**Section 8**

During the life time of the Buddha many people and devas acknowledged his wisdom and compassion; praised him and accepted him as a Great Teacher; there were members of the other religious sectors who recognized him as a Great Leader of a religious sect, but not inclined to follow his teachings. Then there were people who were not pleased of the Buddha and his teachings, we can see in many places in the scriptures how such people blamed and disparaged the Blessed One or praise and respected him. We have selected a few extracts for the sutta to elaborate this.

**The Buddha receiving praises and blames**

♦**The Disciples acclaims the Buddha**

The Blessed One’s disciples- both bhikkhu and bhikkhuni sangha, accepted the Buddha as their supreme guide who has shown them the path to liberation. Throughout the scriptures we can see how they esteemed him and revered him. A few extracts are given below.



The Buddha and his Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni disciples. Picture courtesy: https://present.bhikkhuni.net/

◙ **Venerable Sāriputta [[1]](#endnote-1)**

In DN/Mahāparinibbāna sutta there is a passage showing Venerable Sāriputta parsing the Blessed One:

*‘It is clear to me, Lord, that there never has been, will be or is now another ascetic or Brahmin who is better or more enlightened than the Lord”…* *All those Arahant Buddhas of the past attained to supreme enlightenment by abandoning the five hindrances, defilements of mind that weaken the understanding, having firmly established the four foundations of mindfulness in their minds, and realised the seven factors of enlightenment as they really are. All the Arahant Buddhas of the future will do likewise, and you, Lord, who are now the Arahant, fully-enlightened Buddha, have done the same…”*

DN: Mahāparinibbāna sutta: 1.16, p. 173.

◙ **Venerable Mahākaccāna** [[2]](#endnote-2)

Following extract shows how Venerable Mahākaccāna, described the greatness of the Buddha, to his companion in the spiritual life:

*“…the Blessed One knows; seeing, he sees; he has become vision, he has become knowledge, he has become the Dhamma, he has become Brahmā (great); he is the expounder, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the giver of the deathless, the lord of the Dhamma, the Tathāgata…”*

**See:** AN:10: 172 (6 ) Nnon-Dhamma sutta 2, p.551.

◙ **Venerable Udāyī**

Onetime Venerable Udāi asked the Buddha, whether when people see an elephant with massive body addressed it as ‘A nāga, truly a nāga!’ or do people also say this when they see a large and massive body? The Buddha explained that when people see a human being possessed with a massive body also, they addressed him as nāga. The Buddha further said:

*“…I call one a nāga who does no evil by body, speech, and mind”.*

Then Venerable Udāi rejoiced of the words of the Blessed One, praised him thus:

“A human being who is fully enlightened,

self-tamed and concentrated,

traveling on the path of brahmā,

he takes delight in peace of mind.

He is the nāga who outshines all,

like the Himalayas amid the other mountains.

Among all things named nāga,

he, unsurpassed, is the one truly named.

Mindfulness is his neck, his head is wisdom,

investigation, and reflection on phenomena.

Dhamma is the balanced heat of his belly,

and seclusion is his tail

“The lotus flower

is born and grown up in water,

yet is not soiled by the water

but remains fragrant and delightful.

“Devoid of lust, devoid of hatred,

devoid of delusion, without taints,

the nāga, discarding his body,

taintless, is utterly quenched

and attains final nibbāna.”

**See:** AN:6: Dhammika vagga: 43 (1) sutta, p. 335.

◙ **Venerable Vaṅgīsa [[3]](#endnote-3)**

“The secure speech which the Buddha utters

For the attainment of Nibbāna,

For making an end to suffering

Is truly the foremost speech [[4]](#endnote-4).

Having emerged from his daytime abode

From a desire to behold the Teacher,

Your disciple Vaṅgīsa, O great hero,

Bows down in worship at your feet.

See: SN1: Vaṅgīsasamyutta: suttas 5 Well spoken & 8 Over a thousand.

◙ **Bhikkhuni Khemā** [[5]](#endnote-5)

After becoming a great disciple of the Buddha, Venerable Khemā, formerly was a queen of Bimbisaara said this:

*“Worshiping the stars,*

*serving the sacred flame in a grove;*

*failing to grasp the true nature of things,*

*foolish me, I thought this was purity.*

*But now I worship the Awakened One,*

*supreme among men.*

*Doing the teacher’s bidding,*

*I am released from all suffering.*” [[6]](#endnote-6)

**◙ The Bhikkhunī Sīsupacālā [[7]](#endnote-7)**

One-time Bhikkhunī Sīsupacālā had an encounter with the Māra, and when he asked the bhikkhuni who is her teacher, she said:

*“But there’s one born in the Sakyan clan, The Enlightened One, without an equal, Conqueror of all, Māra’s subduer, who everywhere is undefeated, Everywhere freed and unattached, The One with Vision who sees all. Attained to the end of all kamma, liberated in the extinction of acquisitions, That Blessed One is my teacher…”*

**See:** SN:1: Bhikkhunisamyutta: sutta 8, p. 314.

**◙ Venerable Sela**

Venerable Sela, after meeting the Buddha and went to his refuge with his group, observing the teachings given by him and at the end of seventh day became enlighten; paid homage to the Blessed One thus:

*“Eight days have passed, All-Seeing One, since we went to you for refuge. In these seven nights, O Blessed One, we have been tamed in your teaching… you are the Buddha, you are the Teacher, you are the Sage, the conqueror of Māra. Having cut off all evil tendencies, You have crossed and guide humanity across… Here these three hundred bhikkhus stand with hands held out in adoration. O Hero, extend your feet, and let these great beings worship the Teacher”*

MN: Sela sutta.

**♦ Brahmas and Devas praised the Buddha**

◙ **Brahma Sanaṅkumāra praises the Blessed One**

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Rājagaha on the bank of the river Sappinī, …when the night had advanced, Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, of stunning beauty, illuminating the entire bank of the river Sappinī, approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, and stood to one side and recited this verse in the presence of the Blessed One:

“*The khattiya is the best among people*

*For those whose standard is the clan,*

*But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct*

*Is best among devas and humans”.*

**See:** SN:1: Brahmasamyutta: 11 (1) sutta, p. 345.

**◙The Sakka Praises the Buddha**

One-time Sakka, the Ruler of the Thavatimsa Deva Realm addressing the deva assembly mentioned the following eight truthful qualities of the Buddha and commended him:

1) As regards the way in which the Lord has striven for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare and happiness of devas and humans — we can find no teacher endowed with such qualities, whether we consider the past or the present, other than the Lord.

2) Well-proclaimed, truly, is this Lord’s Teaching, visible here and now, timeless, inviting inspection, leading onward, to be realised by the wise each one for himself — and we can find no proclaimer … other than the Lord.

3) The Lord has well explained what is right and what is wrong, what is blameworthy and what is blameless, what is to be followed and what is not to be followed, what is base and what is noble, what is foul, fair and mixed in quality — and we can find none who is a proclaimer of such things…other than the Lord.

4) The Lord has well explained to his disciples the path leading to Nibbāna, and they coalesce, Nibbāna and the path, just as the waters of the Ganges and the Yamunā coalesce and flow on together. And we can find no proclaimer of the path leading to Nibbāna ... other than the Lord.

5) “And the Lord has gained companions, both learners (sekha) and those who, having lived the life, have abolished the corruptions (arahants), and the Lord dwells together with them, all rejoicing in the one thing. And we can find no such teacher ... other than the Lord.

6) The gifts given to the Lord are well-bestowed, his fame is well established, so much so that, I think, the Khattiyas will continue to be attached to him, yet the Lord takes his food-offering without conceit. And we can find no teacher who does this... other than the Lord.

7) And the Lord acts as he speaks, and speaks as he acts. And we can find no teacher who does likewise, in every detail of doctrine ... other than the Lord.

8) ‘The Lord has transcended doubt, passed beyond all ‘how’ and ‘why’, he has accomplished his aim in regard to his goal and the supreme holy life. And we can find no teacher who has done the like, whether we consider the past or the present, other than the Lord.

See: DN: 19 Mahāgovinda Sutta.



Devas paying homage to the Blessed One. Picture Courtesy: https://thebuddhadhamma.wordpress.com/

◙ In SN we can see the following extract: a verse, recited by a certain devata, elaborating qualities of the Buddha :

*“Behold him of perfect name,*

*The seer of the subtle goal,*

*The giver of wisdom, unattached*

*To the lair of sensual pleasures.*

*Behold the wise one, all-knowing,*

*The great seer treading the noble path.*

**See**: SN: Devatha samyuththa 45.5. Perfect sutta, p. 120.[[8]](#endnote-8)

◙ Following is another extract from scriptures showing how devata’s honor and praise the Buddha:

One-time Brahamin Bāvari [[9]](#endnote-9) an ascetic was frightened of a curse of another brahamin who came to his abode asking 500 coins. He did not have the money to give, so the other one was angry and said his head will be exploded to seven pieces. Seen his restlessness, a devata heaving compassion for Brahamin Bāvari directed him to see the Buddha who could resolve of the head splitting matter. This is the way devata, introduced the Blessed One to Bāvari:

*“From the city of Kapilavatthu*

*the World Leader has gone forth.*

*He is a scion of King Okkāka,*

*a Sakyan, and a beacon.*

*For he, brahmin, is the Awakened One!*

*He has gone beyond all things;*

*he has attained to all knowledge and power;*

*his eye sees clearly in all things,*

*he has attained the end of all deeds;*

*he is freed with the ending of attachments.*

*That Buddha, the Blessed One in the world,*

*the Clear-eyed One, teaches Dhamma.*

*Go to him and ask—he will answer you.”* [[10]](#endnote-10)

♦ **People from other religious sectors**

Many prominent members of the other religious sectors, praised the wisdom of the Buddha and his skilfulness as a leader of a religious sector; some became his followers but others did not join him. During the time of the Blessed One, the Brahmins and Jains were the powerful religious sectors; often we can see from the scriptures how they opposed the Buddha and his followers.

◙ **Sunakkhatta Licchavi blaming and doubting the Buddha**

He was belonged to the Licchavis of Vesali and became a disciple of the Buddha and sometime was an attendant to him. He has requested the Blessed One to perform miracles and explain him, beginning of things; since the Blessed One refused, he was unhappy and left the Sangha and made deceptive statements of the Buddha as follows:

*“The recluse Gotama does not have any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. The recluse Gotama teaches a Dhamma [merely] hammered out by reasoning, following his own line of inquiry as it occurs to him, and when he teaches the Dhamma to anyone, it leads him when he practises it to the complete destruction of suffering.”*

When the Buddha came to know about Sunakkhatta’s stamen at Vesali he said:

“Sāriputta, the misguided man Sunakkhatta is angry and his words are spoken out of anger. Thinking to discredit the Tathāgata, he actually praises him; for it is praise of the Tathāgata to say of him: ‘*When he teaches the Dhamma to anyone, it leads him when he practises it to the complete destruction of suffering’”.[[11]](#endnote-11)*

◙ **Wanderer Pilotika Vacchāyana’s commendation of the Buddha**

On one occasion the Brahmin Jāṇussoṇi [[12]](#endnote-12) knowing that the wanderer Pilotika visited the Buddha asked him what he thinks about the lucidity of wisdom of the Buddha. Pilotika replied:

*“Sir, who am I to know the recluse Gotama’s lucidity of wisdom? One would surely have to be his equal to know the recluse Gotama’s lucidity of wisdom”.*

Then brahmin Jāṇussoṇi said:

*“Master Vacchāyana praises the recluse Gotama with high praise indeed”.*

Pilotika answered:

*“Sir, who am I to praise the recluse Gotama? The recluse Gotama is praised by the praised as best among gods and humans.”*

Then brahmin Jāṇussoṇi inquired how he has established such firm confidence of the recluse Gotama; and Pilotika gave a detailed statement regarding how he has confidence of the Blessed One and said this:

*“…I saw four footprints of the recluse Gotama, I came to the conclusion: ‘The Blessed One is fully enlightened, the Dhamma is well proclaimed by the Blessed One, the Sangha is practising the good way.’” [[13]](#endnote-13)*

**See**: MN: Cūḷahatthipadopama Sutta.

◙ **Saccaka Aggivessana [[14]](#endnote-14), follower of Nigaṇṭhanathaputtha debating with the Buddha**

According to MN: Cūḷasaccaka Sutt a, in one time, in Vesali, Saccaka approached Venerable Assaji and asked him: *‘how does the recluse Gotama discipline his disciples?* . But he was not in agreement with the statement of Venerable Assaji and said:

*“If we have heard what the recluse Gotama asserts, we have indeed heard what is disagreeable. Perhaps sometime or other we might meet Master Gotama and have some conversation with him. Perhaps we might detach him from that evil view.”*

Then Saccaka approached the assembly of Licchavis and invited them to come with him to see how he is going to defeat the Buddha in a debate and further elaborated thus:

*“…today there will be some conversation between me and the recluse Gotama. If the recluse Gotama maintains before me what was said by one of his famous disciples, the bhikkhu named Assaji, then just as a strong man might seize a long-haired ram by the hair and drag him to and drag him fro and drag him round about, so in debate I will drag the recluse Gotama to and drag him fro and drag him round about…”*

According to scriptures there was debate between the Blessed One and Saccaka; though he boasted that he could defeat the Buddha he was unable to breaks any of the logical reason of the Buddha and said:

*“Master Gotama, we were bold and impudent in thinking we could attack Master Gotama in debate. A man might attack a mad elephant and find safety, yet he could not attack Master Gotama and find safety. A man might attack a blazing mass of fire and find safety, yet he could not attack Master Gotama and find safety. A man might attack a terrible poisonous snake and find safety, yet he could not attack Master Gotama and find safety…” [[15]](#endnote-15)*

1. He was the first chief disciple of the Buddha, the foremost among those with great wisdom, for more detailed biographical account: see: Great Disciples of The Buddha by Bhikkhu Nyanaponika and Helmut Hecker. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. He was a great disciple of the Buddha ; and the foremost of those who can analyses in detail what had been stated by the Buddha in brief; see: AN:1: Foremost, p. 44. For details read: Mahākaccāna

   Master of Doctrinal Exposition by Bhikkhu Bodhi: Wheel No. 405/406, PBS. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. In SN: Vangisasamyutta include most of his verses, he was declared by the Buddha as who compose inspired verses; see: AN:1:Foremost,p. 44. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Since the Buddha speaks for the sake of security (khemāya), his speech is ‘secure,’ as it is the cause for the arising of security. Thus it is the foremost speech. See: SN: Notes: 511, p. 567. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Before becoming a nun, she was the consort of King Bimbisara, became a great bhikkhuni disciple of the Buddha, he declared her as foremost in wisdom. See: AN1: Foremst: p.44. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. **See:** KN: Therigātha: 6.3: Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato: www.suttacentral.net [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. She was the youngest sisters of Venerable Sāriputta, her verses are at Therigata: 196-203. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The interpretation of the verse: Of perfect name (anomanāma): of undefective name, of complete name, because he (the Buddha) possesses all excellent qualities. The seer of the subtle goal (or “meanings”: nipuṇatthadassiṃ): because he sees the fine, recondite meanings such as the diversity of aggregates, etc. He is the giver of wisdom (paññādadaṃ) by teaching the path of practice for the achievement of wisdom. Treading the noble path (ariye pathe kamamānaṃ) : the present tense is used with reference to the past, for the Blessed One had gone along the noble path on the site of the great enlightenment; he is not going along it now. See: SN: Notes: 99, p. 516. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Story of Bāvari who was an ascetic and later became a follower of the Buddha with his pupils, is elaborated in KN: Sn: Parāyānavagga: Vatthugātā: translated by Bhikkhi Sujato, w.w.w.Suttacentral.net. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. **See:** MN: Mahāsīhanāda Sutta. For further information of Sunakkhatta’s leaving the Sangha see: DN: Pāṭika Sutta. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. He was a wealthy and famous brahmin from the city of Sāvatthī had many encounters with the Blessed One ; established faith in Dhamma and became an ardent lay follower. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. The four prints of the Buddha are described in the sutta. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. He was considered as a debater and clever speaker and also a saint, see: MN: Notes: 369, p. 1099. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. See also MN: Mahasaccaka Sutta, per commentary: even though Saccaka did not …become established in the Three Refuges, the Buddha taught him two long suttas in order to deposit in him a mental impression (vāsānā) that would come to maturity in the future. For he foresaw that at a later time, after the Dispensation became established in Sri Lanka, Saccaka would be reborn there and would attain arahantship as the great arahant, Kāla Buddharakkhita Thera. See: MN: Notes: 394, p.1101. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)