself, and goes off where he will.

“He resorts to a secluded dwelling place: the wilderness, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a forest grove, the open air, a haystack. Having gone to the wilderness, the foot of a tree, or an empty building, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and brings mindfulness to the fore.

“Abandoning covetousness with regard to the world, he dwells with an awareness devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness. Abandoning ill will & anger, he dwells with an awareness devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will & anger. Abandoning sloth & drowsiness, he dwells with an awareness devoid of sloth & drowsiness, mindful, alert, percipient of light. He cleanses his mind of sloth & drowsiness. Abandoning restlessness & anxiety, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness

& anxiety. Abandoning uncertainty, he dwells having crossed over uncertainty, with no perplexity with regard to skillful qualities. He cleanses his mind of uncertainty.

“Having abandoned these five hindrances, corruptions of awareness that weaken discernment, then—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—he enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain.

“With his mind thus concentrated, purified, & bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the ending of the effluents. He discerns, as it has come to be, that *‘This is stress ... This is the origination of stress ... This is the cessation of stress ... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress ... These are effluents ... This is the origination of effluents ... This is the cessation of effluents ... This is the way leading to the cessation of effluents.’* His heart, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the effluent of sensuality, released from the effluent of becoming, released from the effluent of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’

“This, for him, is victory in the battle. This individual, I tell you, is like the warrior who can handle the cloud of dust, the top of the enemy’s banner, the tumult, & hand-to-hand combat. On winning the battle, victorious in battle, he comes out at the very head of the battle. Some individuals are like this. This is the fifth type of warrior-like individual who can be found existing among the monks.

“These are the five warrior-like individuals who can be found existing among the monks.” — [AN 5:75](#)

§ 7.8 At that time, King Udena was enjoying himself in the park with his harem. King Udena's harem heard that "Our teacher, Master Ānanda, they say, is sitting at the root of a certain tree not far from the park."

Then King Udena's harem said to him, "Your majesty, our teacher, Master Ānanda, they say, is sitting at the root of a certain tree not far from the park. We would like to see Master Ānanda."

"In that case, go see Ānanda the contemplative."

So King Udena's harem went to Ven. Ānanda and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As they were sitting there, Ven. Ānanda instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged them with a Dhamma talk. Having been instructed, urged, roused, & encouraged with a Dhamma talk by Ven. Ānanda, they offered him 500 upper robes.

Then King Udena's harem, delighting in and approving of Ven. Ānanda's words—having gotten up from their seats, having bowed to him and circumambulated around him, keeping him on their right—went to King Udena. King Udena saw his harem coming from afar and, on seeing them, said to them, "Did you see Ānanda the contemplative?"

"We saw Master Ānanda, your majesty."

"Did you give him anything?"

"We gave him 500 upper robes, your majesty."

King Udena criticized and complained and spread it about, "How can Ānanda the contemplative accept so many robes? Is he going to deal in the cloth-business? Is he going to set up a shop?"

Then King Udena went to Ven. Ānanda and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Ānanda, "Did our harem come, Master Ānanda?"

"They came, great king."

"And did they give Master Ānanda anything?"

"They gave me 500 upper robes, great king."

"But what will Master Ānanda do with so many robes?"

"I will share them with those monks who have worn-out robes, great king."

"But what will you do with the old, worn-out robes, Master Ānanda?"

"We'll make canopies, great king."

“But what will you do with the old, worn-out canopies, Master Ānanda?”

“We’ll make mattress covers, great king.”

“But what will you do with the old, worn-out mattress covers, Master Ānanda?”

“We’ll make floor coverings, great king.”

“But what will you do with the old, worn-out floor coverings, Master Ānanda?”

“We’ll make foot-wiping cloths, great king.”

“But what will you do with the old, worn-out foot-wiping cloths, Master Ānanda?”

“We’ll make dust-rags, great king.”

“But what will you do with the old, worn-out dust-rags, Master Ānanda?”

“Having pounded them and kneaded them with clay, we’ll spread it on as plaster, great king.”

Then King Udena, (thinking,) “*All* these Sakyan-son monks, it seems, use things appropriately—they don’t let things go to waste,” offered Ven. Ānanda another 500 upper robes. And so it was that the first robe-arms of 1,000 robes accrued to Ven. Ānanda. — *Cv XI.1.13-14*

§ 7.9 [Ven. Puṇṇa:] “Venerable sir, there is a country called Sunāparanta. I am going to live there.”

[The Buddha:] “Puṇṇa, the Sunāparanta people are vicious. They are rough. If they insult and ridicule you, what will you think?”

“If they insult and ridicule me, I will think, ‘These Sunāparanta people are civilized, very civilized, in that they don’t hit me with their hands.’ That is what I will think, O Blessed One. That is what I will think, O One Well-Gone.”

“But if they hit you with their hands, what will you think?”

“...I will think, ‘These Sunāparanta people are civilized, very civilized, in that they don’t hit me with a clod’...”

“But if they hit you with a clod...?”

“...I will think, ‘These Sunāparanta people are civilized, very civilized, in that they don’t hit me with a stick’...”

“But if they hit you with a stick...?”

“...I will think, ‘These Sunāparanta people are civilized, very civilized, in that they don’t hit me with a knife’...”

“But if they hit you with a knife...?”

“...I will think, ‘These Sunāparanta people are civilized, very civilized, in that they don’t take my life with a sharp knife’...”

“But if they take your life with a sharp knife...?”

“If they take my life with a sharp knife, I will think, ‘There are disciples of the Blessed One who—horrificed, humiliated, & disgusted by the body and by life—have sought for an assassin, but here I have met my assassin without searching for him.’ That is what I will think, O Blessed One. That is what I will think, O One Well-Gone.”

“Good, Puṇṇa, very good. Possessing such calm & self-control you are fit to dwell among the Sunāparantans.” — [SN 35:88](#)

8 : *Dhamma Strategies*

§ 8.1 Now on that occasion a financier of Rājagaha had a seven-year headache. Many great doctors, the foremost in all directions, having come to treat him, couldn't cure him of his illness. Taking a great deal of money, they left. And now, the doctors had given up on him. Some doctors said, "On the fifth day, the financier will die." Some doctors said, "On the seventh day, the financier will die."

Then the thought occurred to the Rājagaha urban council: "This financier has done much for the king and for the urban council, and now the doctors have given up on him. Some doctors say, 'On the fifth day, the financier will die.' Some doctors say, 'On the seventh day, the financier will die.' But there's this Jīvaka, the king's doctor, who is young & talented. What if we were to ask for Jīvaka from the king to treat the financier?"

So the Rājagaha urban council went to King Seniya Bimbisāra and on arrival said to him, "Your majesty, this financier has done much for the king and for the urban council, and now the doctors have given up on him. Some doctors say, 'On the fifth day, the financier will die.' Some doctors say, 'On the seventh day, the financier will die.' It would be good if your majesty would command doctor Jīvaka to treat the financier."

So King Seniya Bimbisāra commanded Jīvaka Komārabhacca: "Go, I say, Jīvaka and treat the financier."

Responding, "As you say, your majesty," to the king, Jīvaka Komārabhacca went to the financier. On arrival, after observing the financier's symptoms, he said to him, "If I were to cure you, householder, what would be my reward?"

"All my property will be yours, teacher, and I your slave."

"But, householder, can you lie on one side for seven months?"

"Teacher, I can lie on one side for seven months."

"And can you lie on the other side for seven months?"

"I can lie on the other side for seven months."

"And can you lie on your back for seven months?"

“I can lie on my back for seven months.”

Then Jīvaka Komārabhacca, having had the financier lie on a bed, having bound him to the bed, made an incision in the skin of his head. Drilling a hole in his skull and drawing out two creatures, he showed them to the people: “See these two creatures, one small, the other large? Those teachers who said, ‘On the fifth day, the financier will die,’ had seen this large creature. On the fifth day it would have consumed the financier’s brain. From the consumption of his brain, the financier would have died. That was well-seen by those teachers.

“Those teachers who said, ‘On the seventh day, the financier will die,’ had seen this small creature. On the seventh day it would have consumed the financier’s brain. From the consumption of his brain, the financier would have died. That was well-seen by those teachers, too.”

Closing the hole in the skull and stitching the skin of the head, he applied an ointment.

Then the financier, after the passing of seven days, said to Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “Teacher, I can’t lie on one side for seven months.”

“But didn’t you respond to me, householder, ‘Teacher, I can lie on one side for seven months’?”

“It’s true, teacher, that I responded (in that way). But I will die. I can’t lie on one side for seven months.”

“In that case, householder, lie on the other side for seven months.”

Then the financier, after the passing of seven days, said to Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “Teacher, I can’t lie on the other side for seven months.”

“But didn’t you respond to me, householder, ‘I can lie on the other side for seven months’?”

“It’s true, teacher, that I responded (in that way). But I will die. I can’t lie on the other side for seven months.”

“In that case, householder, lie on your back for seven months.”

Then the financier, after the passing of seven days, said to Jīvaka Komārabhacca, “Teacher, I can’t lie on my back for seven months.”

“But didn’t you respond to me, householder, ‘I can lie on my back for seven months’?”

“It’s true, teacher, that I responded (in that way). But I will die. I can’t lie on my back for seven months.”

“Householder, if I hadn’t said that to you, you would not have lied down for this long. But I knew beforehand, ‘In three times seven days the financier will be cured.’ Get up, householder. Know that you are cured. What is my reward?”

“All my property is yours, teacher, and I am your slave.”

“Enough, householder. Don’t give me all your property and don’t be my slave. Give 100,000 to the king and 100,000 to us.”

So the financier gave 100,000 to the king and 100,000 to Jīvaka Komārabhacca. — [*Mv VIII.1.16–20*](#)

§ 8.2 I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattthī at Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. And on that occasion Ven. Nanda—the Blessed One’s brother, son of his maternal aunt—announced to a large number of monks: “I don’t enjoy leading the holy life, my friends. I can’t keep up the holy life. Giving up the training, I will return to the common life.”

Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he told the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, Ven. Nanda—the Blessed One’s brother, son of his maternal aunt—has announced to a large number of monks: ‘I don’t enjoy leading the holy life, my friends. I can’t keep up the holy life. Giving up the training, I will return to the common life.’”

Then the Blessed One told a certain monk, “Come, monk. In my name, call Nanda, saying, ‘The Teacher calls you, friend Nanda.’”

Responding, “As you say, venerable sir,” to the Blessed One, the monk went to Ven. Nanda, on arrival he said, “The Teacher calls you, friend Nanda.”

Responding, “As you say, my friend,” to the monk, Ven. Nanda went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, “Is it true, Nanda, that you have announced to a large number of monks: ‘I don’t enjoy leading the holy life, my friends. I can’t keep up the holy life. Giving up the training, I will return to the common life’?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“But why, Nanda, don’t you enjoy leading the holy life? Why can’t you keep up the holy life? Why, giving up the training, will you return to the common life?”

“Venerable sir, as I was leaving home, a Sakyan girl—the envy of the countryside—glanced up at me, with her hair half-combed, and said, ‘Hurry back, master.’ Recollecting that, I don’t enjoy leading the holy life. I can’t keep up the holy life. Giving up the training, I will return to the common life.”

Then, taking Ven. Nanda by the arm—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—the Blessed One disappeared from Jeta’s Grove and reappeared among the devas of the heaven of the Thirty-three. Now on that occasion about 500 dove-footed nymphs had come to wait upon Sakka, the deva-king. The Blessed One said to Ven. Nanda, “Nanda, do you see these 500 dove-footed nymphs?”

“Yes, venerable sir.”

“What do you think, Nanda? Which is lovelier, better looking, more charming: the Sakyan girl, the envy of the countryside, or these 500 dove-footed nymphs?”

“Venerable sir, compared to these 500 dove-footed nymphs, the Sakyan girl, the envy of the countryside, is like a cauterized monkey with its ears & nose cut off. She doesn’t count. She’s not even a small fraction. There’s no comparison. The 500 dove-footed nymphs are lovelier, better looking, more charming.”

“Then take joy, Nanda. Take joy! I am your guarantor for getting 500 dove-footed nymphs.”

“If the Blessed One is my guarantor for getting 500 dove-footed nymphs, I will enjoy leading the holy life under the Blessed One.”

Then, taking Ven. Nanda by the arm—as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—the Blessed One disappeared from among the devas of the heaven of the Thirty-three and reappeared at Jeta’s Grove. The monks heard, “They say that Ven. Nanda—the Blessed One’s brother, son of his maternal aunt—is leading the holy life for the sake of nymphs. They say that the Blessed One is his guarantor for getting 500 dove-footed nymphs.”

Then the monks who were companions of Ven. Nanda went around addressing him as they would a hired hand & a person who had been bought:

“Venerable Nanda, they say, has been hired. Venerable Nanda, they say, has been bought. He’s leading the holy life for the sake of nymphs. The Blessed One is his guarantor for getting 500 dove-footed nymphs.”

Then Ven. Nanda—humiliated, ashamed, & disgusted that the monks who were his companions were addressing him as they would a hired hand & a person who had been bought—went to dwell alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute. He in no long time entered & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for himself right in the here-&-now. He knew, “Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.” And thus Ven. Nanda became another one of the arahants.

Then a certain devatā, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta’s Grove, approached the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to him, she stood to one side. As she was standing there, she said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, Ven. Nanda—the Blessed One’s brother, son of his maternal aunt—through the ending of the effluents, has entered & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, directly knowing & realizing them for himself right in the here-&-now.” And within the Blessed One, the knowledge arose: “Nanda, through the ending of the effluents, has entered & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, directly knowing & realizing them for himself right in the here-&-now.”

Then, when the night had passed, Ven. Nanda went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “Venerable sir, about the Blessed One’s being my guarantor for getting 500 dove-footed nymphs: I hereby release the Blessed One from that promise.”

“Nanda, having comprehended your awareness with my own awareness, I realized that ‘Nanda, through the ending of the effluents, has entered & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, directly knowing & realizing them for himself right in the here-&-now.’ And a devatā informed me that ‘Ven. Nanda, through the ending of the effluents, has entered & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, directly knowing & realizing them for himself right in the here-&-

now.' When your mind, through lack of clinging, was released from the effluents, I was thereby released from that promise."

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

In whom

the mire of sensuality is crossed over,
the thorn of sensuality crushed,
the ending of delusion reached:

He doesn't quiver

from pleasures & pains

: a monk. — [Ud 3:2](#)

9 : *The Buddha Smiles*

§ 9 On one occasion the Blessed One was wandering on a tour among the Kosalans with a large Saṅgha of monks. As he was going along a road, he saw a large Sal forest in a certain place. Going down from the road, he went to the Sal forest. On reaching it, he plunged into it and at a certain spot, broke into a smile.

Then the thought occurred to Ven. Ānanda, “What is the cause, what is the reason, for the Blessed One’s breaking into a smile? It’s not without purpose that Tathāgatas break into smile.” So he said to the Blessed One, “What is the cause, what is the reason, for the Blessed One’s breaking into a smile? It’s not without purpose that Tathāgatas break into smile.”

“In this spot, Ānanda, there was once a great city: powerful, prosperous, populous, crowded with people. And on that city, Kassapa the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened, dwelled dependent. Now, Kassapa the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened, had a lay follower named Gavesin who didn’t practice in full in terms of his virtue. But because of Gavesin, there were 500 people who had been inspired to declare themselves lay followers, and yet who also didn’t practice in full in terms of their virtue.

“Then the thought occurred to Gavesin the lay follower: ‘I am the benefactor of these 500 lay followers, their leader, the one who has inspired them. But I don’t practice in full in terms of my virtue, just as they don’t practice in full in terms of their virtue. In that we’re exactly even; there’s nothing extra (for me). How about something extra!’ So he went to the 500 lay followers and on arrival said to them, ‘From today onward I want you to know me as someone who practices in full in terms of his virtue.’

“Then the thought occurred to the 500 lay followers: ‘Master Gavesin is our benefactor, our leader, the one who has inspired us. He will now practice in full in terms of his virtue. So why shouldn’t we?’ So they went to Gavesin the lay follower and on arrival said to him, ‘From today onward we want Master Gavesin to know the 500 lay followers as people who practice in full in terms of their virtue.’

“Then the thought occurred to Gavesin the lay follower: ‘I am the benefactor of these 500 lay followers, their leader, the one who has inspired them. I practice in full in terms of my virtue, just as they practice in full in terms of their virtue. In that we’re exactly even; there’s nothing extra (for me). How about something extra!’ So he went to the 500 lay followers and on arrival said to them, ‘From today onward I want you to know me as someone who practices the celibate life, the life apart, abstaining from intercourse, the act of villagers.’

“Then the thought occurred to the 500 lay followers: ‘Master Gavesin is our benefactor, our leader, the one who has inspired us. He will now practice the celibate life, the life apart, abstaining from intercourse, the act of villagers. So why shouldn’t we?’ So they went to Gavesin the lay follower and on arrival said to him, ‘From today onward we want Master Gavesin to know the 500 lay followers as people who practice the celibate life, the life apart, abstaining from intercourse, the act of villagers.’

“Then the thought occurred to Gavesin the lay follower: ‘I am the benefactor of these 500 lay followers, their leader, the one who has inspired them. I practice in full in terms of my virtue, just as they practice in full in terms of their virtue. I practice the celibate life, the life apart, abstaining from intercourse, the act of villagers, just as they practice the celibate life, the life apart, abstaining from intercourse, the act of villagers. In that we’re exactly even; there’s nothing extra (for me). How about something extra!’ So he went to the 500 lay followers and on arrival said to them, ‘From today onward I want you to know me as someone who eats only one meal a day, refraining in the night, abstaining from a meal at the wrong time.’

“Then the thought occurred to the 500 lay followers: ‘Master Gavesin is our benefactor, our leader, the one who has inspired us. He will now eat only one meal a day, refraining in the night, abstaining from a meal at the wrong time. So why shouldn’t we?’ So they went to Gavesin the lay follower and on arrival said to him, ‘From today onward we want Master Gavesin to know the 500 lay followers as people who eat only one meal a day, refraining in the night, abstaining from a meal at the wrong time.’

“Then the thought occurred to Gavesin the lay follower: ‘I am the benefactor of these 500 lay followers, their leader, the one who has inspired them. I practice in full in terms of my virtue, just as they practice in full in terms of their virtue. I practice the celibate life, the life apart, abstaining from

intercourse, the act of villagers, just as they practice the celibate life, the life apart, abstaining from intercourse, the act of villagers. I eat only one meal a day, refraining in the night, abstaining from a meal at the wrong time, just as they eat only one meal a day, refraining in the night, abstaining from a meal at the wrong time. In that we're exactly even; there's nothing extra (for me). How about something extra!'

"So he went to Kassapa the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened, and on arrival said to him, 'Venerable sir, may I receive the Going-forth in the Blessed One's presence. May I receive the Acceptance.' So he received the Going-forth in the presence of Kassapa the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened; he received the Acceptance. And not long after his Acceptance—dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute—he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, directly knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew: 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.' And thus Gavesin the monk became another one of the arahants.

"Then the thought occurred to the 500 lay followers: 'Master Gavesin is our benefactor, our leader, the one who has inspired us. Having shaven off his hair & beard, having put on the ochre robe, he has gone forth from the home life into homelessness. So why shouldn't we?'

"So they went to Kassapa the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened, and on arrival said to him, 'Venerable sir, may we receive the Going Forth in the Blessed One's presence. May we receive the Acceptance.' So they received the Going Forth in the presence of Kassapa the Blessed One, worthy & rightly self-awakened; they received the Acceptance.

"Then the thought occurred to Gavesin the monk: 'I obtain at will—without difficulty, without hardship—this unexcelled bliss of release. O, that these 500 monks may obtain at will—without difficulty, without hardship—this unexcelled bliss of release!' Then those 500 monks—dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute—in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, directly knowing & realizing it for themselves in the here & now. They knew: 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.' And thus did those 500

monks—headed by Gavesin, striving at what is more & more excellent, more & more exquisite—realize unexcelled release.

“So, Ānanda, you should train yourselves: ‘Striving at what is more & more excellent, more & more exquisite, we will realize unexcelled release.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.” — [AN 5:180](#)

Glossary

Arahant: A “worthy one” or “pure one;” a person whose mind is free of defilement and thus is not destined for further rebirth. A title for the Buddha and the highest level of his noble disciples.

Asura: A member of a race of beings who, like the Titans in Greek mythology, battled the devas for sovereignty in heaven and lost.

Brahman: In common usage, a brahman is a member of the priestly caste, which claimed to be the highest caste in India, based on birth. In a specifically Buddhist usage, “brahman” can also mean an arahant, conveying the point that excellence is based, not on birth or race, but on the qualities attained in the mind.

Brahmā: An inhabitant of the heavenly realms of form or formlessness.

Deva (devatā): Literally, “shining one.” An inhabitant of the terrestrial or heavenly realms higher than the human.

Dhamma: (1) Event; action; (2) a phenomenon in and of itself; (3) mental quality; (4) doctrine, teaching; (5) *nibbāna* (although there are passages describing nibbāna as the abandoning of all dhammas). Sanskrit form: *Dharma*.

Gandhabba: A celestial musician, the lowest level of the celestial devas.

Jhāna: Mental absorption. A state of strong concentration focused on a single sensation or mental notion. This term is derived from the verb *jhāyati*, which means to burn with a steady, still flame. Sanskrit form: *Dhyāna*.

Kamma: Intentional act. Sanskrit form: *Karma*.

Māra: The personification of temptation and all forces, within and without, that create obstacles to release from *samsāra*.

Nāga: A magical serpent, technically classed as a common animal, but possessing many of the powers of a deva, including the ability to take on human shape. Sometimes this term is used metaphorically, in the sense of “Great One,” to indicate an arahant.

Nibbāna: Literally, the “unbinding” of the mind from passion, aversion, and delusion, and from the entire round of death and rebirth. As this term also denotes the extinguishing of a fire, it carries connotations of stilling, cooling, and peace. “Total nibbāna” in some contexts denotes the experience of awakening; in others, the final passing away of an arahant. Sanskrit form: *Nirvāṇa*.

Nigaṇṭha: Literally, one without ties. An ascetic in the Jain religion.

Pāṭimokkha: Basic code of monastic discipline, composed of 227 rules for monks and 311 for nuns.

Peta: A hungry ghost.

Samsāra: Transmigration; the process of wandering through repeated states of becoming, with their attendant death and rebirth.

Samvega: A sense of dismay over the meaninglessness and futility of life as it is ordinarily lived, combined with a strong sense of urgency in looking for a way out.

Saṅgha: On the conventional (*sammati*) level, this term denotes the communities of Buddhist monks and nuns. On the ideal (*ariya*) level, it denotes those followers of the Buddha, lay or ordained, who have attained at least stream-entry.

Sutta: Discourse.

Tādin: “Such,” an adjective to describe one who has attained the goal. It indicates that the person’s state is indefinable but not subject to change or influences of any sort.

Tathāgata: Literally, “one who has become authentic (*tatha-āgata*) or is truly gone (*tathā-gata*)”: an epithet used in ancient India for a person who has attained the highest religious goal. In Buddhism, it usually denotes the Buddha, although occasionally it also denotes any of his arahant disciples.

Vinaya: The monastic discipline, whose rules and traditions comprise six volumes in printed text.

Yakkha: Spirit; a lower level of deva—sometimes friendly to human beings, sometimes not—often dwelling in trees or other wild places.

Abbreviations

PALI SUTTAS:

<i>AN</i>	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i>
<i>Dhp</i>	<i>Dhammapada</i>
<i>DN</i>	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
<i>MN</i>	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
<i>SN</i>	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>
<i>Thig</i>	<i>Therīgāthā</i>
<i>Ud</i>	<i>Udāna</i>

PALI VINAYA:

<i>Cv</i>	<i>Cullavagga</i>
<i>Mv</i>	<i>Mahāvagga</i>
<i>NP</i>	<i>Nissaggiya Pācittiya</i>
<i>Pc</i>	<i>Pācittiya</i>
<i>Pr</i>	<i>Pārājika</i>
<i>Sg</i>	<i>Saṅghādisesa</i>
<i>Sk</i>	<i>Sekhiya</i>

All translations are based on the Royal Thai Edition of the Pali Canon (Bangkok: Mahāmakut Rājavidyālaya, 1982).