

# Anthology of Discourses

Bhikkhu Sujato



# ANTHOLOGY OF DISCOURSES

A refreshing translation of the Suttanipāta



*translated and introduced by*

BHIKKHU SUJATO

Snp

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The little creeks flow on babbling,  
while silent flow the great rivers.

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ABOUT NĀLAKA  
*Nālakasutta*  
Sutta Nipāta 3.11:42



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# Preface to the Sutta Nipāta

To be written

# Introduction to Anthology of Discourses

*Bhikkhu Sujato, 2022*

To be written

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# ANTHOLOGY OF DISCOURSES

# The Serpent Chapter

Snp 1.1

## The Snake

*Uragasutta*

- 1.1      When anger surges, they drive it out,  
          as with medicine a snake's spreading venom.  
          Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
          as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 2.1      They've cut off greed entirely,  
          like a lotus plucked flower and stalk.  
          Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
          as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 3.1      They've cut off craving entirely,  
          drying up that swift-flowing stream.  
          Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
          as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 4.1      They've swept away conceit entirely,  
          as a fragile bridge of reeds by a great flood.  
          Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
          as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 5.1      In future lives they find no substance,  
          as an inspector of fig trees finds no flower.



Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
as a snake its old worn-out skin.

They hide no anger within, 6.1  
gone beyond any kind of existence.  
Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
as a snake its old worn-out skin.

Their mental vibrations are cleared away,<sup>1</sup> 7.1  
internally clipped off entirely.  
Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
as a snake its old worn-out skin.

They have not run too far nor run back, 8.1  
but have gone beyond all this proliferation.  
Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
as a snake its old worn-out skin.

They have not run too far nor run back, 9.1  
for they know that nothing in the world  
is what it seems.<sup>2</sup>  
Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
as a snake its old worn-out skin.

They have not run too far nor run back, 10.1  
knowing nothing is what it seems, free of greed.  
Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
as a snake its old worn-out skin.

---

1. Both Bodhi and Norman implicitly accept the commentarial reading here, i.e. that this refers to “wrong thoughts”. However the identical line at Ud 6.7:4.1 clearly refers to *jhāna*. Both also follow the commentary in reading *vidhūpitā* as “burning up”, but *vidhūpa* refers to clearing the mist, smoke, or incense.

2. Bodhi, Norman, and Thanissaro all render *vitatha* as “unreal”. Normally it’s used in the context of “true” speech or the “reality” or “unerringness” of say dependent origination. To say the whole world is “unreal” seems overly idealistic for early Buddhism, so I translate in accord with the apparent sense.

- 11.1      They have not run too far nor run back,  
              knowing nothing is what it seems, free of lust.  
              Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
              as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 12.1      They have not run too far nor run back,  
              knowing nothing is what it seems, free of hate.  
              Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
              as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 13.1      They have not run too far nor run back,  
              knowing nothing is what it seems, free of delusion.  
              Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
              as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 14.1      They have no underlying tendencies at all,  
              and are rid of unskillful roots,  
              Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
              as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 15.1      They have nothing born of distress at all,  
              that might cause them to come back to this world.  
              Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
              as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 16.1      They have nothing born of entanglement at all,  
              that would shackle them to a new life.  
              Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
              as a snake its old worn-out skin.
- 17.1      They've given up the five hindrances,  
              untroubled, rid of doubt, free of thorns.  
              Such a mendicant sheds this world and the next,  
              as a snake its old worn-out skin.

Snp 1.2

# With Dhaniya the Cowherd

## *Dhanyasutta*

- “I’ve boiled my rice and drawn my milk,” 1.1  
*said Dhaniya the cowherd,*  
 “I stay with my family along the bank of the Mahī.  
 My hut is roofed, my fire kindled:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”
- “I boil not with anger and have drawn out hard- 2.1  
 heartedness,”  
*said the Buddha,*  
 “I stay for one night along the bank of the Mahī.  
 My hut is wide open, my fire is quenched:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”
- “No gadflies or mosquitoes are found,” 3.1  
*said Dhaniya,*  
 “cows graze on the lush meadow grass.  
 They get by even when the rain comes:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”
- “I bound a raft and made it well,” 4.1  
*said the Buddha,*<sup>3</sup>  
 “and with it I crossed over, went beyond, and dispelled  
 the flood.  
 Now I have no need for a raft:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”
- “My wife is obedient, not wanton,” 5.1

---

3. Norman points out that this verse is not a proper response to the previous and suggests that a verse has been lost. I agree, but I disagree there is a contradiction in the sense. Rather, the verse tells a story over time. I translate to bring out the meaning.

*said Dhaniya,*  
 “long have we lived together happily.  
 I hear nothing bad about her:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”

6.1 “My mind is obedient and freed,”  
*said the Buddha,*  
 “long nurtured and well-tamed.  
 Nothing bad is found in me:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”

7.1 “I am self-employed,”  
*said Dhaniya,*  
 “and my healthy children likewise.<sup>4</sup>  
 I hear nothing bad about them:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”

8.1 “I am no-one’s lackey,”  
*said the Buddha,*  
 “with what I have earned I wander the world.  
 I have no need for wages:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”

9.1 “I have heifers and sucklings,”  
*said Dhaniya,*  
 “cows in calf and breeding cows.  
 I’ve also got a bull, leader of the herd here:  
 so rain, sky, if you wish.”

10.1 “I have no heifers or sucklings,”

---

4. I’m not convinced by the commentary’s “not separated”. It doesn’t seem to occur in this meaning elsewhere, and lacks a connection with the opening line. Surely the whole verse must be about the children, which requires that there be a comparison made with the first line. The point is, I think, that the children follow the father and have become self-sufficient. This also echoes better with the Buddha’s response.

- said the Buddha,*
- “no cows in calf or breeding cows.  
I haven’t got a bull, leader of the herd here:  
so rain, sky, if you wish.”
- “The stakes are driven in, unshakable,” 11.1  
*said Dhaniya,*
- “The grass halters are new and well-woven,  
not even the sucklings can break them:  
so rain, sky, if you wish.”
- “Like a bull I broke the bonds,” 12.1  
*said the Buddha,*
- “like an elephant I snapped the vine.  
I will never lie in a womb again:  
so rain, sky, if you wish.”
- Right then a thundercloud rained down, 13.1  
 soaking the uplands and valleys.  
 Hearing the sky rain down,  
 Dhaniya said this:
- “It is no small gain for us 14.1  
 that we have seen the Buddha.  
 We come to you for refuge, Seer.  
 O great sage, please be our Teacher.
- My wife and I, obedient, 15.1  
 shall lead the spiritual life under the Holy One<sup>5</sup>  
 Gone beyond birth and death,  
 we shall make an end of suffering.”

---

5. Norman and Bodhi read the middle form *carāmase* as imperative, apparently, but that doesn’t make sense to me; in this context optative would make more sense, but I am not aware of this form. Rather, I take it as the present indicative in the sense of definite future.

- 16.1 “Your children bring you delight!”  
*said Māra the Wicked,*  
 “Your cattle also bring you delight!  
 For attachments are a man’s delight;  
 without attachments there’s no delight.”
- 17.1 “Your children bring you sorrow,”  
*said the Buddha,*  
 “Your cattle also bring you sorrow.  
 For attachments are a man’s sorrow;  
 without attachments there are no sorrows.”

Snp 1.3

## The Rhinoceros Horn

*Khaggavisāṇasutta*

- 1.1 When you’ve laid down arms toward all creatures,  
 not harming even a single one,  
 don’t wish for a child, let alone a companion:  
 live alone like a rhino’s horn.
- 2.1 Those with close relationships have affection,  
 following which this pain arises.  
 Seeing this danger born of affection,  
 live alone like a rhino’s horn.
- 3.1 When feelings for friends and loved ones  
 are tied up in selfish love, you miss out on the goal.  
 Seeing this peril in intimacy,  
 live alone like a rhino’s horn.
- 4.1 As a spreading bamboo gets entangled,  
 so does concern for partners and children.  
 Like a bamboo shoot unimpeded,  
 live alone like a rhino’s horn.

- As a wild deer loose in the forest 5.1  
 grazes wherever it wants,  
 a smart person looking for freedom would  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- When among friends, whether staying in place 6.1  
 or going on a journey, you're always on call.  
 Looking for the uncoveted freedom,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- Among friends you have fun and games, 7.1  
 and for children you are full of love.  
 Though loathe to depart from those you hold dear,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- At ease in any quarter, unresisting, 8.1  
 content with whatever comes your way;  
 prevailing over adversities, dauntless,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- Even some renunciates are hard to please, 9.1  
 as are some layfolk dwelling at home.  
 Don't worry about others' children,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- Having shed the marks of the home life, 10.1  
 like the fallen leaves of the Shady Orchid Tree;  
 having cut the bonds of the home life, a hero would  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- If you find an alert companion, 11.1  
 a wise and virtuous friend,  
 then, overcoming all adversities,  
 wander with them, joyful and mindful.
- If you find no alert companion, 12.1

no wise and virtuous friend,  
 then, like a king who flees his conquered realm,  
 wander alone like a tusker in the wilds.

- 13.1 Clearly we praise the blessing of a friend,  
 it's good to be with friends your equal or better.  
 but failing to find them, eating blamelessly,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 14.1 Though made of shining gold, well-finished by a  
 smith,  
 when two bracelets share the same arm  
 they clash up against each other. Seeing this,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 15.1 Thinking, "So too, if I had a partner,  
 there'd be flattery or curses."<sup>6</sup>  
 Seeing this peril in the future,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 16.1 Sensual pleasures are diverse, sweet, delightful,  
 appearing in disguise they disturb the mind.  
 Seeing danger in the many kinds of sensual stimula-  
 tion,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 17.1 This is a calamity, a boil, a disaster,  
 an illness, a dart, and a danger for me.  
 Seeing this peril in sensuality,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 18.1 Heat and cold, hunger and thirst,  
 wind and sun, flies and snakes:

---

6. The exact nuance of this line is hard to pin down. Later Pali texts equate *abhiḷāpa* with "naming", but it doesn't seem to occur in any early texts with this sense. However *lapanā* is used in the sense of "flattery" in eg. MN 117:29.



having put up with all these things,  
live alone like a rhino's horn.

As a full-grown elephant, lotus-eating, magnificent, 19.1  
forsaking the herd,<sup>7</sup>  
stays where it wants in the forest,  
live alone like a rhino's horn.

It's impossible for one who delights in company 20.1  
to experience even temporary freedom.  
Heeding the speech of the Kinsman of the Sun,  
live alone like a rhino's horn.

Thinking, "I am one who has left warped views be- 21.1  
hind,  
has reached the sure way, has gained the path,  
has given rise to knowledge, and needs no-one to  
guide me",  
live alone like a rhino's horn.

No greed, no guile, no thirst, no slur, 22.1  
dross and delusion is smelted off;<sup>8</sup>  
free of hoping for anything in the world,  
live alone like a rhino's horn.

Avoid a wicked companion, 23.1  
blind to the good, habitually immoral.  
One ought not befriend the heedless and hankering,  
but  
live alone like a rhino's horn.

7. *Padumī* is uncertain, see Bodhi's note 475. But other Sanskrit sources attribute the epithet to the elephant's predilection to bathing and eating in lotus ponds, which would seem much more likely.

8. The reference is to the smelting of gold, AN 3.101:1.9.

- 24.1        Spend time with a learned expert who has memo-  
                  rized the teachings,  
                  an eloquent and uplifting friend.  
                  When you understand the meanings and have dis-  
                  pelled doubt,  
                  live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 25.1        When you realize that worldly fun and games  
                  and pleasure are unsatisfying, disregarding them,  
                  as one unadorned, a speaker of truth,  
                  live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 26.1        Children, partner, father, mother,  
                  wealth and grain and relatives:  
                  having given up sensual pleasures to this extent,  
                  live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 27.1        “This is a snare. Here there's hardly any happiness,  
                  little gratification, and it's full of drawbacks.  
                  It's a hook.” Knowing this, a thoughtful person would  
                  live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 28.1        Having burst apart the fetters,  
                  like a fish that tears the net and swims free,  
                  or a fire not returning to ground it has burned,  
                  live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 29.1        Eyes downcast, not footloose,  
                  senses guarded, mind protected,  
                  uncorrupted, not burning with desire,  
                  live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 30.1        Having shed the marks of the home life,  
                  like the fallen leaves of the Shady Orchid Tree,  
                  and gone forth in the ocher robe,  
                  live alone like a rhino's horn.

- Not wanton, nor rousing greed for tastes, 31.1  
 providing for no other, wandering indiscriminately  
 for alms,  
 not attached to this family or that,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- When you've given up five mental obstacles, 32.1  
 and expelled all corruptions,  
 and cut off affection and hate, being independent,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- When you've put pleasure and pain behind you, 33.1  
 and former happiness and sadness,  
 and gained equanimity serene and pure,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- With energy roused to reach the ultimate goal, 34.1  
 not sluggish in mind or lazy,  
 vigorous, strong and powerful,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- Not neglecting retreat and absorption, 35.1  
 always living in line with the teachings,  
 comprehending the danger in rebirths,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- One whose aim is the ending of craving— 36.1  
 diligent, clever, learned, mindful, resolute—  
 who has assessed the teaching and is bound for awak-  
 ening, should  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.
- Like a lion not startled by sounds, 37.1  
 like wind not caught in a net,  
 like water not sticking to a lotus,  
 live alone like a rhino's horn.

- 38.1 Like the fierce-fanged lion, king of beasts,  
who wanders as victor and master,  
you should frequent remote lodgings, and  
live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 39.1 In time, cultivate freedom through  
love, compassion, rejoicing, and equanimity.  
Not upset by anything in the world,  
live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 40.1 Having given up greed, hate, and delusion,  
having burst apart the fetters,  
unafraid at the end of life,  
live alone like a rhino's horn.
- 41.1 They befriend you and serve you for their own sake;  
these days it's hard to find friends lacking ulterior  
motive.  
Impure folk cleverly profit themselves—  
live alone like a rhino's horn.

## Snp 1.4

## With Bhāradvāja the Farmer

*Kasibhāradvājasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Magadhans in the Southern Hills near the brahmin village of Ekanāḷa. Now at that time the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Farmer had harnessed around five hundred plows, it being the season for sowing. Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to where Bhāradvāja the Farmer was working. Now at that time Bhāradvāja the Farmer was distributing food. Then the Buddha went to where the distribution was taking place and stood to one side.

Bhāradvāja the Farmer saw him standing for alms and said to 2.1  
him, “I plough and sow, ascetic, and then I eat. You too should  
plough and sow, then you may eat.”

“I too plough and sow, brahmin, and then I eat.” “I don’t see 3.1  
Master Gotama with a yoke or plow or plowshare or goad or oxen,  
yet he says: ‘I too plough and sow, brahmin, and then I eat.’”

Then Bhāradvāja the Farmer addressed the Buddha in verse: 4.1

“You claim to be a farmer, 5.1  
but I don’t see you farming.  
Tell me your farming when asked,  
so I can recognize your farming.”

“Faith is my seed, austerity my rain, 6.1  
and wisdom is my yoke and plough.  
Conscience is my pole, mind my strap,  
mindfulness my plowshare and goad.

Guarded in body and speech, 7.1  
I restrict my intake of food.  
I use truth as my scythe,  
and gentleness is my release.

Energy is my beast of burden, 8.1  
transporting me to a place of sanctuary.  
It goes without turning back  
where there is no sorrow.

That’s how to do the farming 9.1  
that has the Deathless as its fruit.  
When you finish this farming  
you’re released from all suffering.”

Then Bhāradvāja the Farmer filled a large bronze dish with milk- 10.1  
rice and presented it to the Buddha: “Eat the milk-rice, Master  
Gotama, you are truly a farmer. For Master Gotama does the farm-  
ing that has the Deathless as its fruit.”

- 11.1 “Food enchanted by a spell isn’t fit for me to eat.  
That’s not the principle of those who see, brahmin.  
The Buddhas reject things enchanted with spells.  
Since there is such a principle, brahmin, that’s how  
they live.
- 12.1 Serve with other food and drink  
the consummate one, the great hermit,  
with defilements ended and remorse stilled.  
For he is the field for the seeker of merit.”
- 13.1 “Then, Master Gotama, to whom should I give the milk-rice?”  
“Brahmin, I don’t see anyone in this world—with its gods, Māras,  
and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its  
gods and humans—who can properly digest this milk-rice, except  
for the Realized One or one of his disciples. Well then, brahmin,  
throw out the milk-rice where there is little that grows, or drop it  
into water that has no living creatures.”
- 14.1 So Bhāradvāja the Farmer dropped the milk-rice in water that  
had no living creatures. And when the milk-rice was placed in the  
water, it sizzled and hissed, steaming and fuming. Suppose there  
was an iron cauldron that had been heated all day. If you placed  
it in the water, it would sizzle and hiss, steaming and fuming. In  
the same way, when the milk-rice was placed in the water, it sizzled  
and hissed, steaming and fuming.
- 15.1 Then Bhāradvāja the Farmer, shocked and awestruck, went up  
to the Buddha, bowed down with his head at the Buddha’s feet, and  
said, “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting  
the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path  
to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes  
can see what’s there, Master Gotama has made the teaching clear  
in many ways. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching,  
and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth,  
the ordination in the Buddha’s presence?”

And Bhāradvāja the Farmer received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Bhāradvāja, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness. He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is no return to any state of existence." And Venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the perfected. 16.1

Snp 1.5

## With Cunda

*Cundasutta*

- "I ask the sage abounding in wisdom," 1.1  
*said Cunda the smith,*  
 "the Buddha, master of the teaching, free of craving,  
 best of men, excellent charioteer, please tell me this:  
 how many ascetics are there in the world?"
- "There are four ascetics, not a fifth." 2.1  
*said the Buddha to Cunda,*  
 "Being asked to bear witness, I will explain them to  
 you:<sup>9</sup>  
 the path-victor, the path-teacher,  
 the path-liver, and the path-wrecker."
- "Who is a path-victor according to the Buddhas?" 3.1  
*said Cunda the smith,*  
 "and how is one an unequaled path-explainer?"

---

9. *Sakkhipuṭṭho* is only elsewhere used in the context of being asked to bear witness in court. I think the context is relevant here, as the Buddha is offering personal testimony on a matter that otherwise he may not speak.

Tell me when asked about one who lives the path,  
then declare the path-wrecker.”

- 4.1 “Rid of doubt, free of thorns,  
delighting in quenching, not fawning,  
a guide for the world with its gods.  
The Buddhas say one such is victor of the path.
- 5.1 Knowing the ultimate as ultimate,  
they explain and analyze the teaching right here.  
That sage unstirred, with doubt cut off,  
is the second mendicant, I say, the path-teacher.
- 6.1 Living restrained and mindful on the path  
of the well-taught passages of teaching,<sup>10</sup>  
cultivating blameless states,  
is the third mendicant, I say, the path-liver.
- 7.1 Dressed like one true to their vows,  
pushy, rude, a corrupter of families,  
devious, unrestrained, chaff,  
the path-wrecker’s life is a sham.
- 8.1 A layperson who gets this,  
a learned, wise noble disciple,  
knows that “They are not all like that one’.  
So when they see them they don’t lose their faith.  
For how could one equate them—  
the corrupt with the uncorrupt, the pure with the  
impure?”

---

10. Norman and Bodhi both read *pada* as “way”, but it surely means “passage” as eg. AN 4.191:1.7.



## Snp 1.6

## Downfalls

*Parābhavasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
 Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then, late at  
 night, a glorious deity, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, went up  
 to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side. Standing to one side,  
 that deity addressed the Buddha in verse:

“We ask Gotama<sup>11</sup> 2.1  
 about a man’s downfall.  
 We have come to ask you sir:<sup>12</sup>  
 what leads to downfall?”<sup>13</sup>

“It’s easy to know success, 3.1  
 and downfall is just as easy.  
 One who loves the teaching succeeds,<sup>14</sup>  
 but a hater of the teaching meets their downfall.”

“We get what you’re saying, 4.1  
 this is the first downfall.  
 Tell us the second, Blessed One:  
 what leads to downfall?”

“The bad are dear to him, 5.1  
 he has no love for the good.  
 He believes the teaching of the bad;  
 and that leads to his downfall.”

“We get what you’re saying, 6.1

---

11. Several of the examples are gendered so I use “man”.

12. Reading *bhavantam* which is the regular form used with *Gotama*.

13. “Cause” or “reason” are not wrong, but they miss the force of the metaphor, which is about going from one state to another.

14. *Dhammakāmo* is apparently always used in this sense.

this is the second downfall.

Tell us the third, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”

7.1 “Fond of sleep, fond of company,  
a man who does no work;  
he’s lazy, marked by anger,  
and that leads to his downfall.”

8.1 “We get what you’re saying,  
this is the third downfall.  
Tell us the fourth, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”

9.1 “Though able, he does not look after  
his mother and father  
when elderly, past their prime,  
and that leads to his downfall.”

10.1 “We get what you’re saying,  
this is the fourth downfall.  
Tell us the fifth, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”

11.1 “He deceives with lies  
ascetics and brahmins  
and other renunciates,  
and that leads to his downfall.”

12.1 “We get what you’re saying,  
this is the fifth downfall.  
Tell us the sixth, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”

13.1 “A man with plenty of wealth—  
gold and food—

eats delicacies alone,  
and that leads to his downfall.”

“We get what you’re saying, 14.1  
this is the sixth downfall.  
Tell us the seventh, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”

“Vain of caste, wealth, 15.1  
and clan, a man  
looks down on his own family,  
and that leads to his downfall.”

“We get what you’re saying, 16.1  
this is the seventh downfall.  
Tell us the eighth, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”

“In womanizing, drinking, 17.1  
and gambling, a man  
wastes all that he has earned,  
and that leads to his downfall.”

“We get what you’re saying, 18.1  
this is the eighth downfall.  
Tell us the ninth, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”

“Not content with his own partners, 19.1  
he debauches himself with prostitutes,<sup>15</sup>  
and with others’ partners,  
and that leads to his downfall.”

“We get what you’re saying, 20.1  
this is the ninth downfall.

---

15. Both Norman and Bodhi read *dissati*, I read *dussati*.

Tell us the tenth, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”

- 21.1 “A man well past his prime  
marries a girl with budding breasts;  
he cannot sleep for jealousy,  
and that leads to his downfall.”
- 22.1 “We get what you’re saying,  
this is the tenth downfall.  
Tell us the eleventh, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”
- 23.1 “He places in authority  
a woman or a man  
who’s a drunkard and a spender,  
and that leads to his downfall.”
- 24.1 “We get what you’re saying,  
this is the eleventh downfall.  
Tell us the twelfth, Blessed One:  
what leads to downfall?”
- 25.1 “A man of little wealth and strong craving,  
born into an aristocratic family,  
sets his sights on kingship,  
and that leads to his downfall.
- 26.1 Seeing these downfalls in the world,  
an astute and noble person,  
accomplished in vision,  
will enjoy a world of grace.”

Snp 1.7

## The Lowlife

*Vasalasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
 Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then the Bud-  
 dha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered  
 Sāvattthī for alms. Now at that time in the brahmin Bhāradvāja the  
 Fire-Worshipper's home the sacred flame had been kindled and  
 the oblation prepared. Wandering indiscriminately for almsfood in  
 Sāvattthī, the Buddha approached Bhāradvāja the Fire-Worshipper's  
 house.

Bhāradvāja the Fire-Worshipper saw the Buddha coming off in 2.1  
 the distance and said to him, "Stop right there, shaveling! Right  
 there, fake ascetic! Right there, lowlife!"

When he said this, the Buddha said to him, "But brahmin, do 3.1  
 you know what is a lowlife or what are the qualities that make you  
 a lowlife?" "No I do not, Master Gotama. Please, Master Gotama,  
 teach me this matter so I can understand what is a lowlife or what  
 are the qualities that make you a lowlife." "Well then, brahmin,  
 listen and pay close attention, I will speak." "Yes sir," Bhāradvāja  
 the Fire-Worshipper replied. The Buddha said this:

"Irritable and hostile, 4.1  
 wicked and offensive,  
 a man deficient in view, deceitful:  
 know him as a lowlife.

He harms living creatures 5.1  
 born of womb or of egg,  
 and has no kindness for creatures:  
 know him as a lowlife.

He destroys and devastates 6.1  
 villages and towns,

a notorious oppressor:  
know him as a lowlife.

7.1 Whether in village or wilderness,  
he steals what belongs to others,  
taking what has not been given:  
know him as a lowlife.

8.1 Having fallen into debt,  
when pressed to pay up he flees, saying  
'I don't owe you anything!':  
know him as a lowlife.

9.1 Wanting some item or other,  
he attacks a person in the street  
and takes it:  
know him as a lowlife.

10.1 For his own sake or the sake of another,  
or for the sake of wealth, a man  
tells a lie when asked to bear witness:  
know him as a lowlife.

11.1 He is spied among the partners<sup>16</sup>  
of relatives and friends,  
by force or seduction:  
know him as a lowlife.

12.1 Though able, he does not look after  
his mother and father  
when elderly, past their prime:  
know him as a lowlife.

---

16. Both Norman and Bodhi add a term suggesting transgression here, in line with the commentary and the apparent sense. I don't, as I suspect the text is corrupt. Could *diss* be *duss*?

- He hits or verbally abuses  
his mother or father,  
brother, sister, or mother-in-law:  
know him as a lowlife. 13.1
- When asked about the good,  
he teaches what is bad,  
giving secretive advice:  
know him as a lowlife. 14.1
- Having done a bad deed, he wishes,  
'May no-one find me out!'  
His deeds are underhand:  
know him as a lowlife. 15.1
- When visiting another family  
he eats their delicious food,  
but does not return the honor:  
know him as a lowlife. 16.1
- He deceives with lies  
ascetics and brahmins  
and other renunciates:  
know him as a lowlife. 17.1
- When time comes to offer a meal  
to brahmins or ascetics,  
he abuses them and does not give:  
know him as a lowlife. 18.1
- He talks about what never happened,  
being wrapped up in delusion,  
chasing after some item or other:  
know him as a lowlife. 19.1
- He extols himself 20.1

and disparages others,  
brought down by his pride:  
know him as a lowlife.

21.1 He's a bully and a miser,  
of wicked desires, stingy, and devious,  
shameless, imprudent:  
know him as a lowlife.

22.1 He insults the Buddha  
or his disciple,  
whether lay or renunciate:  
know him as a lowlife.

23.1 He claims to be a perfected one,  
when he really is no such thing.  
In the world with its Brahmās,  
that crook is truly the lowest lowlife.  
These who are called lowlives  
I have explained to you.

24.1 You're not a lowlife by birth,  
nor by birth are you a brahmin.  
You're a lowlife by your deeds,  
by deeds you're a brahmin.

25.1 And also you should know  
according to this example.  
Sopaka the outcaste's son  
became renowned as Mātāṅga.

26.1 Mātāṅga achieved the highest fame  
so very hard to find.  
Lots of aristocrats and brahmins  
came to serve him.



He ascended the stainless highway 27.1  
 that leads to the heavens;  
 having discarded sensual desire,  
 he was reborn in a Brahmā realm.  
 His birth did not prevent him  
 from rebirth in the Brahmā realm.

Those born in a brahmin family 28.1  
 who recite as kinsmen of the hymns,  
 are often discovered  
 in the midst of wicked deeds.

Blameworthy in the present life, 29.1  
 and in the next, a bad destination.  
 Their birth does not prevent them  
 from blame or bad destiny.

You're not a lowlife by birth, 30.1  
 nor by birth are you a brahmin.  
 You're a lowlife by your deeds,  
 by deeds you're a brahmin."

When he had spoken, the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Fire- 31.1  
 Worshiper said to the Buddha, "Excellent, Master Gotama!  
 Excellent! ... From this day forth, may Master Gotama remember  
 me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

Snp 1.8

## The Discourse on Love

*Mettasutta*

This is what should be done by those who are skilled 1.1  
 in goodness,  
 and have known the state of peace.  
 Let them be able and upright, very upright,

easy to speak to, gentle and humble;

- 2.1      content and unburdensome,  
          unbusied, living lightly,  
          alert, with senses calmed,  
          courteous, not fawning on families.
  
- 3.1      Let them not do the slightest thing  
          that others might blame with reason.  
          May they be happy and safe!  
          May all beings be happy!
  
- 4.1      Whatever living creatures there are  
          with not a one left out—  
          frail or firm, long or large,  
          medium, small, tiny or round,
  
- 5.1      visible or invisible,  
          living far or near,  
          those born or to be born:  
          May all beings be happy!
  
- 6.1      Let none turn from another,  
          nor look down on anyone anywhere.  
          Though provoked or aggrieved,  
          let them not wish pain on each other.
  
- 7.1      Even as a mother would protect with her life  
          her child, her only child,  
          so too for all creatures  
          unfold a boundless heart.
  
- 8.1      With love for the whole world,  
          unfold a boundless heart.  
          Above, below, all round,  
          unconstricted, without enemy or foe.

When standing, walking, sitting, 9.1  
 or lying down while yet unwearied,  
 keep this ever in mind;  
 for this, they say, is a holy abiding in this life.

Avoiding harmful views, 10.1  
 virtuous, accomplished in insight,  
 with sensual desire dispelled,  
 they never return to a womb again.<sup>17</sup>

Snp 1.9

## With Hemavata

*Hemavatasutta*

“Today is the fifteenth day sabbath,” 1.1  
*said Sātāgira, the native spirit of mount Sātā,*  
 “a holy night is at hand.  
 Come now, let us see Gotama,  
 the Teacher of peerless name.”

“Isn’t his mind well-disposed,” 2.1  
*said Hemavata, the native spirit of the Himalayas,*  
 “impartial towards all creatures?  
 And aren’t his thoughts under control  
 when it comes to likes and dislikes?”

“His mind is well-disposed,” 3.1  
*said Sātāgira,*  
 “impartial towards all creatures.  
 His thoughts are under control  
 when it comes to his likes and dislikes.”

---

17. Note that *jātu* here is not connected to *jāti* “birth”. Rather, *na hi jātu* is an idiom meaning “absolutely not”. Commentary: *ekaṃseneva*.

- 4.1 “Doesn’t he not steal?”  
*said Hemavata,*  
 “And doesn’t he harm not a creature?  
 Isn’t he far from negligence?  
 And doesn’t he not neglect absorption?”
- 5.1 “He does not take what is not given,”  
*said Sātāgira,*  
 “and he harms not a creature.  
 He is far from negligence—  
 the Buddha does not neglect absorption.”
- 6.1 “Doesn’t he avoid lying?”  
*said Hemavata,*  
 “And doesn’t he not speak sharply?  
 Doesn’t he avoid divisive speech,<sup>18</sup>  
 as well as speaking nonsense?”
- 7.1 “He does not lie,”  
*said Sātāgira,*  
 “nor does he speak sharply.  
 He avoids divisive speech,  
 and speaks words of wise counsel.”<sup>19</sup>
- 8.1 “Doesn’t he find sensual pleasures unattractive?”  
*said Hemavata,*  
 “And isn’t his mind unclouded?  
 Hasn’t he escaped delusion?  
 And isn’t he seer of truths?”
- 9.1 “He does not find sensual pleasures attractive,”  
*said Sātāgira,*  
 “and his mind is unclouded.”

18. Norman has “untruth”, Bodhi “destructive”. Neither notices *vebhūtiyaṃ* at DN 30:2.21.2 and DN 28:11.2, where “divisive” fits all cases.

19. Lit. “the counselor speaks meaningfully.”

He has escaped all delusion—  
the Buddha is seer of truths.”

“Isn’t he accomplished in knowledge?” 10.1

*said Hemavata,*

“And doesn’t he live a pure life?  
Aren’t his defilements all ended?  
Doesn’t he have no future lives?”

“He is accomplished in knowledge,” 11.1

*said Sātāgira,*

“and he does live a pure life.  
His defilements are all ended,  
there are no future lives for him.”

“Accomplished is the sage’s mind 12.1

in action and in speech,  
and he’s accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
as per the teaching you praise.”<sup>20</sup>

“Accomplished is the sage’s mind 13.1

in action and in speech,  
and he’s accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
as per the teaching you rejoice in.

Accomplished is the sage’s mind 14.1

in action and in speech,  
and he’s accomplished in knowledge and conduct:  
come now, let us see Gotama.”

“The hero so lean, with antelope calves, 15.1

not greedy, eating little,  
the sage meditating alone in the forest,  
come now, let us see Gotama.

---

20. Read *pasamsasi* per PTS.

- 16.1      An elephant, wandering alone like a lion,  
unconcerned for sensual pleasures,  
let's approach him and ask about  
release from the snare of death."
- 17.1      "The communicator, the instructor,  
who has gone beyond all things,  
Awakened, beyond enmity and fear,  
let us ask Gotama."
- 18.1      "What has the world arisen in?"  
              *said Hemavata,*  
What does it get close to?  
By grasping what  
is the world troubled in what?"
- 19.1      "The world's arisen in six,"  
              *said the Buddha to Hemavata.*  
"It gets close to six.  
By grasping at these six,  
the world's troubled in six."
- 20.1      "What is that grasping  
by which the world is troubled?  
Tell us the exit when asked:  
how is one released from all suffering?"
- 21.1      "There are five kinds of sensual stimulation in the  
              world,  
and the mind is said to be the sixth.  
When you've discarded desire for these,  
you're released from all suffering.
- 22.1      This is the exit from the world,  
explained in accord with the truth.  
The way I've explained it is how

you're released from all suffering.”

“Who here crosses the flood, 23.1  
 Who crosses the deluge?  
 Who, not standing and unsupported,  
 does not sink in the deep?”

“Someone who is always endowed with ethics, 24.1  
 wise and serene,  
 inwardly reflective, mindful,  
 crosses the flood so hard to cross.

Someone who desists from sensual perception, 25.1  
 who has escaped all fetters,  
 and is finished with relishing of rebirth,  
 does not sink in the deep.”

“Behold him of wisdom deep who sees the subtle 26.1  
     meaning,  
 who has nothing, unattached to sensual life,  
 everywhere free,  
 the great hermit treading the holy road.

Behold him of peerless name who sees the subtle 27.1  
     meaning,  
 giver of wisdom, unattached to the realm of sensual-  
     ity:  
 see him, the all-knower, so very intelligent,  
 the great hermit treading the noble road.”

“It was a fine sight for us today, 28.1  
 a good dawn, a good rising,  
 to see the Awakened One,  
 the undefiled one who has crossed the flood.

These thousand native spirits 29.1

powerful and glorious,  
all go to you for refuge,  
you are our supreme Teacher.

- 30.1 We shall journey  
village to village, peak to peak,  
paying homage to the Buddha,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching!”

Snp 1.10

## With ĀḶavaka

*ĀḶavakasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near ĀḶavī in the haunt of the native spirit ĀḶavaka. Then the native spirit ĀḶavaka went up to the Buddha, and said to him: “Get out, ascetic!” Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went out. “Get in, ascetic!” Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went in.
- 2.1 For a second time ... And for a third time the native spirit ĀḶavaka said to the Buddha, “Get out, ascetic!” Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went out. “Get in, ascetic!” Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went in.
- 3.1 And for a fourth time the native spirit ĀḶavaka said to the Buddha, “Get out, ascetic!” “No, sir, I won’t get out. Do what you must.”
- 4.1 “I will ask you a question, ascetic. If you don’t answer me, I’ll drive you insane, or explode your heart, or grab you by the feet and throw you to the far shore of the Ganges!”
- 5.1 “I don’t see anyone in this world with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans who could do that to me. But anyway, ask what you wish.” Then the native spirit ĀḶavaka addressed the Buddha in verse:
- 6.1 “What’s a person’s best wealth?  
What brings happiness when practiced well?



What's the sweetest taste of all?

The one who they say has the best life: how do they  
live?"

"Faith here is a person's best wealth. 7.1  
the teaching brings happiness when practiced well.  
Truth is the sweetest taste of all.  
The one who they say has the best life lives by wis-  
dom."

"How do you cross the flood? 8.1  
How do you cross the deluge?  
How do you get over suffering?  
How do you get purified?"

"By faith you cross the flood, 9.1  
and by diligence the deluge.  
By energy you get past suffering,  
and you're purified by wisdom."

"How do you get wisdom? 10.1  
How do you earn wealth?  
How do you get a good reputation?  
How do you hold on to friends?  
How do the departed not grieve  
when passing from this world to the next?"

"One who is diligent and discerning 11.1  
gains wisdom by wanting to learn,  
having faith in the perfected ones,  
and the teaching for becoming extinguished.

Being responsible, acting appropriately, 12.1  
and working hard you earn wealth.  
Truthfulness wins you a good reputation.  
You hold on to friends by giving.

- 13.1 A faithful householder  
who has these four qualities  
does not grieve after passing away:  
truth, principle, steadfastness, and generosity.
- 14.1 Go ahead, ask others as well,  
there are many ascetics and brahmins.  
See whether anything better is found  
than truth, self-control, generosity, and patience.”
- 15.1 “Why now would I question  
the many ascetics and brahmins?  
Today I understand  
what’s good for the next life.
- 16.1 It was truly for my benefit  
that the Buddha came to stay at Āḷavī.  
Today I understand  
where a gift is very fruitful.
- 17.1 I myself will journey  
village to village, town to town,  
paying homage to the Buddha,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching!”

Snp 1.1.1

## Victory

*Vijayasutta*

- 1.1 Walking and standing,  
sitting and lying down,  
extending and contracting the limbs:  
these are the movements of the body.
- 2.1 Linked together by bones and sinews,

plastered over with flesh and hide,  
and covered by the skin,  
the body is not seen as it is.

It's full of guts and belly, 3.1  
liver and bladder,  
heart and lungs,  
kidney and spleen,

spit and snot, 4.1  
sweat and fat,  
blood and synovial fluid,  
bile and grease.

Then in nine streams 5.1  
the filth is always flowing.  
There is muck from the eyes,  
wax from the ears,

and snot from the nostrils. 6.1  
The mouth sometimes vomits  
bile and sometimes phlegm.  
And from the body, sweat and waste.

Then there is the hollow head 7.1  
all filled with brains.  
Governed by ignorance,  
the fool thinks it's lovely.

And when it lies dead, 8.1  
bloated and livid,  
discarded in a charnel ground,  
the relatives forget it.

It's devoured by dogs, 9.1  
by jackals, wolves, and worms.

It's devoured by crows and vultures,  
and any other creatures there.

10.1 A wise mendicant here,  
having heard the Buddha's words,  
fully understands it,  
for they see it as it is.

11.1 "As this is, so is that,  
as that is, so is this."  
They'd reject desire for the body  
inside and out.

12.1 That wise mendicant here  
rid of desire and lust,  
has found the deathless peace,  
extinguishment, the imperishable state.

13.1 This two-legged body is dirty and stinking,  
full of different carcasses,  
and oozing all over the place—  
but still it is cherished!

14.1 And if, on account of such a body,  
someone prides themselves  
or looks down on others—  
what is that but a failure to see?

Snp 1.12

## The Sage

*Munisutta*

1.1 Peril stems from intimacy,  
dust comes from a home.  
Freedom from home and intimacy:

that is the sage's vision.

Having cut down what's grown, they wouldn't re-plant,  
nor would they nurture what's growing.  
That's who they call a sage wandering alone,  
the great hermit has seen the state of peace.

Having assessed the fields and measured the seeds,<sup>21</sup>  
they wouldn't nurture them with moisture.  
Truly that sage sees the utter ending of rebirth;  
when logic's left behind, judgments no longer ap-  
ply.<sup>22</sup>

Understanding all the planes of rebirth,  
not wanting a single one of them,  
Truly that sage freed of greed  
need not strive, for they have reached the far shore.

The champion, all-knower, so very intelligent,  
unsullied in the midst of all things,  
has given up all, freed in the ending of craving:  
that's who the wise know as a sage.

Strong in wisdom, with precepts and observances  
intact,  
serene, loving absorption, mindful,

21. The commentary, followed by Norman, Bodhi, and Ñāṇapāḍīpa, all take *pa-māya* here in the sense of “crushed” (Sanskrit: *pramṛṇati*). However, *pamāya* occurs at Snp 4.12:17.1, where, being beside *vinicchaye* (“judge, assess”), it is clearly an absolute of *pamiṇāti* “having measured”. Here too it sits beside a word (*saṅkhāya*) having the sense to reckon or calculate. In the simile of rebirth and the field, the “seed” is consciousness, which belonging to the first noble truth is not “crushed” but “fully known”. If the seeds are already “crushed” then choosing not to water them (in the next line) is a tad redundant.

22. Compare the stock idiom *Saṅkhampi na upeti upanidhimpi na upeti ka-labhāgampi na upeti* at eg. SN 20.2:1.7; also Snp 5.7:6.3.

released from chains, kind, undefiled:  
that's who the wise know as a sage.

- 7.1 The diligent sage wandering alone,  
is unaffected by blame and praise—  
like a lion not startled by sounds,  
like wind not caught in a net,  
like water not sticking to a lotus.  
Leader of others, not by others led:  
that's who the wise know as a sage.
- 8.1 Steady as a post in a bathing-place  
when others speak endlessly against them,  
freed of greed, with senses stilled:  
that's who the wise know as a sage.
- 9.1 Steadfast, straight as a shuttle,  
horrified by wicked deeds,  
discerning the just and the unjust:  
that's who the wise know as a sage.
- 10.1 Restrained, they do no evil,  
young or middle-aged, the sage is self-controlled.  
Irreproachable, he does not insult anyone:  
that's who the wise know as a sage.
- 11.1 When one who lives on charity receives alms,  
from the top, the middle, or the leftovers,  
they think it unworthy to praise or put down:  
that's who the wise know as a sage.
- 12.1 The sage lives refraining from sex,  
even when young is not tied down,  
refraining from indulgence and negligence, freed:  
that's who the wise know as a sage.

- Understanding the world, the seer of the ultimate goal,  
the poised one who has crossed the flood and the ocean,  
has cut the ties, unattached and undefiled:  
that's who the wise know as a sage. 13.1
- The two are not the same, far apart in lifestyle and conduct—  
the householder providing for a wife, and the selfless one true to their vows. 14.1
- The unrestrained householder kills other creatures,  
while the restrained sage always protects living creatures.
- As the crested blue-necked peacock flying through the sky 15.1  
never approaches the speed of the swan,  
so the householder cannot compete with the mendicant,  
the sage meditating secluded in the woods.

# The Lesser Chapter

Snp 2.1

Gems

*Ratanasutta*

- 1.1      Whatever beings have gathered here,  
            on the ground or in the sky:  
            may beings all be of happy heart,  
            and listen carefully to what is said.
- 2.1      So pay heed, all you beings,  
            have love for humankind,  
            who day and night bring offerings;  
            please protect them diligently.
- 3.1      There's no wealth here or beyond,  
            no sublime gem in the heavens,  
            that equals the Realized One.  
            This sublime gem is in the Buddha:  
            by this truth, may you be well!
- 4.1      Ending, dispassion, the undying, the sublime,  
            attained by the Sakyan Sage immersed in samādhi;  
            there is nothing equal to that Dhamma.  
            This sublime gem is in the Dhamma:  
            by this truth, may you be well!



The purity praised by the highest Buddha  
 is said to be the “immersion with immediate fruit”;  
 no equal to that immersion is found.  
 This sublime gem is in the Dhamma:  
 by this truth, may you be well! 5.1

The eight individuals praised by the good,  
 are the four pairs of the Holy One’s disciples;  
 they are worthy of religious donations,  
 what’s given to them is very fruitful.  
 This sublime gem is in the Saṅgha:  
 by this truth, may you be well! 6.1

Dedicated to Gotama’s dispensation,  
 strong-minded, free of sense desire,  
 they’ve attained the goal, plunged into the deathless,  
 and enjoy the quenching they’ve freely gained.  
 This sublime gem is in the Saṅgha:  
 by this truth, may you be well! 7.1

As a well planted boundary-pillar  
 is not shaken by the four winds,  
 I say a good person is like this,  
 who sees the noble truths in experience.  
 This sublime gem is in the Saṅgha:  
 by this truth, may you be well! 8.1

Those who fathom the noble truths  
 taught by the one of deep wisdom,  
 do not take an eighth life,  
 even if they are hugely negligent.  
 This sublime gem is in the Saṅgha:  
 by this truth, may you be well! 9.1

When they attain to vision  
 they give up three things: 10.1

identity view, doubt, and any  
attachment to precepts and observances.

- 11.1 They're freed from the four places of loss,  
and unable to perform the six grave crimes.  
This sublime gem is in the Saṅgha:  
by this truth, may you be well!
- 12.1 Even if they do a bad deed  
by body, speech, or mind,  
they are unable to conceal it;  
they say this inability applies to one who has seen the  
truth.  
This sublime gem is in the Saṅgha:  
by this truth, may you be well!
- 13.1 Like a tall forest tree crowned with flowers  
in the first month of summer;  
that's how he taught the superb Dhamma,  
leading to quenching, the ultimate benefit.  
This sublime gem is in the Buddha:  
by this truth, may you be well!
- 14.1 The superb, knower of the superb, giver of the superb,  
bringer of the superb;  
taught the superb Dhamma supreme.  
This sublime gem is in the Buddha:  
by this truth, may you be well!
- 15.1 The old is ended, nothing new is produced.  
their minds have no desire for future rebirth.  
Withered are the seeds, there's no desire for growth,  
those wise ones are extinguished just like this lamp.  
This sublime gem is in the Saṅgha:  
by this truth, may you be well!

Whatever beings have gathered here, 16.1  
 on the ground or in the sky:  
 the Realized One is honored by gods and humans!  
 We bow to the Buddha! May you be safe!

Whatever beings have gathered here, 17.1  
 on the ground or in the sky:  
 the Realized One is honored by gods and humans!  
 We bow to the Dhamma! May you be safe!

Whatever beings have gathered here, 18.1  
 on the ground or in the sky:  
 the Realized One is honored by gods and humans!  
 We bow to the Saṅgha! May you be safe!

### Snp 2.2

## Putrefaction

### *Āmagandhasutta*

“The good eat properly obtained 1.1  
 millet, wild grains, broomcorn,  
 greens, tubers, and squashes.  
 They don’t lie to get what they want.

But when you eat delicious food, 2.1  
 nicely cooked and prepared, and offered by others,<sup>23</sup>  
 enjoying a dish of fine rice,  
 Kassapa, you eat putrefaction.

‘Putrefaction is not appropriate for me’— 3.1  
 so you said, kinsman of Brahmā.  
 Yet here you are enjoying a dish of fine rice,  
 nicely cooked with the flesh of fowl.

23. *Dinnam* and *payatam* are synonyms.

I'm asking you this, Kassapa:  
what do you take to be putrefaction?"

- 4.1 "Killing living creatures, mutilation, murder, abduction;  
stealing, lying, cheating and fraud,  
learning crooked spells, adultery:<sup>24</sup>  
this is putrefaction, not eating meat.
- 5.1 People here with unbridled sensuality,  
greedy for tastes, mixed up in impurity,  
nihilists, immoral, intractable:  
this is putrefaction, not eating meat.
- 6.1 Brutal and rough backbiters,  
pitiless and arrogant betrayers of friends,  
misers who never give anything:  
this is putrefaction, not eating meat.
- 7.1 Anger, vanity, obstinacy, contrariness,  
deceit, jealousy, boastfulness,  
haughtiness, wicked associates:  
this is putrefaction, not eating meat.
- 8.1 The ill-behaved, debt-evaders, slanderers,  
business cheats and con-artists,  
vile men committing depravity:  
this is putrefaction, not eating meat.
- 9.1 People here who can't stop harming living creatures,  
taking from others, intent on hurting,  
immoral, cruel, harsh, lacking regard for others:  
this is putrefaction, not eating meat.
- 10.1 Greedy, hostile, aggressive to others,

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24. Read *kujja*.

and addicted to evil—those beings pass into dark-  
 ness,  
 falling headlong into hell:  
 this is putrefaction, not eating meat.

Not fish or flesh or fasting, 11.1  
 being naked or shaven, or dreadlocks or dirt,  
 not rough hides or serving the sacred flame,  
 or the many austerities in the world aimed at immor-  
 tality,  
 not hymns or oblations, sacrifices or seasonal obser-  
 vances,  
 will cleanse a mortal not free of doubt.

Guarding the streams of sense impressions, wander 12.1  
 with faculties conquered,  
 standing on the teaching, delighting in sincerity and  
 gentleness.  
 The wise have escaped their chains and given up all  
 pain;  
 they don't cling to the seen and the heard."

The Buddha explained this matter to him again and 13.1  
 again,  
 until the master of hymns understood it.  
 It was illustrated with colorful verses  
 by the sage free of putrefaction, unattached, hard to  
 trace.

Having heard the fine words of the Buddha, 14.1  
 that are free of putrefaction, getting rid of all suffer-  
 ing;  
 humbled, he bowed to the Realized One,  
 and right away begged to go forth.

Snp 2.3

Conscience

*Hirisutta*

- 1.1      Flouting conscience, loathing it,  
          saying “I’m on your side”,  
          but not following up in deeds—  
          know they’re not on your side.
  
- 2.1      Some say nice things to their friends  
          without following it up.  
          The wise will recognize  
          one who talks without doing.
  
- 3.1      No true friend relentlessly  
          suspects betrayal, looking for fault.  
          One on whom you rest, like a child on the breast,  
          is a true friend, not split from you by others.
  
- 4.1      One whose reward is the fruit  
          of bearing the burden of service  
          develops a happy state,  
          producing joy and attracting praise.
  
- 5.1      One who has drunk the nectar of seclusion  
          and the nectar of peace,  
          free of stress, free of evil,  
          drinks the joyous nectar of Dhamma.

## Snp 2.4

## Blessings

*Mangalasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
 Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then, late at  
 night, a glorious deity, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up  
 to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side. Standing to one side,  
 that deity addressed the Buddha in verse:

“Many gods and humans 2.1  
 have thought about blessings  
 desiring well-being:  
 declare the highest blessing.”

“Not to fraternize with fools, 3.1  
 but to fraternize with the wise,  
 and honoring those worthy of honor:  
 this is the highest blessing.

Living in a suitable region, 4.1  
 having made merit in the past,  
 being rightly resolved in oneself,  
 this is the highest blessing.

Education and a craft, 5.1  
 discipline and training,  
 and well-spoken speech:  
 this is the highest blessing.

Caring for mother and father, 6.1  
 kindness to children and partners,  
 and unstressful work:  
 this is the highest blessing.

Giving and righteous conduct, 7.1

kindness to relatives,  
blameless deeds:  
this is the highest blessing.

8.1 Desisting and abstaining from evil,  
avoiding alcoholic drinks,  
diligence in good qualities:  
this is the highest blessing.

9.1 Respect and humility,  
contentment and gratitude,  
and timely listening to the teaching:  
this is the highest blessing.

10.1 Patience, being easy to admonish,  
the sight of ascetics,  
and timely discussion of the teaching:  
this is the highest blessing.

11.1 Austerity and celibacy  
seeing the noble truths,  
and realization of extinguishment:  
this is the highest blessing.

12.1 Though touched by worldly things,  
their mind does not tremble;  
sorrowless, stainless, secure,  
this is the highest blessing.

13.1 Having completed these things,  
undefeated everywhere;  
everywhere they go in safety:  
this is their highest blessing.”



## Snp 2.5

## With Spiky

*Sūcilomasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Gayā 1.1  
 on the cut-stone ledge in the haunt of Spiky the native spirit. Now  
 at that time the native spirits Shaggy and Spiky were passing by not  
 far from the Buddha. So Shaggy said to Spiky, “That’s an ascetic.”  
 “That’s no ascetic, he’s a faker! I’ll soon find out whether he’s an  
 ascetic or a faker.”

Then Spiky went up to the Buddha and leaned up against his 2.1  
 body, but the Buddha pulled away. Then Spiky said to the Buddha,  
 “Are you afraid, ascetic?” “No, sir, I’m not afraid. But your touch is  
 nasty.”

“I will ask you a question, ascetic. If you don’t answer me, I’ll 3.1  
 drive you insane, or explode your heart, or grab you by the feet and  
 throw you to the far shore of the Ganges!”

“I don’t see anyone in this world with its gods, Māras, and Bra- 4.1  
 hmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and  
 humans who could do that to me. But anyway, ask what you wish.”  
 Then Spiky addressed the Buddha in verse:

“Where do greed and hate come from? 5.1  
 From where spring discontent, desire, and terror?  
 Where do the mind’s thoughts originate,  
 like a crow let loose by boys.”

“Greed and hate come from here; 6.1  
 from here spring discontent, desire, and terror;  
 here’s where the mind’s thoughts originate,  
 like a crow let loose by boys.

Born of affection, originating in oneself, 7.1  
 like the shoots from a banyan’s trunk;  
 the many kinds of attachment to sensual pleasures

are like camel's foot creeper strung through the  
woods.

- 8.1 Those who understand where they come from  
get rid of them—listen up, spirit!  
They cross this flood so hard to cross,  
not crossed before, so as to not be reborn.”

Snp 2.6

## A Righteous Life

*Kapilasutta (dhammacariyasutta)*

- 1.1 A righteous life, a spiritual life,  
they call this the supreme treasure.  
But if someone goes forth  
from the lay life to homelessness
- 2.1 who is of scurrilous character,  
a beast and a bully,  
their life gets worse,  
as poison grows inside them.
- 3.1 A mendicant who loves to argue,  
wrapped in delusion,  
doesn't even know what's been explained  
in the Dhamma taught by the Buddha.
- 4.1 Harassing those who are evolved,  
governed by ignorance,  
they don't know that corruption  
is the path that leads to hell.
- 5.1 Entering the underworld,  
passing from womb to womb, from darkness to dark-  
ness,

such a mendicant  
falls into suffering after death.

One such as that is 6.1  
like a sewer  
brimful with years of filth  
for it's hard to clean one full of grime.

Mendicants, knowing that someone is like this, 7.1  
attached to the lay life,  
of wicked desires and wicked intent,  
of bad behavior and alms-resort,

then having gathered in harmony, 8.1  
you should expel them.  
Throw out the trash!  
Get rid of the rubbish!

And sweep away the scraps— 9.1  
they're not ascetics, they just think they are.  
When you've thrown out those of wicked desires,  
of bad behavior and alms-resort,

dwell in communion, ever mindful, 10.1  
the pure with the pure.  
Then in harmony, alert,  
you'll make an end to suffering."

Snp 2.7

## Brahmanical Traditions

*Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then several  
old and well-to-do brahmins of Kosala—elderly and senior, who

were advanced in years and had reached the final stage of life—went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side and said to the Buddha: “Master Gotama, are the ancient traditions of the brahmins seen these days among brahmins?” “No, brahmins, they are not.” “If you wouldn’t mind, Master Gotama, please teach us the ancient traditions of the brahmins.” “Well then, brahmins, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

- 2.1        “The ancient hermits used to be  
              restrained and austere.  
              Having given up the five sensual titillations,  
              they lived for their own true good.
- 3.1        Brahmins used to own no cattle,  
              nor gold or grain.  
              Chanting was their wealth and grain,  
              which they guarded as a gift from god.
- 4.1        Food was prepared for them  
              and left beside their doors.  
              People believed that food prepared in faith  
              should be given to them.
- 5.1        With colorful clothes,  
              clothes and bedding,  
              prosperous nations and countries  
              honored those brahmins.
- 6.1        Brahmins used to be inviolable and  
              invincible, protected by principle.  
              No-one ever turned them away  
              from the doors of families.
- 7.1        For forty-eight years

they led the spiritual life.<sup>25</sup>

The brahmins of old pursued  
their quest for knowledge and conduct.

Brahmins never transgressed with another,<sup>26</sup> 8.1  
nor did they purchase a wife.  
They lived together in love,  
joining together by mutual consent.

Brahmins never approached their wives for sex 9.1  
during the time outside  
the fertile half of the month  
after menstruation.

They praised celibacy and morality, 10.1  
integrity, gentleness, and austerity,  
gentleness and harmlessness,  
and also patience.

He who was supreme among them, 11.1  
godlike, staunchly vigorous,  
did not engage in sex  
even in a dream.

Training in line with their duties, 12.1  
many smart people here  
praised celibacy and morality,  
and also patience.

They begged for rice, 13.1  
bedding, clothes, ghee, and oil.

25. *Komāra* is hypermetrical and has probably been inserted by analogy with AN 5.192:5.4.

26. According to Baudh 2.1.2.13, *agamyā gamanaṁ* means not transgressing with women considered inappropriate, such as the female friend of a male or female teacher. It doesn't mean "outside caste".

Having collected them legitimately,  
they arranged a sacrifice.

- 14.1 But they slew no cows  
while serving at the sacrifice.  
Like a mother, father, or brother,  
or some other relative,  
cows are our best friends,  
the fonts of medicine.
- 15.1 They give food and health,  
and beauty and happiness.  
Knowing these benefits,  
they slew no cows.
- 16.1 The brahmins were delicate and tall,  
beautiful and glorious.  
They were keen on all the duties  
required by their own traditions.<sup>27</sup>  
So long as they continued in the world,  
people flourished happily.
- 17.1 But perversion crept into them  
little by little when they saw  
the splendor of the king  
and the ladies in all their finery.
- 18.1 Their chariots were harnessed with thoroughbreds,  
well-made with bright canopies,  
and their homes and houses were  
neatly laid out in measured rows.<sup>28</sup>

27. *Kiccākicca* means “all kinds of duties, various business”, not “what is to be done and not done” (per both Norman and Bodhi). See eg. Thag 16.10:20.2.

28. A line elsewhere only used to describe hell. Perhaps the Buddha was no fan of the suburbs.

They were lavished with herds of cattle, 19.1  
and furnished with bevvies of lovely ladies.  
This extravagant human wealth  
was coveted by the brahmins.

They compiled hymns to that end,<sup>29</sup> 20.1  
approached King Okkāka and said,  
'You have plenty of wealth and grain.  
Sacrifice! For you have much treasure.  
Sacrifice! For you have much wealth.'

Persuaded by the brahmins, 21.1  
the king, chief of charioteers, performed  
horse sacrifice, human sacrifice,  
the sacrifices of the 'stick-casting', the 'royal soma  
drinking', and the 'unbarred'.  
When he had carried out these sacrifices,  
he gave riches to the brahmins.

There were cattle, bedding, and clothes, 22.1  
and ladies in all their finery;  
chariots harnessed with thoroughbreds,  
well-made with bright canopies;

and lovely homes, all 23.1  
neatly laid out in measured rows.  
Having furnished them with different grains,  
he gave riches to the brahmins.

When they got hold of that wealth, 24.1  
they arranged to store it up.

---

29. I'm not entirely convinced that *ganthetvā* means "composed" here. It's the only early usage in this sense, and the reading is derived from the highly polemical commentary. It may mean just that they "put together" i.e. "selected" favorable passages. This would be less nasty to the brahmins and more historically plausible (as we know that the Vedas are, in fact, old.)

Falling under the sway of desire,  
 their craving grew and grew.  
 They compiled hymns to that end,  
 approached King Okkāka once more and said,

- 25.1      ‘Like water and earth,  
             gold, riches, and grain,  
             are cows for humankind,  
             as they are essential for creatures.  
             Sacrifice! For you have much treasure.  
             Sacrifice! For you have much wealth.’
- 26.1      Persuaded by the brahmins,  
             the king, chief of charioteers,  
             had many hundred thousand cows<sup>30</sup>  
             slain at the sacrifice.
- 27.1      Neither with feet nor with horns  
             do cows harm anyone at all.  
             Cows meek as lambs,  
             supply buckets of milk.  
             But taking them by the horns,  
             the king slew them with a sword.
- 28.1      At that the gods and the ancestors,  
             with Indra, the titans and monsters,  
             roared out: ‘This is a crime against nature!’  
             as the sword fell on the cows.
- 29.1      There used to be three kinds of illness:  
             greed, starvation, and old age.  
             But due to the slaughter of cows,  
             this grew to be ninety-eight.

---

30. No doubt an exaggeration, but sacrifices on this scale have been performed in modern times.



This unnatural violence 30.1  
 has been passed down as an ancient custom.  
 Killing innocent creatures,  
 the sacrificers forsake righteousness.

And that is how this mean old practice 31.1  
 was criticized by sensible people.  
 Wherever they see such a thing,  
 folk criticize the sacrificer.

With righteousness gone, 32.1  
 merchants and workers were split,  
 as were many aristocrats,  
 and wives looked down on their husbands.

Aristocrats and Brahmā's kinsmen 33.1  
 and others protected by their clan,  
 neglecting the lessons of ancestry,  
 fell under the sway of sensual pleasures."

When he had spoken, those well-to-do brahmins said to the 34.1  
 Buddha, "Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day  
 forth, may Master Gotama remember us as lay followers who have  
 gone for refuge for life."

### Snp 2.8

## The Boat

### *Dhamma (nāvā) sutta*

Honor the person from whom you would learn the 1.1  
 teaching,  
 as the gods honor Indra.  
 Then they will have confidence in you,  
 and being learned, they reveal the teaching.

Heeding well, a wise pupil 2.1

practicing in line with that teaching  
grows intelligent, discerning, and subtle  
through diligently sticking close to such a person.

- 3.1 But associating with a petty fool  
who falls short of the goal, jealous,  
then unable to discern the teaching in this life,  
one proceeds to death still plagued by doubts.
- 4.1 It's like a man who has plunged into a river,  
a rushing torrent in spate.  
As they are swept away downstream,  
how could they help others across?
- 5.1 Just so, one unable to discern the teaching,  
who hasn't studied the meaning under the learned,  
not knowing it oneself, still plagued by doubts,  
how could they help others to contemplate?
- 6.1 But one who has embarked on a strong boat  
equipped with rudder and oar,  
would bring many others across there  
with skill, care, and intelligence.
- 7.1 So too one who understands—a knowledge master,  
evolved, learned, and unflappable—  
can help others to contemplate,  
so long as they are prepared to listen carefully.
- 8.1 That's why you should spend time with a good per-  
son,  
intelligent and learned.  
Having understood the meaning, putting it into prac-  
tice,  
one who has realized the teaching may find happi-  
ness.

Snp 2.9

# What Morality?

*Kimsīlasutta*

“With what morality, what conduct, 1.1  
fostering what deeds,  
would a person lay the foundations right,  
and reach the highest goal?”

“Honoring elders without jealousy, 2.1  
they’d know the time to visit their teachers.  
Treasuring the chance for a Dhamma talk,  
they’d listen carefully to the well-spoken words.

At the right time, they’d humbly enter 3.1  
the teachers’ presence, leaving obstinacy behind.  
They’d call to mind and put into practice  
the meaning, the teaching, self-control, and the spiri-  
tual life.

Delighting in the teaching, enjoying the teaching, 4.1  
standing on the teaching, investigating the teaching,  
they’d never say anything that degraded the teaching,  
but would be guided by genuine words well-spoken.

Giving up mirth, prayer, weeping, ill will, 5.1  
deception, fraud, greed, conceit,  
aggression, crudeness, stains, and indulgence,  
they’d wander free of vanity, steadfast.

Understanding is the essence of well-spoken words, 6.1  
stillness is the essence of learning and understanding.  
Wisdom and learning do not flourish  
in a hasty and negligent person.

- 7.1 Those happy with the teaching proclaimed by the  
Noble One  
are supreme in speech, mind, and deed.  
Settled in peace, gentleness, and stillness,  
they’ve realized the essence of learning and wisdom.”

Snp 2.10

## Get Up!

*Uṭṭhānasutta*

- 1.1 Get up and meditate!  
What’s the point in your sleeping?  
How can the afflicted slumber  
when injured by an arrow strike?
- 2.1 Get up and meditate!  
Train hard for peace!  
The King of Death has caught you heedless—  
don’t let him fool you under his sway.
- 3.1 Needy gods and humans  
are held back by clinging:  
get over it.  
Don’t let the moment pass you by.  
For if you miss your moment  
you’ll grieve when sent to hell.
- 4.1 Negligence is always dust;  
dust follows right behind negligence.  
Through diligence and knowledge,  
pluck out the dart from yourself.

Snp 2.11

## With Rāhula

*Rāhulasutta*

- “Does familiarity breed contempt,  
even for the man of wisdom?  
Do you honor he who holds aloft  
the torch for all humanity?” 1.1
- “Familiarity breeds no contempt  
for the man of wisdom.  
I always honor he who holds aloft  
the torch for all humanity.” 2.1
- “One who’s given up the five sensual stimulations,  
so pleasing and delightful,  
and who’s left the home life out of faith—  
let them make an end to suffering! 3.1
- Mix with spiritual friends,  
stay in remote lodgings,  
secluded and quiet,  
and eat in moderation. 4.1
- Robes, almsfood,  
requisites and lodgings:  
don’t crave such things;  
don’t come back to this world again. 5.1
- Be restrained in the monastic code,  
and the five sense faculties,  
With mindfulness immersed in the body,  
be full of disillusionment. 6.1
- Turn away from the feature of things  
that’s attractive, provoking lust. 7.1

With mind unified and serene,  
meditate on the ugly aspects of the body.

- 8.1 Meditate on the signless,  
give up the tendency to conceit;  
and when you comprehend conceit,  
you will live at peace.”

- 9.1 That is how the Buddha regularly advised Venerable Rāhula with these verses.

Snp 2.12

## Vaṅgīsa and His Mentor Nigrodhakappa

*Nigrodhakappa (vaṅgīsa) sutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Āḷavī, at the Aggāḷava Tree-shrine. Now at that time it was not long after Venerable Vaṅgīsa’s mentor, the senior monk named Nigrodhakappa, had become extinguished. Then as Vaṅgīsa was in private retreat this thought came to his mind: “Has my mentor become extinguished or not?” Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Vaṅgīsa came out of retreat and went to the Buddha. He bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Just now, sir, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind. ‘Has my mentor become extinguished or not?’” Then Venerable Vaṅgīsa got up from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha, and addressed him in verse:

- 2.1 “I ask the teacher unrivaled in wisdom,  
who has cut off all doubts in this very life:  
a monk has died at Aggāḷava, who was  
well-known, famous, and quenched.

- 3.1 Nigrodhakappa was his name;  
it was given to that brahmin by you, Blessed One.

He wandered in your honor, yearning for freedom,  
energetic, a resolute Seer of Truth.

O Sakyan, all-seer, 4.1  
we all wish to know about that disciple.  
Our ears are eager to hear,  
for you are the most excellent teacher.

Cut off our doubt, declare this to us; 5.1  
your wisdom is vast, tell us of his quenching!  
All-seer, speak among us,  
like the thousand-eyed Sakka in the midst of the  
gods!

Whatever ties there are, or paths to delusion, 6.1  
or things on the side of unknowing, or that are bases  
of doubt  
vanish on reaching a Realized One,  
for his eye is the best of all people's.

If no man were ever to disperse corruptions, 7.1  
like the wind dispersing the clouds,  
darkness would shroud the whole world;  
not even brilliant men would shine.

The wise are bringers of light; 8.1  
my hero, that is what I think of you.  
We've come for your discernment and knowledge:  
here in this assembly, declare to us about Kappāyana.

Swiftly send forth your sweet, sweet voice, 9.1  
like a goose stretching its neck, gently honking,  
lucid-flowing, with lovely tone:  
alert, we all listen to you.

You have entirely abandoned birth and death; 10.1

restrained and pure, I urge you to speak the Dhamma!  
For ordinary people have no wish-granter,<sup>31</sup>  
but Realized Ones have a comprehensibility-  
granter.<sup>32</sup>

11.1 Your answer is definitive, and we will adopt it,  
for you have perfect understanding.  
We raise our joined palms one last time,  
one of unrivaled wisdom, don't deliberately confuse  
us.

12.1 Knowing the noble teaching from top to bottom,  
unrivaled hero, don't deliberately confuse us.  
As a man in the baking summer sun would long for  
water,  
I long for your voice, so let the sound rain down.

13.1 Surely Kappāyana did not lead the spiritual life in  
vain?  
Did he realize quenching,  
or did he still have a remnant of defilement?  
Let us hear what kind of liberation he had!"

14.1 "He cut off craving for mind and body in this very life,"

*said the Buddha,*  
"the river of darkness that had long lain within him.  
He has entirely crossed over birth and death."

31. *Kāmakāro*: "wish-maker". At Kv 23.3 *issariyakāmakārikā* means a "sovereign act of will". Commentary here says ordinary people may not simply know or say what they want.

32. *Saṅkheyyakāro*: "comprehensibility-maker". *Saṅkheyya* is always used in the sense of "calculable, comprehensible", not "after comprehension". The point, in line with the previous and succeeding verses, is that the Buddha explains things in a way that makes them clear. It's a clever pair of lines, best served by sticking close to the literal form.



So declared the Blessed One, the leader of the five.

“Now that I have heard your words, 15.1  
seventh of sages, I am confident.  
My question, it seems, was not in vain,  
the brahmin did not deceive me.

As he said, so he did— 16.1  
he was a disciple of the Buddha.  
He cut the net of death the deceiver,  
so extended and strong.

Blessed One, Kappāyana saw 17.1  
the starting point of grasping.  
He has indeed gone far beyond  
Death’s domain so hard to pass.”

Snp 2.13

## The Right Way to Wander

*Sammāparibbājanīyasutta*

“I ask the sage abounding in wisdom— 1.1  
crossed-over, gone beyond, quenched, steadfast:  
when a mendicant has left home, expelling sensuality,  
what’s the right way to wander the world?”

“When they’ve eradicated superstitions,” 2.1  
*said the Buddha,*  
“about celestial portents, dreams, or bodily marks;  
with the stain of superstitions left behind,  
they’d rightly wander the world.

A mendicant ought dispel desire 3.1  
for pleasures human or divine;  
with rebirth transcended and truth comprehended,

they'd rightly wander the world.

- 4.1 Putting divisiveness behind them,  
a mendicant gives up anger and stinginess;  
with favoring and opposing left behind,  
they'd rightly wander the world.
- 5.1 When the loved and the unloved are both left behind,  
not grasping or dependent on anything;  
freed from all things that fetter,  
they'd rightly wander the world.
- 6.1 Finding no substance in attachments,  
rid of desire for things they've acquired,  
independent, needing no-one to guide them,  
they'd rightly wander the world.
- 7.1 Not hostile in speech, mind, or deed,  
they've rightly understood the teaching.  
Aspiring to the state of quenching,  
they'd rightly wander the world.
- 8.1 Not pridefully thinking, 'they bow to me';  
though reviled, they'd still stay in touch;<sup>33</sup>  
not besotted when getting food from others,  
they'd rightly wander the world.
- 9.1 When greed and craving to live again are cast off,  
a mendicant refrains from violence and abduction;  
rid of doubt, free of thorns,  
they'd rightly wander the world.

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33. Neither Norman nor Bodhi note *sandhiyatimeva* in identical context at AN 3.132:3.2. There Bodhi has "remains on friendly terms", I have "stay in touch". I assume there is a confusion of the negative which is required to give the correct sense. If I'm right, the corruption must predate the commentary.

- Knowing what is suitable for themselves, 10.1  
 a mendicant would hurt no-one in the world;  
 understanding the teaching in accord with reality,  
 they'd rightly wander the world.
- They have no underlying tendencies at all, 11.1  
 and are rid of unskillful roots;  
 free of hope, with no need for hope,  
 they'd rightly wander the world.
- Defilements ended, conceit given up, 12.1  
 beyond all manner of desire;  
 tamed, quenched, and steadfast,  
 they'd rightly wander the world.
- Faithful, learned, seer of the sure path, 13.1  
 the wise one takes no side among factions;  
 rid of greed, hate, and repulsion,  
 they'd rightly wander the world.
- A purified victor with veil drawn back, 14.1  
 among worldly things master, transcendent, stilled;  
 expert in knowledge of conditions' cessation,  
 they'd rightly wander the world.
- They're over speculating on the future or past, 15.1  
 and understand what it means to be pure;  
 freed from all the sense fields,  
 they'd rightly wander the world.
- The state of peace is understood, the truth is compre- 16.1  
 hended,  
 they've openly seen defilements cast off;  
 and with the ending of all attachments,  
 they'd rightly wander the world."

- 17.1 “Clearly, Blessed One, it is just as you say.  
One who lives like this is a tamed mendicant,  
beyond all fetters and yokes:  
they’d rightly wander the world.”

Snp 2.14

## With Dhammika

*Dhammikasutta*

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then the lay follower Dhammika, together with five hundred lay followers, went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and addressed him in verse:

- 2.1 “I ask you, Gotama, whose wisdom is vast:  
what does one do to become a good disciple,  
both one who has left the home,  
and the lay followers staying at home?
- 3.1 For you understand the course and destiny  
of the world with all its gods.  
There is no equal to you who sees the subtle meaning,  
for you are the Buddha most excellent, they say.
- 4.1 Having experienced all knowledge,  
you explain the teaching out of compassion for be-  
ings.  
All-seer, you have drawn back the veil,  
and immaculate, you shine on the whole world.
- 5.1 The dragon king Erāvaṇa, hearing you called ‘Victor’,  
came into your presence.  
He consulted with you then, having heard your  
words,

left consoled, saying ‘Excellent!’

And King Kuvera Vessavaṇa also 6.1  
 approached to ask about the teaching.  
 You also answered him, O wise one,  
 and hearing you he too was consoled.

Those teachers of other paths given to debate, 7.1  
 whether Ājīvakas or Jains,  
 all fail to overtake you in wisdom,  
 like a standing man next to a sprinter.

Those brahmins given to debate, 8.1  
 some of whom are quite senior,  
 all end up beholden to you for the meaning,  
 and others too who think themselves debaters.

So subtle and pleasant is the teaching 9.1  
 that is well proclaimed by you, Blessed One.  
 It’s all we long to hear. So when asked,  
 O Best of Buddhas, tell us!

All these mendicants have gathered, 10.1  
 and the layfolk too are here to listen.  
 Let them hear the teaching the immaculate one dis-  
     covered,  
 like gods listening to the fine words of Vāsava.”

“Listen to me, mendicants, I will educate you 11.1  
 in the cleansing teaching; all bear it in mind.  
 An intelligent person, seeing the meaning,  
 would adopt the deportment proper to a renunci-  
     ate.<sup>34</sup>

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34. *Atthadaso*: Bodhi follows comm in “seeing the good”, Norman has “seeing the goal”. I usually have “seeing the meaning”, and I think that is supported here. It is at the start of the practice, after several lines talking about the

- 12.1 No way would a mendicant go out at the wrong time;  
at the right time, they'd walk the village for alms.  
For chains bind one who wanders outside the right  
time,  
which is why the Buddhas avoid it.
- 13.1 Sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches,  
which drive beings mad—  
dispel desire for such things,  
and enter for the morning meal at the right time.
- 14.1 After receiving alms for the day,  
on returning a mendicant would sit in private alone.  
Inwardly reflective, they'd curb their mind  
from outside things, keeping themselves collected.
- 15.1 Should they converse with a disciple,  
with anyone else, or with a mendicant,  
they'd bring up only the sublime teaching,  
not dividing or blaming.
- 16.1 For some contend in debate,  
but we praise not those of little wisdom.  
In place after place they are bound in chains,  
for they send their mind over there far away.
- 17.1 Alms, a dwelling, a bed and seat,  
and water for rinsing the dust from the cloak—  
after hearing the teaching of the Holy One,  
a disciple of splendid wisdom would use these after  
appraisal.
- 18.1 That's why, when it comes to alms and lodgings,  
and water for rinsing the dust from the cloak,

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teaching. The point is, I think, that a reflective person doesn't just hear the teaching, but understands the point of it and puts it into practice.

a mendicant is unsullied in the midst of these things,  
like a droplet on a lotus-leaf.

Now I shall tell you the householder's duty, 19.1  
doing which one becomes a good disciple.  
For one burdened with possessions does not get to  
realize  
the whole of the mendicant's practice.

They'd not kill any creature, nor have them killed, 20.1  
nor grant permission for others to kill.  
They've laid aside violence towards all creatures  
frail or firm that there are in the world.

Next, a disciple would avoid knowingly 21.1  
taking anything not given at all,  
they'd not get others to do it, nor grant them permis-  
sion to steal;  
they'd avoid *all* theft.

A sensible person would avoid the unchaste life, 22.1  
like a burning pit of coals.  
But if unable to remain chaste,  
they'd not transgress with another's partner.

In a council or assembly, 23.1  
or one on one, they would not lie.  
They'd not get others to lie, nor grant them permis-  
sion to lie;  
they'd avoid *all* untruths.

A householder espousing this teaching 24.1  
would not consume liquor or drink.  
They'd not get others to drink, nor grant them per-  
mission to drink;  
knowing that ends in intoxication.

- 25.1 For drunken fools do bad things,  
and encourage other heedless folk.  
Reject this field of demerit,  
the maddening, deluding frolic of fools.
- 26.1 You shouldn't kill living creatures, or steal,  
or lie, or drink alcohol.  
Be celibate, refraining from sex,  
and don't eat at night, the wrong time.
- 27.1 Not wearing garlands or applying perfumes,  
you should sleep on a low bed, or a mat on the  
ground.  
This is the eight-factored sabbath, they say,  
explained by the Buddha, who has gone to suffering's  
end.
- 28.1 Then having rightly undertaken the sabbath  
complete in all its eight factors  
on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fort-  
night,  
as well as on the fortnightly special displays,
- 29.1 on the morning after the sabbath  
a clever person, rejoicing with confident heart,  
would distribute food and drink  
to the mendicant Saṅgha as is fitting.
- 30.1 One should rightfully support one's parents,  
and undertake a legitimate business.  
A diligent layperson observing these duties  
ascends to the gods called Self-luminous."



# The Great Chapter

Snp 3.1

## Going Forth

*Pabbajjāsutta*

“I shall extol going forth  
with the example of the seer,  
the course of inquiry that led to  
his choice to go forth. 1.1

‘This life at home is cramped,  
a realm of dirt.’ 2.1  
‘The life of one gone forth is like an open space.’  
Seeing this, he went forth.

Having gone forth, he shunned 3.1  
bad deeds of body.  
And leaving verbal misconduct behind,  
he purified his livelihood.

The Buddha went to Rājagaha, 4.1  
the Mountainfold of the Magadhans.  
He betook himself for alms,  
replete with excellent marks.

Bimbisāra saw him 5.1  
while standing atop his longhouse.

Noticing that he was endowed with marks,  
he said the following:

- 6.1      ‘Pay heed, sirs, to this one,  
            handsome, majestic, radiant;<sup>35</sup>  
            accomplished in deportment,  
            he looks just a plough’s length in front.
- 7.1      Eyes downcast, mindful,  
            unlike one from a low family.  
            Let the king’s messengers run out,  
            and find where the mendicant will go.’
- 8.1      The messengers sent out  
            followed right behind, thinking  
            ‘Where will the mendicant go?  
            Where shall he find a place to stay?’
- 9.1      Wandering indiscriminately for alms,  
            sense-doors guarded and well restrained,  
            his bowl was quickly filled,  
            aware and mindful.
- 10.1     Having wandered for alms,  
            the sage left the city.  
            He betook himself to Mount Paṇḍava,  
            thinking, ‘Here is the place I shall stay.’
- 11.1     Seeing that he had arrived at a place to stay,  
            the messengers withdrew nearby,<sup>36</sup>  
            but one of them returned  
            to inform the king.

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35. *Suci* here refers to his appearance, as agreed by the commentary, so “pure” is not very useful.

36. Reading *tato*.

- ‘Great king, the mendicant  
is on the east flank of Mount Paṇḍava.  
There he sits, like a tiger or a bull,  
like a lion in a mountain cave.’ 12.1
- Hearing the messenger’s report,  
the aristocrat set out  
hurriedly in his fine chariot  
towards Mount Paṇḍava. 13.1
- He went as far as vehicles could go,  
then dismounted from his chariot,  
approached on foot,  
and reaching him, drew near. 14.1
- Seated, the king greeted him  
and made polite conversation.  
When the courtesies were over,  
he said the following: 15.1
- ‘You are young, just a youth,  
a lad in the prime of life.  
You are endowed with beauty and stature,  
like an aristocrat of good lineage  
in glory at the army’s head,  
surrounded by a troop of elephants.  
I offer you pleasures—enjoy them!  
But please tell me your lineage by birth.’ 16.1
- ‘Up north lies a nation, great king,  
on the slope of the Himalayas,  
full of wealth and strength,  
led by one loyal to the Kosalan.’<sup>37</sup> 18.1

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37. Following the suggestion in PTS dict under *niketa* that it is related to *ketu*.

- 19.1 They are of the Solar clan,  
their lineage is the Sakyans.  
I have gone forth from that family—  
I do not yearn for sensual pleasure.
- 20.1 Seeing the danger in sensual pleasures,  
seeing renunciation as sanctuary,  
I shall go on to strive;  
that is where my mind delights.’”

Snp 3.2

## Striving

*Padhānasutta*

- 1.1 “During my time of resolute striving  
on the bank of the Nerañjara River,  
I was meditating very hard  
for the sake of finding sanctuary.
- 2.1 Namucī approached,  
speaking words of kindness:  
‘You’re thin, discolored,  
on the verge of death.
- 3.1 Death has a thousand parts of you,  
one fraction is left to life.  
Live sir! Life is better!  
Living, you can make merits.
- 4.1 While leading the spiritual life  
and serving the sacred flame,  
you can pile up abundant merit—  
so what will striving do for you?
- 5.1 Hard to walk is the path of striving,

hard to do, a hard challenge to win.’”

These are the verses Māra spoke  
as he stood beside the Buddha.

When Māra had spoken in this way, 6.1  
the Buddha said this:

“O Wicked One, kinsman of the negligent,  
you’re here for your own purpose.

I have no need for 7.1  
the slightest bit of merit.  
Those with need for merit  
are fit for Māra to address.

I have faith and energy too, 8.1  
and wisdom is found in me.  
When I am so resolute,  
why do you beg me to live?

The rivers and streams 9.1  
might be dried by the wind,  
so why, when I am resolute,  
should it not dry up my blood?

And while the blood is drying up, 10.1  
the bile and phlegm dry too.  
And as my muscles waste away,  
my mind grows more serene.  
And all the stronger grow mindfulness  
and wisdom and immersion.

As I meditate like this, 11.1  
having attained the supreme feeling,<sup>38</sup>

---

38. While this whole sutta flirts with the idea of self-mortification, the commentary, followed by Bodhi, takes it to the next level here, identifying *vedanā* as extreme suffering. No doubt in the previous verse such suffering might

my mind has no interest in sensual pleasures:  
 behold a being's purity!

- 12.1      Sensual pleasures are your first army,  
             the second is called discontent,  
             hunger and thirst are the third,  
             and the fourth is said to be craving.
- 13.1      Your fifth is dullness and drowsiness,  
             the sixth is said to be cowardice,  
             your seventh is doubt,  
             contempt and obstinacy are your eighth.
- 14.1      Profit, praise, and honor,  
             and misbegotten fame;  
             the extolling of oneself  
             while scorning others.
- 15.1      This is your army, Namucī,  
             the strike force of the Dark One.  
             Only a hero can defeat it,  
             but in victory there lies bliss.
- 16.1      Let me gird myself—<sup>39</sup>  
             so what if I die!<sup>40</sup>  
             I'd rather die in battle  
             than live on in defeat.

---

apply, but we have just been told that the faculties, including *samādhi* have grown strong. The next line indicates freedom from sensuality. All this agrees with the normal Sutta description of the feeling in *jhāna*.

39. The meaning of these lines is quite obscure. The *muñja* was used for the brahmin's girdle, and as such became an epithet of Vishnu and Shiva. The sense of "girdle" in English conveys the idea of preparing oneself for a righteous challenge, "gird thy loins". I take *parihare* as optative.

40. *Dhiratthu* is a curse, lit. "damn my life". But it's hard to render as a literal curse without sounding like it's weird, swearing, or casting a spell.

- Here some ascetics and brahmins 17.1  
are swallowed up, not to be seen again.  
They do not know the path  
traveled by those true to their vows.
- Seeing Māra ready on his mount, 18.1  
surrounded by his bannered forces,  
I shall meet them in battle—  
they'll never make me retreat!
- That army of yours has never been beaten 19.1  
by the world with all its gods.  
Yet I shall smash it with wisdom,  
like an unfired pot with a stone.<sup>41</sup>
- Having brought my thoughts under control, 20.1  
and established mindfulness well,  
I shall wander from country to country,  
guiding many disciples.
- Diligent and resolute, 21.1  
following my instructions,  
they will proceed despite your will,  
to where there is no sorrow.”
- “For seven years I followed 22.1  
step by step behind the Blessed One.  
I found no vulnerability  
in the mindful Awakened One.
- A crow once circled a stone 23.1  
that looked like a lump of fat.  
‘Perhaps I’ll find something tender,’ it thought,  
‘perhaps there’s something tasty.’

---

41. And unfired pot also used as simile for weakness at MN 122:27.1.

- 24.1 But finding nothing tasty,  
the crow left that place.  
Like the crow that pecked the stone,  
I leave Gotama disappointed.”
- 25.1 So stricken with sorrow  
that his harp dropped from his armpit,  
that spirit, downcast,  
vanished right there.

## Snp 3.3

## Well-Spoken Words

*Subhāsitasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!” “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 “Mendicants, speech that has four factors is well spoken, not poorly spoken. It’s blameless and is not criticized by sensible people. What four? It’s when a mendicant speaks well, not poorly; they speak on the teaching, not against the teaching; they speak pleasantly, not unpleasantly; and they speak truthfully, not falsely. Speech with these four factors is well spoken, not poorly spoken. It’s blameless and is not criticized by sensible people.” That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:
- 3.1 “Good people say that well-spoken words are foremost;  
second, speak on the teaching, not against it;  
third, speak pleasantly, not unpleasantly;  
and fourth, speak truthfully, not falsely.”
- 4.1 Then Venerable Vaṅḡisa got up from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha,



and said, “I feel inspired to speak, Blessed One! I feel inspired to speak, Holy One!” “Then speak as you feel inspired,” said the Buddha. Then Vaṅḡsa extolled the Buddha in his presence with fitting verses:

“Speak only such words  
that do not hurt yourself  
nor harm others;  
such speech is truly well spoken. 5.1

Speak only pleasing words,  
words gladly welcomed. 6.1  
Pleasing words are those  
that bring nothing bad to others.

Truth itself is the undying word:  
this is an eternal truth. 7.1  
Good people say that the teaching and its meaning  
are grounded in the truth.

The words spoken by the Buddha 8.1  
for realizing the sanctuary, extinguishment,  
for the attainment of vision,  
this really is the best kind of speech.”

#### Snp 3.4

### With Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā on the Sacrificial Cake

*Pūraḷāsa (sundarikabhāradvāja) sutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the 1.1  
Kosalan lands on the bank of the Sundarikā river. Now at that time  
the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja was serving the sacred flame and  
performing the fire sacrifice on the bank of the Sundarikā. Then he  
looked all around the four quarters, wondering, “Now who might

eat the leftovers of this offering?” He saw the Buddha meditating at the root of a certain tree with his robe pulled over his head. Taking the leftovers of the offering in his left hand and a pitcher in the right he approached the Buddha.

- 2.1 When he heard Sundarikabhāradvāja’s footsteps the Buddha uncovered his head. Sundarikabhāradvāja thought, “This man is shaven, he is shaven!” And he wanted to turn back. But he thought, “Even some brahmins are shaven. Why don’t I go to him and ask about his birth?” Then the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja went up to the Buddha, and said to him, “Sir, in what caste were you born?”

- 3.1 Then the Buddha addressed Sundarikabhāradvāja in verse:

- 4.1 “I am no brahmin, nor am I a prince,  
nor merchant nor anything else.  
Fully understanding the clan of ordinary people,  
I wander in the world owning nothing, reflective.

- 5.1 Clad in my cloak, I wander without home,  
my hair shorn, quenched.  
Since I’m unburdened by youngsters,<sup>42</sup>  
it’s inappropriate to ask me about clan.”

- 6.1 “Actually sir, when brahmins meet they politely  
ask each other whether they are brahmins.”

- 7.1 “Well, if you say that you’re a brahmin,  
and that I am not,  
I shall question you on the Gāyatrī Mantra,<sup>43</sup>  
with its three lines and twenty-four syllables.”

- 8.1 “On what grounds have hermits and men,

42. Norman and Bodhi both follow comm. here without comment: *manussehi*. But *māṇava* is not used elsewhere in this sense (PTS Dict’s ref to Thig 7.1 notwithstanding), nor does such a sense seem to be attested in the Sanskrit dictionaries. The context is the Buddha’s unattachment to “clan” and it surely has the sense here of “youngling”, either children or students.

43. It’s a translation: we should use the normal word used these days.

aristocrats and brahmins here in the world  
performed so many different sacrifices to the gods?”

“During a sacrifice, should a past master, a knowledge  
master,  
receive an oblation, it profits the donor, I say.” 9.1

“Then clearly my oblation will be profitable,” 10.1  
*said the brahmin,*  
“since I have met such a knowledge master.  
It’s because I’d never met anyone like you  
that others ate the sacrificial cake.”

“So then, brahmin, since you have approached me 11.1  
as a seeker of the good, ask.<sup>44</sup>  
Perhaps you may find here someone intelligent,  
peaceful, unclouded, untroubled, with no need for  
hope.”

“Master Gotama, I like to sacrifice 12.1  
and wish to perform a sacrifice. Please advise me,  
for I do not understand  
where an oblation is profitable; tell me this.”

“Well then, brahmin, lend an ear, I will teach you the Dhamma. 13.1

Don’t ask about birth, ask about conduct; 14.1  
for any wood can surely generate fire.  
A steadfast sage, even though from a low class family,  
is a thoroughbred checked by conscience.

Tamed by truth, fulfilled by taming, 15.1  
a complete knowledge master who has completed  
the spiritual journey—

---

44. Norman and Bodhi both have “approach and ask”, but *upasaṅkamma* is absolute: he is already there.

that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

16.1 Those who have left sensuality behind, wandering  
homeless,  
self-controlled, straight as a shuttle—  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

17.1 Those freed of greed, with senses stilled,  
like the moon released from the eclipse—  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

18.1 They wander the world unimpeded,  
always mindful, calling nothing their own—  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

19.1 Having left sensuality behind, wandering tri-  
umphant,  
knowing the end of rebirth and death,  
extinguished and cool as a lake:  
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

20.1 Good among the good, far from the bad,  
the Realized One has infinite wisdom.  
Unsullied in this world and the next:  
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

21.1 In whom dwells no deceit or conceit,  
rid of greed, unselfish, with no need for hope,  
with anger eliminated, quenched,  
a brahmin rid of sorrow's stain:  
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

He has given up the mind's home, 22.1  
 and has no possessions at all.  
 Not grasping to this world or the next:  
 the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

Serene, he has crossed the flood, 23.1  
 and has understood the teaching with ultimate view.  
 With defilements ended, bearing his final body:  
 the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

In whom desire to be reborn, and caustic speech 24.1  
 are cleared and ended, they are no more;  
 that knowledge master, everywhere free:  
 the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

He has escaped his chains, he's chained no more, 25.1  
 among those caught in conceit he is free of conceit;  
 he has fully understood suffering with its field and  
 ground:  
 the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

Not relying on hope, seeing seclusion, 26.1  
 well past the views proclaimed by others.  
 In him there are no supporting conditions at all:  
 the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

He has comprehended all things, high and low, 27.1  
 cleared them and ended them, so they are no more.  
 Peaceful, freed in the ending of grasping:  
 the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

He sees the utter ending of rebirth's fetter, 28.1  
 and has swept away all manner of desire.  
 Pure, stainless, immaculate, flawless:  
 the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.

- 29.1 Not seeing himself in terms of a self,  
he is stilled, upright, and steadfast.  
Imperturbable, kind, wishless:  
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.
- 30.1 He harbors no delusions within at all,  
he has insight into all things.  
He bears his final body,  
attained to the state of grace, the supreme awakening.  
That's how the purity of a spirit is defined:  
the Realized One is worthy of the sacrificial cake.”
- 31.1 “Let my oblation be a true offering,  
since I have found such a knowledge master!  
I see Brahmā in person! Accept my offering, Blessed  
One:  
please eat my sacrificial cake.”
- 32.1 “Food enchanted by a spell isn't fit for me to eat.  
That's not the principle of those who see, brahmin.  
The Buddhas reject things enchanted with spells.  
Since there is such a principle, brahmin, that's how  
they live.
- 33.1 Serve with other food and drink  
the consummate one, the great hermit,  
with defilements ended and remorse stilled.  
For he is the field for the seeker of merit.”
- 34.1 “Please, Blessed One, help me understand:  
now that I have encountered your teaching,  
when I look for someone during a sacrifice,  
who should eat the religious donation of one like  
me?”
- 35.1 “One who is rid of aggression,

whose mind is unclouded,  
who is liberated from sensual pleasures,  
and who has dispelled dullness.

One who has erased boundaries and limits, 36.1  
expert in birth and death,  
a sage, blessed with sagacity.  
When such a person comes to the sacrifice,

get rid of your scowl! 37.1  
Honor them with joined palms,  
and venerate them with food and drink,  
and in this way your religious donation will succeed.”

“The Buddha is worthy of the sacrificial cake, 38.1  
he is the supreme field of merit,  
Recipient of gifts from the whole world,  
what’s given to the worthy one is very fruitful.”

Then the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja said to the Buddha, 39.1  
“Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the  
overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to  
the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes  
can see what’s there, Master Gotama has made the teaching clear in  
many ways. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and  
to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the  
ordination in the Buddha’s presence?” And the brahmin Sundarika  
Bhāradvāja received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha’s  
presence. And soon after, he became one of the perfected.

Snp 3.5

## With Māgha

*Māghasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain. Then the brahmin student Māgha approached the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha:
- 2.1 "I'm a giver, Master Gotama, a donor; I am bountiful and committed to charity. I seek wealth in a principled manner, and with that legitimate wealth I give to one person, to two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred people or even more. Giving and sacrificing like this, Master Gotama, do I accrue much merit?"
- 3.1 "Indeed you do, student. A giver or donor who is bountiful and committed to charity, who seeks wealth in a principled manner, and with that legitimate wealth gives to one person, or up to a hundred people or even more, accrues much merit." Then Māgha addressed the Buddha in verse:
- 4.1 "I ask the bountiful Gotama,"  
*said Māgha,*  
 "wearing an ochre robe, wandering homeless.  
 Suppose a lay donor who is committed to charity  
 makes a sacrifice seeking merit, looking for merit.  
 Giving food and drink to others here,  
 how is their offering purified?"
- 5.1 "Suppose a lay donor who is committed to charity,"  
*replied the Buddha,*  
 "makes a sacrifice seeking merit, looking for merit,  
 giving food and drink to others here:



such a one would succeed due to those who are worthy of donations.”<sup>45</sup>

“Suppose a lay donor who is committed to charity,” 6.1  
*said Māgha,*

“makes a sacrifice seeking merit, looking for merit,  
 giving food and drink to others here:  
 explain to me who is worthy of donations.”

“Those who wander the world unattached, 7.1  
 consummate, restrained, owning nothing:  
 that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
 should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

Those who have cut off all fetters and bonds, 8.1  
 tamed, liberated, untroubled, with no need for hope:  
 that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
 should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

Those who are released from all fetters, 9.1  
 tamed, liberated, untroubled, with no need for hope:  
 that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
 should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

Having given up greed, hate, and delusion, 10.1  
 with defilements ended, the spiritual journey completed:  
 that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
 should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

Those in whom dwells no deceit or conceit, 11.1  
 with defilements ended, the spiritual journey completed:

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45. Bodhi translates *ārādhaye* as simple present tense here (“succeeds”) and in the identical line below as imperative (“should accomplish”). Norman has the optative mood in both cases, which is surely correct.

that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

- 12.1 Those rid of greed, unselfish, with no need for hope,  
with defilements ended, the spiritual journey completed:  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

- 13.1 Those not fallen prey to cravings,  
who, having crossed the flood, live unselfishly:  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

- 14.1 Those with no craving at all in the world  
to any form of existence in this life or the next:  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

- 15.1 Those who have left sensuality behind, wandering  
homeless,  
self-controlled, straight as a shuttle:  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

- 16.1 Those freed of greed, with senses stilled,  
like the moon released from the eclipse:  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

- 17.1 Those peaceful ones free of greed and anger,  
for whom there are no destinies, being rid of them in  
this life:  
that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

They've given up rebirth and death completely, 18.1  
 and have gone beyond all doubt:  
 that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
 should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

Those who live as their own island, 19.1  
 everywhere free, owning nothing:  
 that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
 should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

Those here who know this to be true: 20.1  
 'This is my last life, there are no future lives':  
 that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
 should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice.

A knowledge master, loving absorption, mindful, 21.1  
 who has reached awakening and is a refuge for many:  
 that is where a brahmin seeking merit  
 should bestow a timely offering as sacrifice."

"Clearly my questions were not in vain!" 22.1  
*said Māgha,*  
 "The Buddha has explained to me who is worthy of  
 donations.

You are the one here who knows this to be true,  
 for truly you understand this matter.

Suppose a lay donor who is committed to charity 23.1  
 makes a sacrifice seeking merit, looking for merit,  
 giving food and drink to others here:  
 explain to me how to accomplish the sacrifice."

"Sacrifice, and while doing so,"<sup>46</sup> 24.1  
*replied the Buddha,*

---

46. The "speaker's mark" is in MS treated as part of the line, which is unusual if not unique. According to Norman's note here however, we should consider

“be clear and confident in every way.  
Sacrifice is the ground standing upon which  
the sacrificer sheds their flaws.

- 25.1      One free of greed, rid of anger,  
             developing a heart of limitless love,  
             spreads that limitlessness in every direction,  
             ever diligent day and night.”
- 26.1      “Who is purified, freed, awake?<sup>47</sup>  
             How can one go to the Brahmā realm oneself?  
             I do not know, so please tell me when asked,  
             for the Buddha is the Brahmā I see in person today!  
             To us you are truly the equal of Brahmā.  
             Splendid One, how is one reborn in the Brahmā  
             realm?”
- 27.1      “One who accomplishes the sacrifice with three  
             modes,”  
             *replied the Buddha,*  
             “such a one would succeed due to those who are wor-  
             thy of donations.  
             Sacrificing like this, one rightly committed to charity  
             is reborn in the Brahmā realm, I say.”

- 28.1      When he had spoken, the student Māgha said to the Buddha,  
“Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may  
Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for  
refuge for life.”

---

this line a seven-syllable sloka (perhaps restoring the variant *ca* to make it eight). I have adjusted the Pali punctuation accordingly.

47. *Bajjhati* (“bound”) seems odd to me in this line. I think it’s more likely these are three semi-synonyms. As it stands, the Buddha does not actually answer the question, since he only discusses the positive side. PTS notes a reading *bujjhati* in the commentary, which I follow. However the commentary reads *bajjhati* in the VRI edition, and the comment itself supports this, since it treats it as a bad thing. If it is a mistake, then, it is an old one.

## Snp 3.6

## With Sabhiya

*Sabhiyasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
 Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.  
 Now at that time the wanderer Sabhiya had been presented with  
 several questions by a deity who was a former relative, saying:  
 "Sabhiya, you should live the spiritual life with whatever ascetic or  
 brahmin answers these questions."

Then Sabhiya, after learning those questions in the presence 2.1  
 of that deity, approached those ascetics and brahmins who led  
 an order and a community, and taught a community, who were  
 well-known and famous religious founders, regarded as holy by  
 many people. That is, Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Nigaṇṭha  
 Nāṭaputta, Saṇjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, Pakudha Kaccāyana, and Ajita  
 Kesakambala. And he asked them those questions, but they were  
 stumped by them. Displaying annoyance, hate, and bitterness, they  
 questioned Sabhiya in return.

Then Sabhiya thought, "Those famous ascetics and brahmins 3.1  
 were stumped by my questions. Displaying annoyance, hate, and  
 bitterness, they questioned me in return on that matter. Why don't  
 I return to a lesser life so I can enjoy sensual pleasures?"

Then Sabhiya thought, "This ascetic Gotama also leads an order 4.1  
 and a community, and teaches a community. He's a well-known  
 and famous religious founder, regarded as holy by many people.  
 Why don't I ask him this question?"

Then he thought, "Even those ascetics and brahmins who are 5.1  
 elderly and senior, who are advanced in years and have reached the  
 final stage of life; who are senior, long standing, long gone forth;  
 who lead an order and a community, and teach a community; who  
 are well-known and famous religious founders, regarded as holy by  
 many people—that is Pūraṇa Kassapa and the rest—were stumped  
 by my questions. They displayed annoyance, hate, and bitterness,

and even questioned me in return. How can the ascetic Gotama possibly answer my questions, since he is so young in age and newly gone forth?”

6.1 Then he thought, “An ascetic should not be looked down upon or disparaged because they are young. Though young, the ascetic Gotama has great psychic power and might. Why don’t I ask him this question?”

7.1 Then Sabhiya set out for Rājagaha. Traveling stage by stage, he came to Rājagaha, the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. He went up to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and addressed the Buddha in verse:

8.1 “I’ve come full of doubts and uncertainties,”  
*said Sabhiya,*  
 “wishing to ask some questions.  
 Please solve them for me.  
 Answer my questions in turn, in accordance with the  
 truth.”

9.1 “You have come from afar, Sabhiya,”  
*said the Buddha,*  
 “wishing to ask some questions.  
 I shall solve them for you,  
 answering your questions in turn, in accordance with  
 the truth.

10.1 Ask me your question, Sabhiya,  
 whatever you want.  
 I’ll solve each and every  
 question you have.”

11.1 Then Sabhiya thought, “It’s incredible, it’s amazing! Where those other ascetics and brahmins didn’t even give me a chance, the Buddha has invited me.” Uplifted and elated, full of rapture and happiness, he asked this question.

“What must one attain to be called a mendicant?” 12.1  
*said Sabhiya,*

“How is one ‘sweet’, how said to be ‘tamed’?  
 How is one declared to be ‘awakened’?  
 May the Buddha please answer my question.”

“When by the path they have walked themselves,” 13.1  
*said the Buddha to Sabhiya,*

“they reach quenching, with doubt overcome;  
 giving up desire to continue existence or to end it,  
 their journey complete, their rebirths ended: that is  
 a mendicant.

Equanimous towards everything, mindful, 14.1  
 they don’t harm anyone in the world.  
 An ascetic who has crossed over, unclouded,  
 not full of themselves, is sweet-natured.

Their faculties have been developed 15.1  
 inside and out in the whole world.  
 Having pierced through this world and the next,  
 tamed, they bide their time.

They have examined the aeons in their entirety,<sup>48</sup> 16.1  
 and both sides of transmigration—passing away and  
 rebirth.

Rid of dust, unblemished, purified:  
 the one they call ‘awakened’ has attained the end of  
 rebirth.”

---

48. Comm allows *kappa* in the sense of both “mental activity” and “aeon” here. For the sake of consistency with later uses of the term, it might seem prudent to use “mental activity” here, and most translators have done so. Yet the context in this verse suggests it is about the aeons of transmigration.

- 17.1 And then, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, uplifted and elated, full of rapture and happiness, Sabhiya asked another question:
- 18.1 “What must one attain to be called ‘brahmin’?”  
*said Sabhiya.*  
 “Why is one an ‘ascetic’, and how a ‘bathed initiate’?  
 How is one declared to be a ‘giant’?  
 May the Buddha please answer my question.”
- 19.1 “Having banished all bad things,”  
*said the Buddha to Sabhiya,*  
 “immaculate, well-composed, steadfast,  
 consummate, they’ve left transmigration behind:  
 such an unattached one is called ‘brahmin’.
- 20.1 A peaceful one who has given up good and evil,  
 stainless, understanding this world and the next,  
 gone beyond rebirth and death:  
 such an one is rightly called ‘ascetic’.
- 21.1 Having washed off all bad things  
 inside and out in the whole world,  
 among gods and humans bound to creations,  
 the one they call ‘washed’ does not return to creation.
- 22.1 They do nothing monstrous at all in the world,  
 discarding all fetters and bonds,  
 everywhere not stuck, freed:  
 such an one is rightly called ‘giant.’”
- 23.1 And then Sabhiya asked another question:
- 24.1 “Who is a ‘field-victor’ according to the Buddhas?”<sup>49</sup>

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49. I think Norman’s reconstruction of this to root *ñā* (followed by Bodhi) is too speculative. The word makes fine sense as is, and is more metaphorically connected with the sense of *khetta*.



*said Sabhiya,*

“Why is one ‘skillful’, and how ‘a wise scholar’?  
How is one declared to be a ‘sage’?  
May the Buddha please answer my question.”

“They are victorious over the fields of deeds in their  
entirety,”<sup>50</sup> 25.1

*said the Buddha to Sabhiya,*

“the fields of gods, humans, and Brahmas;  
released from the root bondage to all fields:  
such a one is rightly called ‘field-victor’.

They have examined the stockpiles of deeds in their  
entirety, 26.1  
the stockpiles of gods, humans, and Brahmas;  
released from the root bondage to all stockpiles:  
such a one is rightly called ‘skillful’.

They have examined whiteness<sup>51</sup> 27.1  
both inside and out; understanding purity,  
they have left dark and bright behind:  
such an one is rightly called ‘a wise scholar.’”<sup>52</sup>

Understanding the nature of the bad and the good 28.1  
inside and out in the whole world;  
one worthy of honor by gods and humans,  
who has escaped from the net and the snare: that is  
a sage.”

50. Reading *vijeyya*; both *viceyya* and *vijeyya* are accepted in the commentary.

51. The commentary has led translators astray here. *Paṇḍarāṇi* means not “senses” per commentary (followed without remark by Norman); nor “translucencies” per Bodhi; nor “white flowers” per Thanissaro. In the EBTs, *paṇḍara* simply means “white, pure” and is a synonym for *suddhi* in the next line. A true *paṇḍita* is pure both inside and out.

52. Using ‘wise scholar’ rather than my normal ‘astute’ to capture, albeit lamely, a pun with *paṇḍara*.

- 29.1 And then Sabhiya asked another question:
- 30.1 “What must one attain to be called ‘knowledge master’?”  
*said Sabhiya,*  
 “Why is one ‘studied’, and how is one ‘heroic’?  
 How to gain the name ‘thoroughbred’?  
 May the Buddha please answer my question.”
- 31.1 “They have examined knowledges in their entirety,”  
*said the Buddha to Sabhiya,*  
 “those that are current among ascetics and brahmins;  
 rid of greed for all feelings,  
 having left all knowledges behind: that is a knowledge master.
- 32.1 Having studied proliferation and name & form  
 inside and out—the root of disease;  
 released from the root bondage to all disease:  
 such an one is rightly called ‘studied’.
- 33.1 Refraining from all evil here,  
 heroic, he escapes from the suffering of hell;<sup>53</sup>  
 he is heroic and energetic:  
 such an one is rightly called ‘hero’.<sup>54</sup>
- 34.1 Whoever’s bonds are cut,  
 the root of clinging inside and out;  
 released from the root bondage to all clinging:  
 such an one is rightly called ‘thoroughbred.’”
- 35.1 And then Sabhiya asked another question:
- 36.1 “What must one attain to be called ‘scholar’?”

53. Commentarial “abode of energy” for *viriyavāso* doesn’t sound right to me, though followed by Bodhi and Norman. I read *viriyavā so*.

54. Reading *vīro*.

*said Sabhiya,*  
 “Why is one ‘noble’, and how is one ‘well conducted’?  
 How to gain the name ‘wanderer’?  
 May the Buddha please answer my question.”

“One who has learned every teaching,”<sup>55</sup> 37.1  
*said the Buddha to Sabhiya,*  
 “and has known for themselves whatever is blameworthy and blameless in the world;  
 a champion, decided, liberated,  
 untroubled everywhere: they call them ‘scholar’.

Having cut off defilements and attachments, 38.1  
 being wise, they enter no womb.  
 They’ve expelled the bog of the three perceptions,<sup>56</sup>  
 the one they call ‘noble’ does not return to creation.

One here who is accomplished and skillful in all 39.1  
 forms of good conduct;<sup>57</sup>  
 always understanding the teaching,  
 everywhere not stuck, freed in mind,  
 who has no repulsion: they are ‘well-conducted’.

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55. Earlier translations misconstrued this verse. The gerunds *sutvā* and *abhiññāya* apply to their respective following accusatives *sabbadhammāṃ* and *sāvajjānavajjāṃ*, not both to *sabbadhammāṃ* per Norman and Bodhi. *Dhamma* means “teachings” here, not “phenomena” per Bodhi. The sense is that to be a “scholar” it is not enough to have “learned” the teachings, one must know for oneself. The commentary well explains this sense, but it doesn’t come through in the translations. Thanissaro attempts this sense, but only by adding an unsupported reading of *abhiññāya* as dative.

56. The three perceptions are sensuality, malice, and cruelty. Since *pañka* is regularly said to be a term for *kāma*, it seems we should read “the bog of the three perceptions” rather than “the three perceptions and the bog” per Bodhi and Thanissaro.

57. It seems to me that the syntax reads more cleanly if the nominatives in this line and the next are read together; and the clauses following *sabb-* are likewise read in parallel.

- 40.1      Avoiding any deed that results in suffering—  
 above, below, all round, between:  
 deceit and conceit, as well as greed and anger,<sup>58</sup>  
 they live full of wisdom.  
 They have made a limit on name & form;<sup>59</sup>  
 the one they call a ‘wanderer’ has reached their destination.”<sup>60</sup>
- 41.1      And then, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha  
 said, uplifted and elated, full of rapture and happiness, Sabhiya got  
 up from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his  
 joined palms toward the Buddha, and extolled the Buddha in his  
 presence with fitting verses:
- 42.1      “O one of vast wisdom, there are three & sixty opinions  
 based on the doctrines of ascetics:  
 they are expressions of perception, based on perception.  
 Having dispelled them all, you passed over the dark  
 flood.
- 43.1      You have gone to the end, gone beyond suffering,  
 you are perfected, a fully awakened Buddha; I think  
 you have ended defilements.  
 Splendid, intelligent, abounding in wisdom,  
 ender of suffering—you brought me across!

58. Following Norman and Bodhi in reading *parivajjayitā* here.

59. I think Bodhi, Norman, and Thanissaro have missed two related points. First, *pariyanta* means “limit, boundary” not “end”; and second, *nāmarūpa* is not ended in this life but rather “limited”. An arahant still has name & form but only until *parinibbāna*; it is “limited”. This further highlights the rather awkward inclusion of *nāmarūpa* in the list of defilements, which are ended. I think we should, rather, include the defilements with the “deeds causing suffering”. This has the further advantage of dividing this long verse into 4 + 2 lines rather than 3 + 3.

60. I think *pattipatta* is a play on words here.

When you understood my uncertainty, 44.1  
 you brought me beyond doubt—homage to you!  
 A sage, accomplished in the ways of sagacity,  
 you are gentle, not hardhearted, O Kinsman of the  
 Sun.<sup>61</sup>

Any doubts that I once had, 45.1  
 you have answered for me, O Seer.  
 Clearly you are a sage, an Awakened One,  
 there are no hindrances in you.

All your distress 46.1  
 is blown away and mown down.  
 Cooled, tamed, steadfast:  
 truth is your strength.

O giant among giants, O great hero, 47.1  
 when you are speaking  
 all the gods rejoice,  
 including both Nārada and Pabbata.<sup>62</sup>

Homage to you, O thoroughbred! 48.1  
 Homage to you, supreme among men!  
 In the world with its gods,  
 you have no counterpart.

You are the Buddha, you are the Teacher, 49.1  
 you are the sage who has overcome Māra;

---

61. Oddly, at AN 5.38:5.4 we find *sorata* with *sakhila* in a similar sense to *akhila* here.

62. The commentary says these were two groups of wise devas. But it seems it refers to the legendary sages Nārada and his nephew Parvata, whose friendship, estrangement, and reconciliation is told in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Nārada is known for his learning and wisdom, which supports the commentary to an extent. Why these two are invoked here is a mystery; presumably they were important to Sabhiya. They occur in a similar context, but with many more gods, in Ja 547.

you have cut off the underlying tendencies,  
you've crossed over, and you bring humanity across.

50.1      You have transcended attachments,  
              your defilements are shattered;  
              you are a lion, free of grasping,  
              with fear and dread given up.

51.1      Like a graceful lotus  
              to which water does not stick,  
              so both good and evil  
              do not stick to you.  
              Stretch out your feet, great hero:  
              Sabhiya bows to the Teacher.”

52.1      Then the wanderer Sabhiya bowed with his head at the Buddha's feet and said, “Excellent, sir! Excellent! ... I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence?”

53.1      “Sabhiya, if someone formerly ordained in another sect wishes to take the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training, they must spend four months on probation. When four months have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, they'll give the going forth, the ordination into monkhood. However, I have recognized individual differences in this matter.”

54.1      “Sir, if four months probation are required in such a case, I'll spend four years on probation. When four years have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, let them give me the going forth, the ordination into monkhood.” And the wanderer Sabhiya received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence. And Venerable Sabhiya became one of the perfected.

Snp 3.7

## With Sela

*Selasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Northern Āpaṇas together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants when he arrived at a town of the Northern Āpaṇas named Āpaṇa. The matted-hair ascetic Keṇiya heard: “It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Āpaṇa, together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. It’s good to see such perfected ones.” 1.1

So Keṇiya approached the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. The Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk. Then he said to the Buddha, “Would Master Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow’s meal from me?” When he said this, the Buddha said to him, “The Saṅgha is large, Keṇiya; there are 1,250 mendicants. And you are devoted to the brahmins.” 2.1

For a second time, Keṇiya asked the Buddha to accept a meal offering. “Never mind that the Saṅgha is large, with 1,250 mendicants, and that I am devoted to the brahmins. Would Master Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow’s meal from me?” 3.1

row's meal from me?" And for a second time, the Buddha gave the same reply.

- 4.1 For a third time, Keṇiya asked the Buddha to accept a meal offering. "Never mind that the Saṅgha is large, with 1,250 mendicants, and that I am devoted to the brahmins. Would Master Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow's meal from me?" The Buddha consented in silence. Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Keṇiya got up from his seat and went to his own hermitage. There he addressed his friends and colleagues, relatives and family members, "My friends and colleagues, relatives and family members: please listen! The ascetic Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha has been invited by me for tomorrow's meal. Please help me with the preparations." "Yes, sir," they replied. Some dug ovens, some chopped wood, some washed dishes, some set out a water jar, and some spread out seats. Meanwhile, Keṇiya set up the pavilion himself.
- 5.1 Now at that time the brahmin Sela was residing in Āpaṇa. He had mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies, ritual, phonology and etymology, and the testament as fifth. He knew philology and grammar, and was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. And he was teaching three hundred students to recite the hymns.
- 6.1 And at that time Keṇiya was devoted to Sela. Then Sela, while going for a walk escorted by the three hundred students, approached Keṇiya's hermitage. He saw the preparations going on, and said to Keṇiya, "Keṇiya, is your son or daughter being married? Or are you setting up a big sacrifice? Or has King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha been invited for tomorrow's meal?"
- 7.1 "There is no marriage, Sela, and the king is not coming. Rather, I am setting up a big sacrifice. The ascetic Gotama has arrived at Āpaṇa, together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train,



teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ He has been invited by me for tomorrow’s meal together with the mendicant Saṅgha.” “Mister Keṇiya, did you say ‘the awakened one’?” “I said ‘the awakened one.’” “Mister Keṇiya, did you say ‘the awakened one’?” “I said ‘the awakened one.’”

Then Sela thought, “It’s hard to even find the word ‘awakened one’ in the world. The thirty-two marks of a great man have been handed down in our hymns. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world. “But Keṇiya, where is the Blessed One at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?” 8.1

When he said this, Keṇiya pointed with his right arm and said, 9.1  
 “There, Mister Sela, at that line of blue forest.” Then Sela, together with his students, approached the Buddha. He said to his students, “Come quietly, gentlemen, tread gently. For the Buddhas are intimidating, like a lion living alone. When I’m consulting with the ascetic Gotama, don’t interrupt. Wait until I’ve finished speaking.”

Then Sela went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with 10.1  
 him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. and scrutinized the Buddha’s body for the thirty-two marks of a great man. He saw all of them except for two, which he had doubts about: whether the private parts were covered in a foreskin, and the largeness of the tongue.

11.1 Then it occurred to the Buddha, “Sela sees all the marks except for two, which he has doubts about: whether the private parts are covered in a foreskin, and the largeness of the tongue.” The Buddha used his psychic power to will that Sela would see his private parts covered in a foreskin. And he stuck out his tongue and stroked back and forth on his ear holes and nostrils, and covered his entire forehead with his tongue.

12.1 Then Sela thought, “The ascetic Gotama possesses the thirty-two marks completely, lacking none. But I don’t know whether or not he is an awakened one. I have heard that brahmins of the past who were elderly and senior, the teachers of teachers, said, ‘Those who are perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas reveal themselves when praised.’ Why don’t I extoll him in his presence with fitting verses?” Then Sela extolled the Buddha in his presence with fitting verses:

13.1 “O Blessed One, your body’s perfect,  
you’re radiant, handsome, lovely to behold;  
golden colored,  
with teeth so white; you’re strong.

14.1 The characteristics  
of a handsome man,  
the marks of a great man,  
are all found on your body.

15.1 Your eyes are clear, your face is fair,  
you’re formidable, upright, majestic.  
In the midst of the Saṅgha of ascetics,  
you shine like the sun.

16.1 You’re a mendicant fine to see,  
with skin of golden sheen.  
But with such excellent appearance,  
what do you want with the ascetic life?

You're fit to be a king, 17.1  
 a wheel-turning monarch, chief of charioteers,  
 victorious in the four quarters,  
 lord of all India.

Aristocrats, nobles, and kings 18.1  
 ought follow your rule.  
 Gotama, you should reign  
 as king of kings, lord of men!"

"I am a king, Sela", 19.1  
*said the Buddha,*  
 "the supreme king of the teaching.  
 By the teaching I roll forth the wheel  
 which cannot be rolled back."

"You claim to be awakened," 20.1  
*said Sela the brahmin,*  
 "the supreme king of the teaching.  
 'I roll forth the teaching':  
 so you say, Gotama.

Then who is your general, 21.1  
 the disciple who follows the Teacher's way?  
 Who keeps rolling the wheel  
 of the teaching you rolled forth?"

"By me the wheel was rolled forth," 22.1  
*said the Buddha,*  
 "the supreme wheel of the teaching.  
 Sāriputta, taking after the Realized One,  
 keeps it rolling on.

I have known what should be known, 23.1  
 and developed what should be developed,  
 and given up what should be given up:

and so, brahmin, I am a Buddha.

- 24.1      Dispel your doubt in me—  
             make up your mind, brahmin!  
             The sight of a Buddha  
             is hard to find again.
- 25.1      I am a Buddha, brahmin,  
             the supreme surgeon,  
             one of those whose appearance in the world  
             is hard to find again.
- 26.1      Holy, unequaled,  
             crusher of Māra's army;  
             having subdued all my opponents,  
             I rejoice, fearing nothing from any quarter."
- 27.1      "Pay heed, sirs, to what  
             is spoken by the seer.  
             The surgeon, the great hero,  
             roars like a lion in the jungle.
- 28.1      Holy, unequaled,  
             crusher of Māra's army;  
             who would not be inspired by him,  
             even one whose nature is dark?
- 29.1      Those who wish may follow me;  
             those who don't may go.  
             Right here, I'll go forth in his presence,  
             the one of such splendid wisdom."
- 30.1      "Sir, if you like  
             in the teaching of the Buddha,  
             we'll also go forth in his presence,  
             the one of such splendid wisdom."

“These three hundred brahmins 31.1  
 with joined palms held up, ask:  
 ‘May we lead the spiritual life  
 in your presence, Blessed One?’”

“The spiritual life is well explained,” 32.1  
*said the Buddha,*  
 “visible in this very life, immediately effective.  
 Here the going forth isn’t in vain  
 for one who trains with diligence.”

And the brahmin Sela together with his assembly received the 33.1  
 going forth, the ordination in the Buddha’s presence. And when the  
 night had passed Keṇiya had a variety of delicious foods prepared  
 in his own home. Then he had the Buddha informed of the time,  
 saying, “It’s time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready.” Then the  
 Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe,  
 went to Keṇiya’s hermitage, where he sat on the seat spread out,  
 together with the Saṅgha of mendicants.

Then Keṇiya served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed 34.1  
 by the Buddha with his own hands with a variety of delicious foods.  
 When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Keṇiya  
 took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha expressed his  
 appreciation with these verses:

“The foremost of sacrifices is offering to the sacred 35.1  
 flame;  
 the Gāyatrī Mantra is the foremost of poetic meters;  
 of humans, the king is the foremost;  
 the ocean’s the foremost of rivers;

the foremost of stars is the moon; 36.1  
 the sun is the foremost of lights;  
 for those who sacrifice seeking merit,  
 the Saṅgha is the foremost.”

- 37.1 When the Buddha had expressed his appreciation to Keṇiya the matted-hair ascetic with these verses, he got up from his seat and left. Then Venerable Sela and his assembly, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. They lived having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness. And Venerable Sela together with his assembly became perfected.
- 38.1 Then Sela with his assembly went to see the Buddha. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha, and said:
- 39.1 “This is the eighth day since  
we went for refuge, O seer.  
In these seven days, Blessed One,  
we’ve become tamed in your teaching.
- 40.1 You are the Buddha, you are the Teacher,  
you are the sage who has overcome Māra;  
you have cut off the underlying tendencies,  
you’ve crossed over, and you bring humanity across.
- 41.1 You have transcended attachments,  
your defilements are shattered;  
you are a lion, free of grasping,  
with fear and dread given up.
- 42.1 These three hundred mendicants  
stand with joined palms raised.  
Stretch out your feet, great hero:  
let these giants bow to the Teacher.”

Snp 3.8

The Dart

*Sallasutta*

Unforeseen and unknown<sup>63</sup> 1.1  
is the extent of this mortal life—  
hard and short  
and bound to pain.

There is no way that 2.1  
those born will not die.  
On reaching old age death follows:  
such is the nature of living creatures.

As ripe fruit 3.1  
are always in danger of falling,<sup>64</sup>  
so mortals once born  
are always in danger of death.

As clay pots 4.1  
made by a potter  
all end up being broken,  
so is the life of mortals.

Young and old, 5.1  
foolish and wise—  
all go under the sway of death;  
all are destined to die.

When those overcome by death 6.1  
leave this world for the next,

---

63. I can't find any translation or note that captures this line properly. A *nimitta* is a sign or portent, and is commonly used in the context of omens, prophecy, or fortune-telling. Here it means that there is no portent or omen by which one can predict the extent of life.

64. Accepting *niccaṃ* per Norman and Bodhi.

a father cannot protect his son,  
nor relatives their kin.

7.1      See how, while relatives look on,  
            wailing profusely,  
            mortals are led away one by one,  
            like a cow to the slaughter.

8.1      And so the world is stricken  
            by old age and by death.  
            That is why the wise do not grieve,  
            for they understand the way of the world.

9.1      For one whose path you do not know—  
            not whence they came nor where they went—  
            you lament in vain,  
            seeing neither end.

10.1     If a bewildered person,  
            lamenting and self-harming,  
            could extract any good from that,  
            then those who see clearly would do the same.

11.1     For not by weeping and wailing  
            will you find peace of heart.  
            It just gives rise to more suffering,  
            and distresses your body.

12.1     Growing thin and pale,  
            you hurt yourself.  
            It does nothing to help the dead:  
            your lamentation is in vain.

13.1     Unless a person gives up grief,  
            they fall into suffering all the more.  
            Bewailing those whose time has come,



you fall under the sway of grief.

See, too, other folk departing 14.1  
to fare after their deeds;  
fallen under the sway of death,  
beings flounder while still here.

For whatever you imagine it is, 15.1  
it turns out to be something else.  
Such is separation:  
see the way of the world!

Even if a human lives 16.1  
a hundred years or more,  
they are parted from their family circle,  
they leave this life behind.

Therefore, having learned from the Perfected One, 17.1  
dispel lamentation.  
Seeing the dead and departed, think:  
“I cannot escape this.”<sup>65</sup>

As one would extinguish 18.1  
a blazing refuge with water,  
so too a sage—a wise,  
astute, and skilled person—  
would swiftly blow away grief that comes up,  
like the wind a tuft of cotton.

One who seeks their own happiness 19.1  
would pluck out the dart from themselves—  
the wailing and moaning,

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65. Commentary says this means, “I cannot bring back the dead” followed by Norman, Bodhi, and Thanissaro. But I think that reading is suspect. I think the text elides a second negative and should read: *na eso alabbhā*, literally “This is not not-to-be-gotten by me”, i.e. “I cannot escape this”.

and sadness inside.

- 20.1 With dart plucked out, unattached,  
having found peace of mind,  
overcoming all sorrow,  
one is sorrowless and extinguished.

Snp 3.9

## With Vāsetṭha

*Vāsetṭhasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in a forest near Icchānaṅgala. Now at that time several very well-known well-to-do brahmins were residing in Icchānaṅgala. They included the brahmins Caṅkī, Tārukkha, Pokkharasāti, Jāṇussoṇi, Todeyya, and others. Then as the brahmin students Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja were going for a walk they began to discuss the question: “How do you become a brahmin?”
- 2.1 Bhāradvāja said this: “When you’re well born on both your mother’s and father’s side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation—then you’re a brahmin.”
- 3.1 Vāsetṭha said this: “When you’re ethical and accomplished in doing your duties—then you’re a brahmin.” But neither was able to persuade the other.
- 4.1 So Vāsetṭha said to Bhāradvāja, “Master Bhāradvāja, the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—is staying in a forest near Icchānaṅgala. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ Come, let’s go to see him and ask him about this matter. As he answers, so we’ll remember it.” “Yes, sir,” replied Bhāradvāja.

So they went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. 5.1  
 When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat  
 down to one side, and Vāseṭṭha addressed the Buddha in verse:

“We’re both authorized masters 6.1  
 of the three Vedas.  
 I’m a student of Pokkharasāti,  
 and he of Tārukkha.

We’re fully qualified 7.1  
 in all the Vedic experts teach.  
 As philologists and grammarians,  
 we match our teachers in recitation.

We have a dispute 8.1  
 regarding the question of ancestry.  
 For Bhāradvāja says that  
 one is a brahmin due to birth,  
 but I declare it’s because of one’s actions.  
 Oh seer, know this as our debate.

Since neither of us was able 9.1  
 to convince the other,  
 we’ve come to ask you, sir,  
 renowned as the awakened one.

As people honor with joined palms 10.1  
 the moon on the cusp of waxing,  
 bowing, they revere  
 Gotama in the world.

We ask this of Gotama, 11.1  
 the eye arisen in the world:  
 is one a brahmin due to birth,  
 or else because of actions?  
 We don’t know, please tell us,

so we can recognize a brahmin.”

- 12.1 “I shall explain to you,”  
       *said the Buddha,*  
 “accurately and in sequence,  
 the taxonomy of living creatures,  
 for species are indeed diverse.
- 13.1 Know the grass and trees,  
 though they lack self-awareness.  
 They’re defined by birth,  
 for species are indeed diverse.
- 14.1 Next there are bugs and moths,  
 and so on, to ants and termites.  
 They’re defined by birth,  
 for species are indeed diverse.
- 15.1 Know the quadrupeds, too,  
 both small and large.  
 They’re defined by birth,  
 for species are indeed diverse.
- 16.1 Know, too, the long-backed snakes,  
 crawling on their bellies.  
 They’re defined by birth,  
 for species are indeed diverse.
- 17.1 Next know the fish,  
 whose habitat is the water.  
 They’re defined by birth,  
 for species are indeed diverse.
- 18.1 Next know the birds,  
 flying with wings as chariots.  
 They’re defined by birth,

for species are indeed diverse.

While the differences between these species  
are defined by birth,  
the differences between humans  
are not defined by birth. 19.1

Not by hair nor by head,  
not by ear nor by eye,  
not by mouth nor by nose,  
not by lips nor by eyebrow, 20.1

not by shoulder nor by neck,  
not by belly nor by back,  
not by buttocks nor by breast,  
not by groin nor by genitals, 21.1

not by hands nor by feet,  
not by fingers nor by nails,  
not by knees nor by thighs,  
not by color nor by voice:  
none of these are defined by birth  
as it is for other species. 22.1

In individual human bodies  
you can't find such distinctions.  
The distinctions among humans  
are spoken of by convention. 23.1

Anyone among humans  
who lives off keeping cattle:  
know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
as a farmer, not a brahmin. 24.1

Anyone among humans  
who lives off various professions: 25.1

know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
as a professional, not a brahmin.

- 26.1      Anyone among humans  
            who lives off trade:  
            know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
            as a trader, not a brahmin.
- 27.1      Anyone among humans  
            who lives off serving others:  
            know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
            as an employee, not a brahmin.
- 28.1      Anyone among humans  
            who lives off stealing:  
            know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
            as a bandit, not a brahmin.
- 29.1      Anyone among humans  
            who lives off archery:  
            know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
            as a soldier, not a brahmin.
- 30.1      Anyone among humans  
            who lives off priesthood:  
            know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
            as a sacrificer, not a brahmin.
- 31.1      Anyone among humans  
            who taxes village and nation,  
            know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
            as a ruler, not a brahmin.
- 32.1      I don't call someone a brahmin  
            after the mother or womb they came from.  
            If they still have attachments,

they're just someone who says 'sir'.  
 Having nothing, taking nothing:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

Having cut off all fetters 33.1  
 they have no anxiety;  
 they've got over clinging, and are detached:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

They've cut the strap and harness, 34.1  
 the reins and bridle too;  
 with cross-bar lifted, they're awakened:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

Abuse, killing, caging: 35.1  
 they endure these without anger.  
 Patience is their powerful army:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

Not irritable or stuck up, 36.1  
 dutiful in precepts and observances,  
 tamed, bearing their final body:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

Like water from a lotus leaf, 37.1  
 like a mustard seed off a pin-point,  
 sensual pleasures slip off them:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

They understand for themselves 38.1  
 the end of suffering in this life;  
 with burden put down, detached:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

Deep in wisdom, intelligent, 39.1  
 expert in the variety of paths;

arrived at the highest goal:  
that's who I call a brahmin.

- 40.1      Socializing with neither  
householders nor the homeless;  
a migrant with no shelter, few in wishes:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 41.1      They've laid aside violence  
against creatures firm and frail;  
not killing or making others kill:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 42.1      Not fighting among those who fight,  
extinguished among those who are armed,  
not taking among those who take:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 43.1      They've discarded greed and hate,  
along with conceit and contempt,  
like a mustard seed off the point of a pin:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 44.1      The words they utter  
are sweet, informative, and true,  
and don't offend anyone:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 45.1      They don't steal anything in the world,  
long or short,  
fine or coarse, beautiful or ugly:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 46.1      They have no hope  
for this world or the next.  
with no need for hope, detached:



that's who I call a brahmin.

They have no clinging, 47.1  
 knowledge has freed them of indecision,  
 they've plunged right into the deathless:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

They've escaped clinging 48.1  
 to both good and bad deeds;  
 sorrowless, stainless, pure:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

Pure as the spotless moon, 49.1  
 clear and undisturbed,  
 they've ended delight and future lives:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

They've got past this grueling swamp 50.1  
 of delusion, transmigration.  
 Meditating in stillness, free of indecision,  
 they have crossed over to the far shore.  
 They're extinguished by not grasping:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

They've given up sensual stimulations, 51.1  
 and have gone forth from lay life;  
 they've ended rebirth in the sensual realm:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

They've given up craving, 52.1  
 and have gone forth from lay life;  
 they've ended craving to be reborn:  
 that's who I call a brahmin.

They've given up human bonds, 53.1  
 and gone beyond heavenly bonds;

detached from all attachments:  
that's who I call a brahmin.

- 54.1 Giving up discontent and desire,  
they're cooled and free of attachments;  
a hero, master of the whole world:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 55.1 They know the passing away  
and rebirth of all beings;  
unattached, holy, awakened:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 56.1 Gods, fairies, and humans  
don't know their destiny;  
the perfected ones with defilements ended:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 57.1 They have nothing before or after,  
or even in between.  
Having nothing, taking nothing:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 58.1 Leader of the herd, excellent hero,  
great hermit and victor;  
unstirred, washed, awakened:  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 59.1 They know their past lives,  
and sees heaven and places of loss,  
and has attained the ending of rebirth,  
that's who I call a brahmin.
- 60.1 For name and clan are formulated  
as mere convention in the world.  
Produced by mutual agreement,

they're formulated for each individual.

For a long time this misconception 61.1  
 has prejudiced those who don't understand.  
 Ignorant, they declare  
 that one is a brahmin by birth.

You're not a brahmin by birth, 62.1  
 nor by birth a non-brahmin.  
 You're a brahmin by your deeds,  
 and by deeds a non-brahmin.

You're a farmer by your deeds, 63.1  
 by deeds you're a professional;  
 you're a trader by your deeds,  
 by deeds are you an employee;

you're a bandit by your deeds, 64.1  
 by deeds you're a soldier;  
 you're a sacrificer by your deeds,  
 by deeds you're a ruler.

In this way the astute regard deeds 65.1  
 in accord with truth.  
 Seeing dependent origination,  
 they're expert in deeds and their results.

Deeds make the world go on, 66.1  
 deeds make people go on;  
 sentient beings are bound by deeds,  
 like a moving chariot's linchpin.

By austerity and spiritual practice, 67.1  
 by restraint and by self-control:  
 that's how to become a brahmin,  
 this is the supreme brahmin.

- 68.1 Accomplished in the three knowledges,  
peaceful, with rebirth ended,  
know them, Vāseṭṭha,  
as Brahmā and Sakka to the wise.”
- 69.1 When he had spoken, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja said to him,  
“Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may  
Master Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for  
refuge for life.”

Snp 3.10

## With Kokālika

*Kokālikasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near  
Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then the men-  
dicant Kokālika went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one  
side, and said to him, “Sir, Sāriputta and Moggallāna have wicked  
desires. They’ve fallen under the sway of wicked desires.”
- 2.1 When this was said, the Buddha said to Kokālika, “Don’t say  
that, Kokālika! Don’t say that, Kokālika! Have confidence in Sāri-  
putta and Moggallāna, they’re good monks.”
- 3.1 For a second time ... For a third time Kokālika said to the Bud-  
dha, “Despite my faith and trust in the Buddha, Sāriputta and  
Moggallāna have wicked desires. They’ve fallen under the sway  
of wicked desires.” For a third time, the Buddha said to Kokālika,  
“Don’t say that, Kokālika! Don’t say that, Kokālika! Have confi-  
dence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, they’re good monks.”
- 4.1 Then Kokālika got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully  
circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. Not  
long after he left his body erupted with boils the size of mustard  
seeds. The boils grew to the size of mung beans, then chickpeas,  
then jujube seeds, then jujubes, then myrobalans, then unripe  
wood apples, then ripe wood apples. Finally they burst open, and

pus and blood oozed out. Then the mendicant Kokālika died of that illness. He was reborn in the Pink Lotus hell because of his resentment for Sāriputta and Moggallāna.

Then, late at night, the beautiful Brahmā Sahampati, lighting up 5.1  
the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, "Sir, the mendicant Kokālika has passed away. He was reborn in the Pink Lotus hell because of his resentment for Sāriputta and Moggallāna." That's what Brahmā Sahampati said. Then he bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right side, before vanishing right there.

Then, when the night had passed, the Buddha told the mendi- 6.1  
cants all that had happened.

When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, 7.1  
"Sir, how long is the life span in the Pink Lotus hell?" "It's long, mendicant. It's not easy to calculate how many years, how many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of years it lasts." "But sir, is it possible to give a simile?" "It's possible," said the Buddha.

"Suppose there was a Kosalan cartload of twenty bushels of 8.1  
sesame seed. And at the end of every hundred years someone would remove a single seed from it. By this means the Kosalan cartload of twenty bushels of sesame seed would run out faster than a single lifetime in the Abbuda hell. Now, twenty lifetimes in the Abbuda hell equal one lifetime in the Nirabbuda hell. Twenty lifetimes in the Nirabbuda hell equal one lifetime in the Ababa hell. Twenty lifetimes in the Ababa hell equal one lifetime in the Aṭṭa hell. Twenty lifetimes in the Aṭṭa hell equal one lifetime in the Ahaha hell. Twenty lifetimes in the Ahaha hell equal one lifetime in the Yellow Lotus hell. Twenty lifetimes in the Yellow Lotus hell equal one lifetime in the Sweet-Smelling hell. Twenty lifetimes in the Sweet-Smelling hell equal one lifetime in the Blue Water Lily hell. Twenty lifetimes in the Blue Water Lily hell equal one lifetime in the White Lotus hell. Twenty lifetimes in the White Lotus hell equal one lifetime in the Pink Lotus hell. The mendicant Kokālika

has been reborn in the Pink Lotus hell because of his resentment for Sāriputta and Moggallāna.” That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

- 9.1           “A person is born  
                with an axe in their mouth.  
                A fool cuts themselves with it  
                when they say bad words.
- 10.1          When you praise someone worthy of criticism,  
                or criticize someone worthy of praise,  
                you choose bad luck with your own mouth:  
                you’ll never find happiness that way.
- 11.1          Bad luck at dice is a trivial thing,  
                if all you lose is your money  
                and all you own, even yourself.  
                What’s really terrible luck  
                is to hate the holy ones.
- 12.1          For more than two quinquadecillion years,  
                and another five quattuordecillion years,  
                a slanderer of noble ones goes to hell,  
                having aimed bad words and thoughts at them.
- 13.1          A liar goes to hell,  
                as does one who denies what they did.  
                Both are equal in the hereafter,  
                those men of base deeds.
- 14.1          Whoever wrongs a man who has done no wrong,  
                a pure man who has not a blemish,  
                the evil backfires on the fool,  
                like fine dust thrown upwind.
- 15.1          One addicted to the way of greed,  
                abuses others with their speech,

faithless, miserly, uncharitable,  
stingy, addicted to backbiting.

Foul-mouthed, divisive, ignoble,<sup>66</sup> 16.1  
a life-destroyer, wicked, wrongdoer,  
worst of men, cursed, base-born—  
quiet now, for you are bound for hell.<sup>67</sup>

You stir up dust, causing harm,<sup>68</sup> 17.1  
when you, evildoer, malign the good.  
Having done many bad deeds,  
you'll go to the pit for a long time.

For no-one's deeds are ever lost, 18.1  
they return to their owner.  
In the next life that stupid evildoer  
sees suffering in themselves.

They approach the place of impalement, 19.1  
with its iron spikes, sharp blades, and iron stakes.  
Then there is the food, which appropriately,  
is like a red-hot iron ball.

For the speakers speak not sweetly,<sup>69</sup> 20.1  
they don't hurry there, or find shelter.  
They lie upon a spread of coals,

66. I can't find any evidence to support the commentary's gloss as "liar". I assume it is shorthand for *vebhūtiya* which is a synonym of *pesuṇiya* (DN 30:2.21.2 and DN 28:11.2).

67. I can't find any explanation for the shift to direct address in second person here. Perhaps these verses were inserted from a separate source.

68. Norman and Bodhi both accept commentary's *kilesarajam attani pakkhipasi*, but this seems too narrow; their deeds harmed others too.

69. Commentary says the hell-keepers are the subject here, hell-dwellers the subject of the next line. But this seems forced and unnecessary. Those going to hell are screaming, not uttering sweet words.

they enter a blazing mass of fire.<sup>70</sup>

- 21.1 Wrapping them in a net,  
they strike them there with iron hammers.  
They come to blinding darkness,  
which spreads about them like a fog.
- 22.1 Next they enter a copper pot,  
a blazing mass of fire.  
There they roast for a long time,  
writhing in the masses of fire.
- 23.1 Then the evildoer roasts there  
in a mixture of pus and blood.  
No matter where they settle,  
everything they touch there hurts them.
- 24.1 The evildoer roasts in  
worm-infested water.  
There's not even a shore to go to,  
for all around are the same kind of pots.
- 25.1 They enter the Wood of Sword-Leaves,  
so sharp they cut their body to pieces.  
Having grabbed the tongue with a hook,  
they stab it, slashing back and forth.
- 26.1 Then they approach the impassable Vetaraṇi River,  
with its sharp blades, its razor blades.  
Idiots fall into it,  
the wicked who have done wicked deeds.
- 27.1 There dogs all brown and spotted,  
and raven flocks, and greedy jackals  
devour them as they wail,

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70. Read *aggini-samam jalitam*, as at Snp 3.10:22.2 below.



while hawks and crows attack them.

Hard, alas, is the life here 28.1  
 that evildoers endure.  
 That's why for the rest of this life  
 a person ought do their duty without fail.

Experts have counted the loads of sesame<sup>71</sup> 29.1  
 as compared to the Pink Lotus Hell.  
 They amount to 50,000,000 times 10,000,  
 plus another 12,000,000,000.

As painful as life is said to be in hell, 30.1  
 that's how long one must dwell there.  
 That's why, for those who are pure, well-behaved, full  
     of good qualities,  
 one should always guard one's speech and mind."

Snp 3.11

## About Nālaka

*Nālakasutta*

The hermit Asita in his daily meditation 1.1  
 saw the bright-clad gods of the Thirty-Three<sup>72</sup>  
 and their lord Sakka joyfully celebrating,  
 waving streamers in exuberant exaltation.

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71. The commentary says that these two verses are absent from the old "Great Commentary". Bodhi takes this as a sign they were a later addition. Norman thinks otherwise, arguing that these verses answer the question asked in the prose introduction. But that question has already been answered in the prose, so I don't think this is a compelling reason. Norman also argues on the basis of metre, which I'm not competent to assess. On the whole, however, I tend to agree with Bodhi here.

72. Bodhi and Norman follow the PTS reading *sakkacca* here, but it seems uncharacteristic to me. Why mention they have just honored Indra? On the other hand, it's common to express "a group with its leader".

- 2.1        Seeing the gods rejoicing, elated,  
             he paid respects and said this there:  
 “Why is the community of gods in such excellent spir-  
             its?  
 Why take up streamers and whirl them about?
- 3.1        Even in the war with the demons,  
             when gods were victorious and demons defeated,  
             there was no such excitement.  
 What marvel have the celestials seen that they so  
             rejoice?
- 4.1        Shouting and singing and playing music,  
             they clap their hands and dance.  
 I ask you, dwellers on Mount Meru’s peak,  
             quickly dispel my doubt, good sirs!”
- 5.1        “The being intent on awakening, a peerless gem,  
             has been born in the human realm for the sake of  
             welfare and happiness,  
             in Lumbinī, a village in the Sakyan land.  
 That’s why we’re so happy, in such excellent spirits.
- 6.1        He is supreme among all beings, the best of people,  
             a bull among men, supreme among all creatures.  
 He will roll forth the wheel in the grove of the her-  
             mits,  
             roaring like a mighty lion, lord of beasts.”
- 7.1        Hearing this, he swiftly descended  
             and right away approached Suddhodana’s home.<sup>73</sup>  
             Seated there he said this to the Sakyans,  
 “Where is the boy? I too wish to see him!”

73. Notice the use of the humble *bhavana* rather than the royal *pasāda*. There is an almost complete lack of royal language in this text, the sole exception being the *antepura* “royal compound” in Snp 3.11:17.2.

Then the Sakyans showed their son to the one named 8.1  
Asita—

the boy shone like burning gold  
well-wrought in the forge;  
resplendent with glory, of peerless beauty.

The boy beamed like crested flame, 9.1  
pure as the moon, lord of stars traversing the sky,  
blazing like the sun freed from the clouds after the  
rains;<sup>74</sup>  
seeing him, he was joyful, brimming with happiness.

The celestials held up a parasol in the sky, 10.1  
many-ribbed and thousand-circled;  
and golden-handled chowries waved—  
but none could see who held the chowries or the  
parasols.

When the dreadlocked hermit who they called “Dark 11.1  
Splendor”  
had seen the boy like a gold nugget on a cream rug<sup>75</sup>  
with a white parasol held over his head,  
he received him, elated and happy.

Having received the Sakyan bull, 12.1  
the seeker, master of marks and hymns,  
lifted up his voice with confident heart:  
“He is supreme, the best of men!”

74. Here, as so often, “autumn” (per Bodhi and Norman) conveys quite the wrong impression. Autumn is the time of gathering clouds, *sarada* is the time after the rains.

75. Here the commentary glosses *paṇḍu* as *ratta* (“red”), followed by both Norman (“pale red”) and Bodhi. But *paṇḍu* means “pale, white, cream, yellowish” and I can’t see anywhere in Pali or Sanskrit to suggest a meaning “red”. Given that it’s the standard color of a luxurious rug, perhaps it is due to a change in fashions; in the Buddha’s day luxury was cream-colored, but later it became red.

- 13.1 But then, remembering he would depart this world,  
his spirits fell and his tears flowed.  
Seeing the weeping hermit, the Sakyans said,  
“Surely there will be no threat to the boy?”
- 14.1 Seeing the crestfallen Sakyans, the hermit said,  
“I do not foresee harm befall the boy,  
and there will be no threat to him,  
not in the least; set your minds at ease.
- 15.1 This boy shall reach the highest awakening.  
As one of perfectly purified vision, compassionate  
for the welfare of the many,  
he shall roll forth the wheel of the teaching;  
his spiritual path will become widespread.
- 16.1 But I have not long left in this life,  
I shall die before then.  
I will never hear the teaching of the one who bore  
the unequaled burden.<sup>76</sup>  
That’s why I’m so upset and distraught—it’s a disaster  
for me!”
- 17.1 Having brought abundant happiness to the Sakyans,  
the spiritual seeker left the royal compound.  
He had a nephew; and out of compassion  
he encouraged him in the teaching of the one who  
bore the unequaled burden.
- 18.1 “When you hear the voice of another saying ‘Bud-  
dha’—<sup>77</sup>

76. Neither Bodhi’s “fortitude” nor Norman’s “peerless one” quite capture the force of *asamadhura*. The implication is that, as the forger of the path, the Buddha carries a burden greater than any other.

77. Note the idiom *parato ghosam* here.

one who has attained awakening and who reveals the  
 foremost teaching—<sup>78</sup>  
 go there and ask about his breakthrough;<sup>79</sup>  
 lead the spiritual life under that Blessed One.”

Now, that Nālaka had a store of accumulated merit; 19.1  
 so when instructed by one of such kindly intent,<sup>80</sup>  
 with perfectly purified vision of the future,  
 he waited in hope for the Victor, guarding his  
 senses.<sup>81</sup>

When he heard of the Victor rolling forth the excel- 20.1  
 lent wheel he went to him,  
 and seeing the leading hermit, he became confident.  
 The time of Asita’s instruction had arrived;  
 so he asked the excellent sage about the highest sagac-  
 ity.

*The introductory verses are finished.*

“I now know that Asita’s words 21.1  
 have turned out to be true.  
 I ask you this, Gotama,  
 who has gone beyond all things:

For one who has entered the homeless life, 22.1  
 seeking food on alms round,

78. This is a succinct definition of *buddha*, not an alternate thing that you might hear people say, per Bodhi and Norman.

79. Both Norman and Bodhi have “doctrine” here, while commentary is silent. I’m not aware of *samaya* in the sense of “doctrine” in the early texts, nor is it listed in the senses of *samaya* in the commentarial analysis in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī commentary, Kāmāvacarakusala. Given that the concern in previous lines is the notion of an awakened one, surely we have here an abbreviated *abhisamaya* i.e. “breakthrough, enlightenment experience”.

80. I find it curious that this epithet is used of both the Buddha and Asita.

81. Possibly the only usage of “hope” in a spiritual sense in the EBTs.

when questioned, O sage, please tell me  
of sagacity, the ultimate state.”<sup>82</sup>

- 23.1 “I shall school you in sagacity,”  
      *said the Buddha,*  
“so difficult and challenging.  
Come, I shall tell you all about it.  
Brace yourself; stay strong!
- 24.1 In the village, keep the same attitude  
no matter if reviled or praised.  
Guard against ill-tempered thoughts,  
wander peaceful, not frantic.
- 25.1 Many different things come up,<sup>83</sup>  
like tongues of fire in a forest.  
Women try to seduce a sage—  
let them not seduce you!
- 26.1 Refraining from sex,  
having left behind sensual pleasures high and low,  
don’t be hostile or attached  
to living creatures firm or frail.
- 27.1 ‘As am I, so are they;  
as are they, so am I’—  
Treating others like oneself,  
neither kill nor incite to kill.

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82. Bodhi accepts the commentarial gloss of *pada* as *paṭipadā* here, but I find his reasoning unconvincing. Yes, the text speaks of practice, but this correlates to the first part of the answer. Here, at the end of the question, it relates to the end of the text, which speaks of the state of sagacity.

83. Note that, despite the etymology, *uccāvaca* seems to be used more in the sense of “diversity” rather than “high and low”; eg. the colors of a rainbow. Here all things are like tongues of flame, i.e. there are many different ones, but they are not treated as better or worse.

Leaving behind desire and greed 28.1  
 for what ordinary people are attached to,<sup>84</sup>  
 a seer would set out to practice,  
 they'd cross over this abyss.<sup>85</sup>

With empty stomach, taking limited food, 29.1  
 few in wishes, not greedy;  
 truly hungerless regarding all desires,<sup>86</sup>  
 desireless, one is quenched.

Having wandered for alms, 30.1  
 they'd take themselves into the forest;  
 and nearing the foot of a tree,  
 the sage would take their seat.

That wise one intent on absorption, 31.1  
 would delight within the forest.  
 They'd practice absorption at the foot of a tree,  
 filling themselves with bliss.

Then, at the end of the night, 32.1  
 they'd take themselves into a village.  
 They'd not welcome being called,<sup>87</sup>  
 nor offerings brought from the village.

A sage who has come to a village 33.1

84. As other instances of this line make clear, the referent of *yattha* is *kāmā*, i.e. the pleasures of the senses, not the desire and greed (of the previous line). Bodhi gets this nuance right, Norman does not.

85. Bodhi has “inferno”, Norman “hell” but the normal sense of “abyss” better fits the metaphor of “crossing over”.

86. Read *sa ve*.

87. This line and the next echo the practices of Jain ascetics: *naehibhaddantiko*, *natīṭṭhabhaddantiko*, *nābhihaṭaṃ*. The sense of the first two terms is similar to *avhāna*, while the last of these terms is the same as *abhihāra* in the next line.

would not walk hastily among the families.<sup>88</sup>

They'd not discuss their search for food,  
nor would they speak suggestively.

34.1 'I got something, that's good.  
I got nothing, that's fine.'  
Impartial in both cases,  
they return right to the tree.

35.1 Wandering with bowl in hand,  
not dumb, but thought to be dumb,  
they wouldn't scorn a tiny gift,  
nor look down upon the giver.

36.1 For the practice has many aspects,<sup>89</sup>  
as explained by the Ascetic.<sup>90</sup>  
They do not go to the far shore twice,<sup>91</sup>  
nor having gone once do they fall away.<sup>92</sup>

37.1 When a mendicant has no creeping,  
and has cut the stream of craving,

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88. Bodhi's "should not behave rashly" and Norman's "should not pursue his search for food inconsiderately" confuse a plain meaning. When on alms round a mendicant should not walk too fast, else the families have no time to ready the food.

89. As above, *uccāvaca* probably means "diverse" practices rather than "high and low" per commentary followed by Bodhi and Norman. The only usage of *uccāvaca* in the context of practice is the "diverse duties" performed by mendicants for their fellows (eg. DN 33:3.3.17).

90. Norman's proposal that this is not the Buddha is implausible.

91. This verse is quoted by the Kathāvatthu (Kv 1.2:113.1) to refute the thesis that an arahant might fall away from their attainment. This is overlooked by both Bodhi and Norman, although it evidently underlies the commentary.

92. Both Bodhi and Norman discuss this line, without any compelling conclusion. The problematic *mutam* cannot mean "experienced" per Bodhi and Norman following the commentary. Since the Kathāvatthu is by far the earliest source on this verse, I suggest we adopt its reading that the verse is about "falling away", and amend *mutam* to *cutam*.



and given up all the various duties,  
no fever is found in them.

I shall school you in sagacity.<sup>93</sup> 38.1  
Practice as if you were licking a razor's edge.  
With tongue pressed to the roof of your mouth,  
be restrained regarding your stomach.

Don't be sluggish in mind, 39.1  
nor think overly much.  
Be free of putrefaction and unattached,  
committed to the spiritual life.

Train in a lonely seat, 40.1  
attending closely to ascetics;  
solitude is sagacity, they say.  
If you welcome solitude,  
you'll light up the ten directions.

Having heard the words of the wise,<sup>94</sup> 41.1  
the meditators who've given up sensual desires,  
a follower of mine would develop  
conscience and faith all the more.

Understand this by the way streams move 42.1  
in clefts and crevices:  
the little creeks flow on babbling,  
while silent flow the great rivers.

93. The PTS edition, as does the BJT, has a reciter's remark here identifying the speaker as the Buddha, and this is translated without comment by Norman and Bodhi. It is unusual, if not unique, to find such a mark in the middle of a series of verses by one speaker. The Mahāsaṅgīti edition, following the VRI, lacks this remark and I have translated accordingly.

94. By forcing the commentary's sense of *kitti* into *nigghosa*, Bodhi and Norman confuse a simple meaning. *Nighosa* (more commonly spelled *nigghosa*) just means "word, teaching, statement", eg. *tava sutvāna nigghosaṃ* "having heard your teaching".

- 43.1      What is lacking, babbles;  
               what is full is at peace.  
               The fool is like a half-full pot;  
               the wise like a brimfull lake.
- 44.1      When the Ascetic speaks much  
               it is relevant and meaningful:  
               knowing, he teaches the Dhamma;  
               knowing, he speaks much.
- 45.1      But one who, knowing, is restrained,  
               knowing, does not speak much;  
               that sage is worthy of sagacity,  
               that sage has achieved sagacity.”

Snp 3.12

### 3.12 Contemplating Pairs

*Dvayatānupassanāsutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattihī in the Eastern Monastery, the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother. Now, at that time it was the sabbath—the full moon on the fifteenth day—and the Buddha was sitting in the open surrounded by the Saṅgha of monks. Then the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of monks, who were so very silent. He addressed them:
- 2.1      “Suppose, mendicants, they questioned you thus: ‘There are skillful teachings that are noble, emancipating, and lead to awakening. What is the real reason for listening to such teachings?’ You should answer: ‘Only so as to truly know the pairs of teachings.’ And what pairs do they speak of?
- 3.1      ‘This is suffering; this is the origin of suffering’: this is the first contemplation. ‘This is the cessation of suffering; this is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant meditates rightly contemplat-

ing a pair of teachings in this way—diligent, keen, and resolute—they can expect one of two results: enlightenment in the present life, or if there’s something left over, non-return.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 4.1  
went on to say:

“There are those who don’t understand suffering 5.1  
and suffering’s cause,  
and where all suffering  
ceases with nothing left over.  
And they don’t know the path  
that leads to the stilling of suffering.

They lack the heart’s release, 6.1  
as well as the release by wisdom.  
Unable to make an end,  
they continue to be reborn and grow old.

But there are those who understand suffering 7.1  
and suffering’s cause,  
and where all suffering  
ceases with nothing left over.  
And they understand the path  
that leads to the stilling of suffering.

They’re endowed with the heart’s release, 8.1  
as well as the release by wisdom.  
Able to make an end,  
they don’t continue to be reborn and grow old.”

“Suppose, mendicants, they questioned you thus: ‘Could there 9.1  
be another way to contemplate the pairs?’ You should say, ‘There  
could.’ And how could there be? ‘All the suffering that originates  
is caused by attachment’: this is one contemplation. ‘With the  
utter cessation of attachment there is no origination of suffering’:  
this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant meditates in

this way they can expect enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

- 10.1        “Attachment is the source of suffering  
in all its countless forms in the world.  
When an ignorant person builds up attachments,  
that idiot returns to suffering again and again.  
So let one who understands not build up attachments,  
contemplating the birth and origin of suffering.”
- 11.1        “Suppose, mendicants, they questioned you thus: ‘Could there be another way to contemplate the pairs?’ You should say, ‘There could.’ And how could there be? ‘All the suffering that originates is caused by ignorance’: this is one contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of ignorance there is no origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:
- 12.1        “Those who journey again and again,  
transmigrating through birth and death;  
they go from this state to another,  
destined only for ignorance.
- 13.1        For ignorance is the great delusion  
because of which we have long transmigrated.  
Those beings who have arrived at knowledge  
do not proceed to a future life.”
- 14.1        “‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? ‘All the suffering that originates is caused by choices’: this is one contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of choices there is no origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

“All the suffering that originates  
is caused by choices. 15.1  
With the cessation of choices,  
there is no origination of suffering.

Knowing this danger, 16.1  
that suffering is caused by choices;  
through the stilling of all choices,  
and the stopping of perceptions,  
this is the way suffering ends.  
For those who truly know this,

rightly seeing, knowledge masters, 17.1  
the astute, understanding rightly,  
having overcome Māra’s bonds,  
do not proceed to a future life.”

“‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? 18.1  
‘All the suffering that originates is caused by consciousness’: this  
is one contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of consciousness  
there is no origination of suffering’: this is the second contempla-  
tion. When a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect  
enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

“All the suffering that originates 19.1  
is caused by consciousness.  
With the cessation of consciousness,  
there is no origination of suffering.

Knowing this danger, 20.1  
that suffering is caused by consciousness,  
with the stilling of consciousness a mendicant  
is hungerless, extinguished.”

“‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? 21.1  
‘All the suffering that originates is caused by contact’: this is one

contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of contact there is no origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

- 22.1        “Those mired in contact,  
              swept down the stream of rebirths,  
              practicing the wrong way,  
              are far from the ending of fetters.
- 23.1        But those who completely understand contact,  
              who, understanding, delight in peace;  
              by comprehending contact  
              they are hungerless, extinguished.”
- 24.1        “‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be?  
‘All the suffering that originates is caused by feeling’: this is one  
contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of feeling there is no  
origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When  
a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment  
or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:
- 25.1        “Having known everything that is felt—  
              whether pleasure or pain,  
              as well as what’s neutral,  
              both internally and externally—
- 26.1        as suffering,  
              deceptive, falling apart;  
              they see it vanish with every touch:  
              that’s how they understand it.<sup>95</sup>  
              With the ending of feelings, a mendicant  
              is hungerless, extinguished.”

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95. SN 36.2:3.4 has *virajjati*. See Bodhi’s note 1735 for the readings and commentary in both contexts.

“‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? 27.1  
 ‘All the suffering that originates is caused by craving’: this is one  
 contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of craving there is no  
 origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When  
 a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment  
 or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

“Craving is a person’s partner 28.1  
 as they transmigrate on this long journey.  
 They go from this state to another,  
 but don’t escape transmigration.

Knowing this danger, 29.1  
 that craving is the cause of suffering—  
 rid of craving, free of grasping,  
 a mendicant would wander mindful.”

“‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? 30.1  
 ‘All the suffering that originates is caused by grasping’: this is one  
 contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of grasping there is no  
 origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When  
 a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment  
 or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

“Grasping is the cause of continued existence; 31.1  
 one who exists falls into suffering.  
 Death comes to those who are born—  
 this is the origination of suffering.

That’s why with the end of grasping, 32.1  
 the astute, understanding rightly,  
 having directly known the end of rebirth,  
 do not proceed to a future life.”

“‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? ‘All 33.1  
 the suffering that originates is caused by instigating karma’: this

is one contemplation.<sup>96</sup> ‘With the utter cessation of instigation there is no origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

- 34.1 “All the suffering that originates  
is caused by instigating karma.  
With the cessation of instigation,  
there is no origination of suffering.
- 35.1 Knowing this danger,  
that suffering is caused by instigating karma,  
having given up all instigation,  
one is freed with respects to instigation.
- 36.1 For the mendicant with peaceful mind,  
who has cut off craving for continued existence,  
transmigration through births is finished;  
there are no future lives for them.”
- 37.1 “‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? ‘All the suffering that originates is caused by sustenance’: this is one contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of sustenance there is no origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:
- 38.1 “All the suffering that originates  
is caused by sustenance.  
With the cessation of sustenance,  
there is no origination of suffering.
- 39.1 Knowing this danger,  
that suffering is caused by sustenance,

96. I take *ārambha* here as having the same sense as *samārambha* at AN 4.195:6.2. But see too the sense of “transgression” at AN 5.142:6.4.



completely understanding all sustenance,  
one is independent of all sustenance.

Having rightly understood the state of health, 40.1  
through the ending of defilements,  
using after reflection, firm in principle,<sup>97</sup>  
a knowledge master cannot be reckoned.”

“‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? ‘All 41.1  
the suffering that originates is caused by perturbation’: this is one  
contemplation. ‘With the utter cessation of perturbation there is no  
origination of suffering’: this is the second contemplation. When  
a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment  
or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

“All the suffering that originates 42.1  
is caused by perturbation.  
With the cessation of perturbation,  
there is no origination of suffering.

Knowing this danger, 43.1  
that suffering is caused by perturbation,  
that’s why, having relinquished perturbation,<sup>98</sup>  
and stopped making karmic choices,  
imperturbable, free of grasping,  
a mendicant would wander mindful.”

“‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be? 44.1  
‘For the dependent there is agitation’: this is the first contempla-  
tion. ‘For the independent there’s no agitation’: this is the second  
contemplation. When a mendicant meditates in this way they can  
expect enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on  
to say:

97. *Saṅkhāya sevī* refers to the monastic practice of making use of requisites, including food, only after reflection on them.

98. Text treats *injita* as *eja* and the translation should reflect this.

- 45.1 “For the independent there’s no agitation.  
The dependent, grasping,  
goes from this state to another,  
without escaping transmigration.
- 46.1 Knowing this danger,  
the great fear in dependencies,  
independent, free of grasping,  
a mendicant would wander mindful.”
- 47.1 “‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be?  
‘Formless states are more peaceful than states of form’: this is the  
first contemplation. ‘Cessation is more peaceful than formless  
states’: this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant med-  
itates in this way they can expect enlightenment or non-return.”  
Then the Teacher went on to say:
- 48.1 “There are beings in the realm of luminous form,  
and others stuck in the formless.  
Not understanding cessation,  
they return in future lives.
- 49.1 But the people who completely understand form,  
not stuck in the formless,  
released in cessation—  
they are conquerors of death.”
- 50.1 “‘Could there be another way?’ ... And how could there be?  
‘What this world—with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this popula-  
tion with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—focuses  
on as true, the noble ones have clearly seen with right wisdom to  
be actually false’: this is the first contemplation.”<sup>99</sup> ‘What this world

99. In this unique formulation, *upanijjhāyati* should be understood in terms of its consistent usage in the Suttas: the excessive and obsessive focusing or gazing on something. It’s not just that people miss what is true, it is that they are looking intently in the wrong direction.

focuses on as false, the noble ones have clearly seen with right wisdom to be actually true’: this is the second contemplation. When a mendicant meditates in this way they can expect enlightenment or non-return.” Then the Teacher went on to say:

“See how the world with its gods  
imagines not-self to be self;  
habituated to name and form,  
imagining this is truth. 51.1

For whatever you imagine it is, 52.1  
it turns out to be something else.  
And that is what is false in it,  
for the ephemeral is deceptive by nature.

Extinguishment has an undeceptive nature, 53.1  
the noble ones know it as truth.  
Having comprehended the truth,  
they are hungerless, extinguished.”

“Suppose, mendicants, they questioned you thus: ‘Could there 54.1  
be another way to contemplate the pairs?’ You should say, ‘There  
could.’ And how could there be? ‘What this world—with its gods,  
Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brah-  
mins, its gods and humans—focuses on as happiness, the noble  
ones have clearly seen with right wisdom to be actually suffering’:  
this is the first contemplation. ‘What this world focuses on as suf-  
fering, the noble ones have clearly seen with right wisdom to be  
actually happiness’: this is the second contemplation. When a  
mendicant meditates rightly contemplating a pair of teachings in  
this way—diligent, keen, and resolute—they can expect one of two  
results: enlightenment in the present life, or if there’s something  
left over, non-return. That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy  
One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Sights, sounds, tastes, smells, 55.1

touches, and thoughts, the lot of them—  
they're likable, desirable, and pleasurable  
as long as you can say that they exist.

- 56.1 For all the world with its gods,  
this is what they agree is happiness.  
And where they cease  
is agreed on as suffering for them.
- 57.1 The noble ones have seen as happiness  
the ceasing of identity.  
This insight by those who see  
contradicts the whole world.
- 58.1 What others say is happiness  
the noble ones say is suffering.  
What others say is suffering  
the noble ones know as happiness.
- 59.1 See, this teaching is hard to understand,  
it confuses the ignorant.  
There is darkness for the shrouded;  
blackness for those who don't see.
- 60.1 But the good are open;  
like light for those who see.  
Though close, they do not understand,  
those fools inexperienced in the teaching.<sup>100</sup>
- 61.1 They're mired in desire to be reborn,  
flowing along the stream of lives,  
mired in Māra's sway:  
this teaching isn't easy for them to understand.
- 62.1 Who, apart from the noble ones,

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100. Read *akovidā* per SN 35.136:7.4.

is qualified to understand this state?  
Having rightly understood this state,  
the undefiled become fully extinguished.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were <sup>63.1</sup>  
happy with what the Buddha said. And while this discourse was  
being spoken, the minds of sixty mendicants were freed from de-  
filements by not grasping.

# The Chapter of Eights

Snp 4.1

## Sensual Pleasures

*Kāmasutta*

- 1.1 If a mortal desires sensual pleasure  
and their desire succeeds,  
they definitely become elated,  
having got what they want.
- 2.1 But for that person in the throes of pleasure,  
aroused by desire,  
if those pleasures fade,  
it hurts like an arrow's strike.
- 3.1 One who, being mindful,  
avoids sensual pleasures  
like side-stepping a snake's head,  
transcends attachment to the world.
- 4.1 There are many objects of sensual desire:  
fields, lands, and gold; cattle and horses;  
slaves and servants; women and relatives.  
When a man lusts over these,
- 5.1 the weak overpower him  
and adversities crush him.

Suffering follows him<sup>101</sup>  
like water in a leaky boat.

That's why a person, ever mindful, 6.1  
should avoid sensual pleasures.  
Give them up and cross the flood,  
as a bailed-out boat reaches the far shore.

## Snp 4.2

# Eight on the Cave

*Guhaṭṭhakasutta*

Trapped in a cave, thickly overspread, 1.1  
sunk in delusion they stay.  
A person like this is far from seclusion,  
for sensual pleasures in the world are not easy to give  
up.

The chains of desire, the bonds of life's pleasures 2.1  
are hard to escape, for one cannot free another.<sup>102</sup>  
Looking to the past or the future,  
they pray for these pleasures or former ones.<sup>103</sup>

101. Bodhi, Norman, and Nāṇadīpa all have “enter” here, while Thanissaro has “invades”. But this is a stock line, and it's hard to read *anveti* as anything other than “follows”. Niddesa (Mnd 1:70.2) has *anveti anugacchati anvāyikaṃ hoti*. The metaphor is not that water “enters” a boat, but that a leaky boat already contains water and takes it along (like a shadow or an ox-cart per the opening verses of the Dhammapada). That's why it has to be bailed out in the next verse.

102. *Te duppamuñca* has been taken by most translators as referring to people, in senses either active (Bodhi's “let go with difficulty”) or passive (Norman's “are hard to release”). However the phrase occurs in a very similar context at SN 3.10:5.2 and Dhṛp 346:2, where it refers to the chains that are hard to escape.

103. *Jappa* means both to “incant” and to “long for”, and the English “pray” has exactly the same connotations—for exactly the same reasons. They originated in begging favors of a god.

- 3.1 Greedy, fixated, infatuated by sensual pleasures,  
they are incorrigible, habitually immoral.  
When led to suffering they lament,  
“What will become of us when we pass away from  
here?”
- 4.1 That’s why a person should train in this life:  
should you know that anything in the world is wrong,  
don’t act wrongly on account of that;  
for the wise say this life is short.
- 5.1 I see the world’s population floundering,  
given to craving for future lives.  
Base men wail in the jaws of death,  
not rid of craving for life after life.
- 6.1 See them flounder over belongings,  
like fish in puddles of a dried-up stream.  
Seeing this, live unselfishly,  
forming no attachment to future lives.
- 7.1 Rid of desire for both ends,<sup>104</sup>  
having completely understood contact, free of greed,  
doing nothing for which they’d blame themselves,  
the wise don’t cling to the seen and the heard.
- 8.1 Having completely understood perception and hav-  
ing crossed the flood,<sup>105</sup>  
the sage, not clinging to possessions,

104. The reference here is to the two ends of contact (AN 6.61) rather than the two extremes of views or paths.

105. Bodhi, Norman, and Ñāṇadīpa, apparently following the commentary, take *vitareyya* as an optative. But the previous verse spoke of an arahant, and here the one who has fully understood perception must have already crossed over. *Vitareyya ogham* occurs at Snp 3.5:13.2, where *vitareyya* is clearly an absolute, and is rendered as such by both Bodhi and Norman.



with dart plucked out, living diligently,  
does not long for this world or the next.

### Snp 4.3

## Eight on Malice

### *Duṭṭhaṭṭhakasutta*

Some speak with malicious intent,<sup>106</sup> 1.1  
while others speak set on truth.  
When disputes come up a sage does not get involved,  
which is why they've no barrenness at all.

How can you transcend your own view 2.1  
when you're led by preference, dogmatic in belief?<sup>107</sup>  
Inventing your own undertakings,<sup>108</sup>  
you'd speak according to your notion.<sup>109</sup>

Some, unasked, tell others 3.1  
of their own precepts and vows.  
They have an ignoble nature, say the experts,  
since they speak about themselves of their own accord.

106. *Duṭṭhamana*, or more commonly *paduṭṭhamana*, means “malice” not “corruption”, as is found through the Suttas and confirmed by the Niddesa.

107. Bodhi, Norman, and Ñāṇadīpa all render *chanda* as “desire”, and that is certainly the sense of *chandānunito* at SN 35.94:6.4. Here, however, Niddesa glosses with synonyms for “view” and this seems like a more plausible sense. Note too the sense of *nivīṭṭha* as “dogmatic”, which recurs through the *Aṭṭhakavagga* (cp. *abhinivesa*).

108. *Samattāni* is regularly used of vows “undertaken”, and given the following verse this is surely the meaning here, *contra* Niddesa and commentary. See Snp 4.4:5.1, where *samādāya* is used in the same sense.

109. Here we find a sense of *jānāti* that doesn't fit the English idea of “knowledge” as “true belief”. The idea is that they speak from their own (limited and opinionated) ideas. It's not as pejorative as “opinion” nor as solid as “knowledge”, so I render as “notion”. We find this usage commonly in the final two chapters of Snp.

- 4.1 A mendicant, peaceful, quenched,  
never boasts “thus am I” of their precepts.  
They have a noble nature, say the experts,  
not proud of anything in the world.
- 5.1 For one who formulates and creates teachings,  
and promotes them despite their defects,  
if they see an advantage for themselves,  
they become dependent on that, relying on unstable  
peace.
- 6.1 It’s not easy to get over dogmatic views  
adopted after judging among the teachings.  
That’s why, among all these dogmas, a person  
rejects one teaching and takes up another.
- 7.1 The cleansed one has no formulated view  
at all in the world about the different realms.  
Having given up illusion and conceit,  
by what path would they go? They are not involved.
- 8.1 For one who is involved gets embroiled in disputes  
about teachings—  
but how to dispute with the uninvolved? About  
what?  
For picking up and putting down is not what they  
do;<sup>110</sup>  
they have shaken off all views in this very life.

110. The problem addressed is one who is picking up one thing after another. It’s therefore best to translate *atta* in an active sense, per Niddesa: *gahaṇaṃ muñcanā samatikkanto*.

## Snp 4.4

## Eight on the Pure

*Suddhaṭṭhakasutta*

“I see a pure being of ultimate wellness;<sup>111</sup> 1.1

it is vision that grants a person purity.”

Recalling this notion of the ultimate,<sup>112</sup>

they believe in the notion that there is one who observes purity.<sup>113</sup>

If a person were granted purity through vision, 2.1

or if by a notion they could give up suffering,

then one with attachments is purified by another:

their view betrays them as one who asserts thus.

The brahmin speaks not of purity from another 3.1

in terms of what is seen, heard, or thought; or by

precepts or vows.

They are unsullied in the midst of good and evil,

letting go what was picked up, without creating anything new here.

Having let go the last they lay hold of the next; 4.1

following impulse, they don’t get past the snare.<sup>114</sup>

111. This line refers to seeing a supposed saint or holy person, a sight that was believed to grant blessings. As Bodhi remarks, *aroga* refers to the *attā*. However this does not necessarily mean an immaterial soul. Here what is seen is the soul as a physical form (*rūpī attā*) manifesting purity and wellness.

112. Here as in 4.3, *ñāṇa* is used in the sense of “notion”. Bodhi, Norman, and Ñāṇadīpa all follow Niddesa in taking *abhijāna* in its usual sense of “understanding, direct knowing”. But here the secondary sense of “recall” fits better. Someone thinking about their vision of a holy man believes that there must be an observer of such purity, i.e. a self.

113. *Pacceti* is a standard verb for someone who “believes” in a religious rite or idea.

114. Bodhi, Norman, and Ñāṇadīpa all render *saṅga* in some variant of “tie, attachment”. Yet that fails to render the metaphor. *Saṅga* is used in the sense

They grab on and let go like a monkey  
grabbing and releasing a branch.<sup>115</sup>

- 5.1 Having undertaken their own vows, a person  
visits various teachers, being attached to percep-  
tion.<sup>116</sup>  
One who knows, having comprehended the truth  
through the knowledges,<sup>117</sup>  
does not visit various teachers, being of vast wisdom.

- 6.1 They are remote from all things  
seen, heard, or thought.  
Seeing them living openly,  
how could anyone in this world judge them?

- 7.1 They don't make things up or promote them,  
or speak of the uttermost purity.  
After untying the tight knot of grasping  
they long for nothing in the world.

- 8.1 The brahmin has stepped over the boundary;  
knowing and seeing, they adopt nothing.<sup>118</sup>  
Neither in love with passion nor besotted by dispa-  
sion,  
there is nothing here they adopt as the ultimate.

---

of a “snare” in which one may be caught, like a net (Sn̐ 3.6:28.4). And a snare is indeed something that one may cross over or get past.

115. The monkey grabs the branches, not the trunk, as a metaphor for missing the essence. And to drive home the pun, religious orders are called “branches”.

116. See *uccāvacar̐ vā pana dassanāya gacchati* at AN 6.30:2.2. In the current poem, it refers to someone who visits a variety of teachers or sects, as per Niddesa.

117. Here the plural *vedehi* stands for the *tevijjā*.

118. Note that *samuggahīta* is used here in the same sense as Sn̐ 4.3:6.2 or Sn̐ 2.12:11.1, i.e. the “adoption” of a theory or view.

## Snp 4.5

## Eight on the Ultimate

*Paramatthakasutta*

If, maintaining that theirs is the “ultimate” view, 1.1  
 a person makes it out to be highest in the world;<sup>119</sup>  
 then they declare all others are “lesser”;  
 that’s why they’re not over disputes.

If they see an advantage for themselves 2.1  
 in what’s seen, heard, or thought; or in precepts or  
 vows,  
 in that case, having adopted that one alone,  
 they see all others as inferior.

Experts say that, too, is a knot, 3.1  
 relying on which people see others as lesser.  
 That’s why a mendicant ought not rely  
 on what’s seen, heard, or thought, or on precepts and  
 vows.

Nor would they form a view about the world 4.1  
 through a notion or through precepts and vows.  
 They would never represent themselves as “equal”,  
 nor conceive themselves “worse” or “better”.

What was picked up has been set down and is not 5.1  
 grasped again;  
 they form no dependency even on notions.  
 They follow no side among the factions,  
 and believe in no view at all.

One here who has no wish for either end— 6.1  
 for any form of existence in this life or the next—

119. Reading *yad-* here and below as *yadi*.

has adopted no dogma at all  
after judging among the teachings.

- 7.1 For them not even the tiniest idea is formulated here  
regarding what is seen, heard, or thought.  
That brahmin does not grasp any view—  
how could anyone in this world judge them?
- 8.1 They don't make things up or promote them,  
and don't subscribe to any of the doctrines.  
The brahmin has no need to be led by precept or vow;  
gone to the far shore, one such does not return.

Snp 4.6  
Old Age  
*Jarāsutta*

- 1.1 Short, alas, is this life;  
you die before a hundred years.  
Even if you live a little longer,  
you still die of old age.
- 2.1 People grieve over belongings,  
yet there is no such thing as permanent possessions.  
Separation is a fact of life; when you see this,  
you wouldn't stay living at home.
- 3.1 Whatever a person thinks of as belonging to them,  
that too is given up when they die.  
Knowing this, an astute follower of mine  
would not be bent on ownership.<sup>120</sup>
- 4.1 Just as, upon awakening, a person does not see

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120. *Namati* is usually rendered with “incline” but I feel something stronger is meant here.

what they encountered in a dream;  
so too you do not see your loved ones  
when they are dead and gone.

You used to see and hear those folk, 5.1  
and call them by their name.  
Yet the name is all that's left to tell  
of a person when they're gone.

Those who are greedy for belongings 6.1  
don't give up sorrow, lamentation, and stinginess.  
That's why the sages, seers of sanctuary,<sup>121</sup>  
left possessions behind and wandered.

For a mendicant who lives withdrawn, 7.1  
frequenting a secluded seat,  
they say it's fitting  
to not show themselves in a home.

The sage is independent everywhere, 8.1  
they don't form likes or dislikes.  
Lamentation and stinginess  
slip off them like water from a leaf.

Like a droplet slips from a lotus-leaf, 9.1  
like water from a lotus flower;  
the sage doesn't cling to that  
which is seen or heard or thought.

For the one who is cleansed does not conceive 10.1  
in terms of things seen, heard, or thought.  
They do not wish to be purified by another;

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121. The historical past tense here is unusual. It seems to be an allusion to legendary hermits of the past.

they are neither passionate nor growing dispassioned.<sup>122</sup>

Snp 4.7

## With Tissametteyya

*Tissametteyyasutta*

- 1.1 “When someone indulges in sex,”  
       *said Venerable Tissametteyya,*  
 “tell us, sir: what trouble befalls them?  
 After hearing your instruction,  
 we shall train in seclusion.”
- 2.1 “When someone indulges in sex,”  
       *replied the Buddha,*  
 “they forget their instructions  
 and go the wrong way—  
 that is something ignoble in them.
- 3.1 Someone who formerly lived alone  
 and then resorts to sex  
 is like a chariot careening off-track;  
 in the world they call them a low, ordinary person.
- 4.1 Their former fame and reputation  
 also fall away.  
 Seeing this, they’d train  
 to give up sex.
- 5.1 Oppressed by thoughts,  
 they brood like a wretch.  
 When they hear what others are saying,

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122. In the Suttas, *virajjati* is a stock term in the process of liberation. It follows *nibbidā* (“disenchantment”) and precedes *vimutti* (“freedom”). Being free, the arahant has gone beyond this stage.



such a person is embarrassed.

Then they lash out with verbal daggers 6.1  
when reproached by others.  
This is their great blind spot;<sup>123</sup>  
they sink to lies.

They once were considered astute,<sup>124</sup> 7.1  
committed to the solitary life.  
But then they indulged in sex,  
dragged along by desire like an idiot.<sup>125</sup>

Knowing this danger 8.1  
in falling from a former state here,<sup>126</sup>  
a sage would firmly resolve to wander alone,  
and would not resort to sex.

They'd train themselves only in seclusion; 9.1  
this, for the noble ones, is highest.  
One who wouldn't conceive themselves "best" due  
to that—  
they have truly drawn near to extinguishment.

People tied to sensual pleasures envy them: 10.1  
the isolated, wandering sage  
who has crossed the flood,

123. *Gedha* also at AN 5.103:3.2, where the sense is not "entanglement" but "cover from sight". See Norman's note on this verse for the apparent confusion between *gedha*, *rodha*, and the intermediary *godha*.

124. A line used of Devadatta at Iti 89:4.1.

125. Bodhi follows the commentary and Niddesa in rendering *parikissati* as "afflicted", as does Norman with "troubled", both assuming a contracted *parikilissati*. But *parikissati* here is connected with wisdom (or lack thereof), not suffering. Surely we should look to such passages as AN 4.186:2.6, where *parikassati* is the mind that "drags" a person around. *Parikissati* is the passive form.

126. At Pli Tv Pvr 15:7.2 *pubbāpara* is defined in terms of changing and inconsistent behavior.

unconcerned for sensual pleasures.

Snp 4.8

## With Pasūra

*Pasūrasutta*

- 1.1 “Here alone is purity,” they say,  
denying that there is purification in other teachings.  
Speaking of the beauty in that which they depend  
on,<sup>127</sup>  
each one is dogmatic about their own idiosyncratic  
interpretation.<sup>128</sup>
- 2.1 Desiring debate, they plunge into an assembly,  
where each takes the other as a fool.<sup>129</sup>  
Relying on others they state their contention,  
desiring praise while claiming to be experts.
- 3.1 Addicted to debating in the midst of the assembly,  
their need for praise makes them nervous.  
But when they’re repudiated they get embarrassed;  
upset at criticism, they find fault in others.
- 4.1 If their doctrine is said to be weak,  
and judges declare it repudiated,  
the loser weeps and wails,

127. Norman has “good” for *subha*, Bodhi “excellent”, but the Niddesa shows that the sense is “illuminating, bringing wisdom”. Compare the same phrase at Snp 4.13:16.3, where the context shows we are speaking of those whose doctrine is derived from meditative experience. Perhaps here (as in the Pārāyanavagga) we are dealing with ascetics who rely on the *subhavamutti*, the “beautiful release” (of jhānas).

128. Here, as at Snp 4.12:15.3, *puthu* emphasizes how they all have their own distinct view.

129. *Dahanti* is to “regard” or “see”, per Niddesa and Commentary; Bodhi’s “accuse” seems hard to justify.

moaning, “They beat me.”

When these arguments come up among ascetics, 5.1  
they get excited or dejected.  
Seeing this, refrain from contention,  
for the only purpose is praise and profit.

But if, having declared their doctrine, 6.1  
they are praised there in the midst of the assembly,  
they laugh and proudly show off because of it,  
having got what they wanted.

Their pride is their downfall, 7.1  
yet they speak from conceit and arrogance.  
Seeing this, one ought not get into arguments,  
for experts say this is no way to purity.

As a warrior, after feasting on royal food, 8.1  
goes roaring, wanting an opponent—  
go off and find an opponent, Sūra,  
for here, as before, there is no-one to fight.

When someone argues about a view they have 9.1  
adopted,  
saying, “This is the only truth,”  
say to them, “Here you’ll have no adversary  
when a dispute has come up.”

There are those who live far from the crowd, 10.1  
not countering views with view.  
Who is there to argue with you, Pasūra,  
among those who grasp nothing here as the highest?

And so you come along speculating, 11.1  
thinking up theories in your mind.

Now that you’ve challenged someone who’s  
cleansed,<sup>130</sup>  
you’ll not be able to respond.<sup>131</sup>

Snp 4.9

## With Māgaṇḍiya

*Māgaṇḍiyasutta*

- 1.1 “Even when I saw the sirens Craving, Delight, and  
Lust,<sup>132</sup>  
I had no desire for sex.  
What is this body full of piss and shit?<sup>133</sup>  
I wouldn’t even want to touch it with my foot.”<sup>134</sup>
- 2.1 “If you do not want a gem such as this,  
a lady desired by many rulers of men,  
then what kind of theory, precepts and vows, liveli-  
hood,  
and rebirth in a new life do you assert?”

130. Here, *yuga* is connected in the Niddesa with *yugaggāha* (“taking the reins”), which in turn is connected in Vb 17:75.2 with “causing disputes”. It seems to be an idiom for “issuing a challenge”. In any case, it has a stronger sense than just “met, encountered”.

131. *Sakkhasi* is 2nd future, *sampayātave* is infinitive. *Sampāyati* is a fairly common word, “answer a question”, usually in a negative sense, to be “stumped” by a question. Oddly, most translators (Bodhi, Norman, Ñāṇadīpa, Thanissaro) don’t catch this sense.

132. Māra’s daughters, the archetypal temptresses. Their failed seduction is told at SN 4.25. *Arati* seems to be an error in the Pali tradition for *rati*.

133. The commentary is surely correct in glossing these lines as *kimevidam imissā dārikāya muttakarisapunṇam rūpam*. *Idam* (neuter) refers to the body (*rūpa*) not to the girl. It’s a meaningful distinction; the Buddha was criticizing the nature of the body, not shaming the person.

134. *Ice* is 1st optative. *Nam* is rendered as feminine (“her”) by Norman and Bodhi, but it agrees with *idam* in the previous line, so it should be neuter (“it”). Again, the Buddha says nothing in criticism of the woman, only of the body.

“After judging among the teachings,”<sup>135</sup> 3.1

*said the Buddha to Māgaṇḍiya,*

“none have been adopted thinking, ‘I assert this.’

Seeing views without adopting any,

searching, I saw inner peace.”

“O sage, you speak of judgments you have formed,” 4.1

*said Māgaṇḍiya,*

“without having adopted any of those views.

As to that matter of ‘inner peace’—

how is that described by the wise?”

“Purity is neither spoken of in terms of view,”<sup>136</sup> 5.1

*said the Buddha to Māgaṇḍiya,*

“oral transmission, notion, and precepts and vows;<sup>137</sup>

nor in terms of that without view, oral transmission,

notion, and precepts and vows.

Having relinquished these, not adopting them,

peaceful, independent, one would not pray to be re-

born.”

“It seems purity is neither spoken of in terms of view,” 6.1

*said Māgaṇḍiya,*

“oral transmission, notion, and precepts and vows;

nor in terms of that without view, oral transmission,

notion, and precepts and vows.

135. The sense only emerges with the specific nuance of terms. *Niccheyya* means to “judge, decide” not simply “consider”; and *samuggahitaṃ* means “[a view that is] adopted” (not “assumed” or “grasped”). Finally, the *na* here applies, not just to *idaṃ vadāmi*, but also to *samuggahitaṃ*, with which *idaṃ* agrees.

136. *Suti* is what is “heard”, but with the extra emphasis on “heard via oral transmission of a sacred scripture”. I think the case should be read here as “instrumental of relation”, since the question was not, “how is peace attained”, but “how is it described”.

137. *Pi* here doesn’t qualify *sīlabbata* (per Norman), it co-ordinates with *nopi tena*. I capture this with the neither/nor construction.

If so, I think this teaching is sheer confusion;  
for some believe in purity in terms of view.”

7.1 “Continuing to question while relying on a view,”  
      *said the Buddha to Māgaṇḍiya,*  
“you’ve become confused by all you’ve adopted.  
From this you’ve not glimpsed the slightest idea,  
which is why you consider the teaching confused.

8.1 If you think that ‘I’m equal,  
special, or worse’, you’ll get into arguments.  
Unwavering in the face of the three discriminations,  
you’ll have no thought ‘I’m equal or special’.

9.1 Why would that brahmin say, ‘It’s true’,  
or with whom would they argue, ‘It’s false’?  
There is no equal or unequal in them,  
so who would they take on in debate?

10.1 After leaving shelter to migrate unsettled,  
a sage doesn’t get close to anyone in town.  
Rid of sensual pleasures, expecting nothing,  
they wouldn’t get in arguments with people.

11.1 A spiritual giant would not take up for argument  
the things in the world from which they live secluded.  
As a prickly lotus born in the water  
is unsullied by water and mud,  
so the greedless sage, proponent of peace,  
is unsmeared by sensuality and the world.

12.1 A knowledge master does not become conceited  
due to view or thought, for they do not identify with  
that.

They've no need for deeds or learning,<sup>138</sup>  
they're not indoctrinated in dogmas.<sup>139</sup>

There are no ties for one detached from ideas; 13.1  
there are no delusions for one freed by wisdom.  
But those who have adopted ideas and views  
wander the world causing conflict."

Snp 4.10

## Before the Breakup

*Purābhedaśutta*

"Seeing how, behaving how, 1.1  
is one said to be at peace?  
When asked, Gotama, please tell me  
about the ultimate person."

"Rid of craving before the breakup," 2.1  
*said the Buddha,*  
"not dependent on the past,  
unfathomable in the middle,<sup>140</sup>  
they are not governed by anything."<sup>141</sup>

Unangry, unafraid, 3.1  
not boastful or regretful,  
thoughtful in counsel, and stable—  
truly that sage is controlled in speech.

138. *Neyyo* has the sense "needing to be led", for example a student who "requires education" before they can master a passage (AN 4.133:1.3). Here it refers to the arahant.

139. *Anupanīto* ("not led in") relates to *neyyo* in the previous line. *Anupanīto* has the sense of "one who has been educated (in recitation)" at MN 93:15.2. Compare English "brought into the fold". The sense of "dogma" for *nivesana* is established at Snp 4.3:6.3 and Snp 4.5:6.3.

140. See SN 44.1, MN 72.

141. Such as ignorance (AN 4.10:9.4) or craving (Dhp 342).

- 4.1 Rid of attachment to the future,  
they don't grieve for the past.  
A seer of seclusion in the midst of contacts  
is not led astray among views.
- 5.1 Withdrawn, free of deceit,  
they're not envious or stingy,  
nor rude or disgusting,  
or given to slander.
- 6.1 Not swept up in pleasures,  
or given to arrogance,  
they're gentle and articulate,  
neither hungering nor growing dispassionate.<sup>142</sup>
- 7.1 They don't train out of desire for profit,  
nor get annoyed at lack of profit.  
Not hostile due to craving,  
nor greedy for flavors,
- 8.1 they are equanimous, ever mindful.  
They never conceive themselves in the world  
as equal, special, or less than;  
for them there is no pride.
- 9.1 They have no dependencies,  
understanding the teaching, they are independent.  
No craving is found in them  
to continue existence or to end it.
- 10.1 I declare them to be at peace,  
unconcerned for sensual pleasures.  
No ties are found in them,  
they have crossed over clinging.

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142. Agreeing with Norman that this is a rare instance of *saddha* in the sense of wish, desire, per Sanskrit *śraddhā*, one sense of which is “appetite”.



They have no sons or cattle, 11.1  
nor possess fields or lands.  
No picking up or putting down<sup>143</sup>  
is to be found in them.

That by which one might describe 12.1  
an ordinary person or ascetics and brahmins  
has no importance to them,  
which is why they're unaffected by words.

Freed of greed, not stingy, 13.1  
a sage doesn't speak of themselves as being  
among superiors, inferiors, or equals.  
One not prone to creation does not return to cre-  
ation.

They who have nothing in the world of their own 14.1  
do not grieve for that which is not,  
or drift among the teachings;<sup>144</sup>  
that's who is said to be at peace."

Snp 4.11

## Quarrels and Disputes

*Kalahavivādasutta*

"Where do quarrels and disputes come from? 1.1  
And lamentation and sorrow, and stinginess?  
What of conceit and arrogance, and slander too—  
tell me please, where do they come from?"

143. As in Snp 4.3:8.3 this makes better sense considered as an active process.

144. Given the significance of "views" in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, and that *dhamma* is commonly used in the sense of "teaching", I read this in view of such passages as MN 47:14.3: *dhammesu niṭṭham gacchati* "comes to a conclusion about the teachings".

- 2.1 “Quarrels and disputes come from what we hold dear,  
as do lamentation and sorrow, stinginess,  
conceit and arrogance.  
Quarrels and disputes are linked to stinginess,  
and when disputes have arisen there is slander.”
- 3.1 “So where do what we hold dear in the world spring  
from?  
And the lusts that are loose in the world?  
Where spring the hopes and aims  
a man has for the next life?”<sup>145</sup>
- 4.1 “What we hold dear in the world spring from desire,  
as do the lusts that are loose in the world.  
From there spring the hopes and aims  
a man has for the next life.”
- 5.1 “So where does desire in the world spring from?  
And judgments, too, where do they come from?  
And anger, lies, and doubt,  
and other things spoken of by the Ascetic?”
- 6.1 “What they call pleasure and pain in the world—  
based on that, desire comes about.  
Seeing the appearance and disappearance of forms,  
a person forms judgments in the world.
- 7.1 Anger, lies, and doubt—  
these things are, too, when that pair is present.<sup>146</sup>  
One who has doubts should train in the path of  
knowledge;

145. *Samparāya* means “in the next life”. The Niddesa’s gloss of “refuge, shelter” etc. is not meant to change this but to qualify it: people look for safety in the next life.

146. Here *dvaya* obviously refers back to the pair of the previous lines and should not be overinterpreted as “duality”.

it is from knowledge that the Ascetic speaks of these things.”

“Where do pleasure and pain spring from? 8.1  
When what is absent do these things not occur?  
And also, on the topic of appearance and disappear-  
ance—  
tell me where they spring from.”

“Pleasure and pain spring from contact; 9.1  
when contact is absent they do not occur.  
And on the topic of appearance and disappearance—  
I tell you they spring from there.”

“So where does contact in the world spring from? 10.1  
And possessions, too, where do they come from?  
When what is absent is there no possessiveness?  
When what disappears do contacts not strike?”

“Name and form cause contact; 11.1  
possessions spring from wishing;  
when wishing is absent there is no possessiveness;  
when form disappears, contacts don’t strike.”

“How to proceed so that form disappears?<sup>147</sup> 12.1  
And how do happiness and suffering disappear?  
Tell me how they disappear;  
I think we ought to know these things.”

“Without normal perception or distorted percep- 13.1  
tion;<sup>148</sup>

147. The past participle *sameta* here should be read, as per Niddesa, similarly to *paṭipanna*, i.e. “engaged in the practice” rather than “completed the practice”.

148. Following Niddesa.

not lacking perception, nor perceiving what has disappeared.<sup>149</sup>

That's how to proceed so that form disappears:  
for concepts of identity due to proliferation spring  
from perception.”<sup>150</sup>

14.1 “Whatever I asked you have explained to me.”<sup>151</sup>

I ask you once more, please tell me this:  
Do some astute folk here say that this is the extent  
of purification of the spirit?  
Or do they say it is something else?”

15.1 “Some astute folk do say that this is the highest extent<sup>152</sup>

of purification of the spirit.  
But some of them, claiming to be experts,<sup>153</sup>  
speak of a time when nothing remains.

16.1 Knowing that these states are dependent,

149. From the following verses we can infer that these enigmatic lines refer to an advanced state of *samādhi*, probably the formless attainments. These are not “normal” as they have no sense-perception or defilements; they are not “distorted” as they are free of hindrances; they are not the non-percipient realm; and they do not perceive what has disappeared, namely the *rūpa* or the *sukha* of lower absorptions.

150. In MN 18, we have the sequence perception, thought, proliferation, then *papañcasaññāsāṅkhā*. This suggests that *papañca* causes *sāṅkhā*, as per Bodhi.

151. Oddly, however, the disappearance of *sukha* and *dukkha* is not directly answered. It is, however, implied in the surmounting of 3rd *jhāna*.

152. Such as the Buddha's former teachers, who aimed at rebirth in formless realms. See AN 10.29:20.1.

153. How to distinguish this from the Buddha's teaching? If, following Bodhi, we read *samaya* as “attainment”, we must add in an extra layer of interpretation. If we follow Norman in accepting the (more common) sense of “time, occasion”, then the difference becomes clear: they believe that the end of things happens at some point in the future (probably at death), rather than the Buddha who spoke of realizing the truth now.

and knowing what they depend on, the inquiring  
 sage,  
 having understood, is freed, and does not dispute.  
 The wise do not go on into life after life.”

Snp 4.12

## The Shorter Discourse on Arrayed For Battle

*Cūḷabyūhasutta*

“Each maintaining their own view, 1.1  
 the experts disagree, arguing:  
 ‘Whoever sees it this way has understood the teach-  
 ing;<sup>154</sup>  
 those who reject this are inadequate.’

So arguing, they quarrel, 2.1  
 saying, ‘The other is a fool, an amateur!’  
 Which one of these speaks true,  
 for they all claim to be an expert?”

“If not accepting another’s teaching 3.1  
 makes you a useless fool lacking wisdom,<sup>155</sup>  
 then they’re all fools lacking wisdom,  
 for they all maintain their own view.

But if having your own view is what makes you pris- 4.1  
 tine—  
 pure in wisdom, expert and intelligent—  
 then none of them lack wisdom,

154. Here, as often in the Aṭṭhakavagga, *jānāti* implies different ways of knowing, which may be right or wrong (to degrees). We can’t press “know” to serve this sense, per Bodhi, Norman, and Ñāṇadīpa. I can have a different “understanding” to you, I can “see” it differently, but I can’t “know” it differently.

155. Preferring *omako* over *mago*, which seems a little harsh; *omako* conforms to the principle of least meaning.

for such is the view they have all embraced.

- 5.1 I do not say that it is correct<sup>156</sup>  
 when they call each other fools.<sup>157</sup>  
 Each has built up their own view to be the truth,<sup>158</sup>  
 which is why they take the other as a fool.”
- 6.1 “What some say is true and correct,  
 others say is hollow and false.  
 So arguing, they quarrel;  
 why don’t ascetics say the same thing?”
- 7.1 “The truth is one, there is no second;  
 wise folk would not argue about this.<sup>159</sup>  
 But those ascetics each boast of different truths;  
 that’s why they don’t say the same thing.”
- 8.1 “But why do they speak of different truths,  
 these proponents who claim to be experts?  
 Are there really so many different truths,<sup>160</sup>  
 or do they just follow their own lines of reasoning?”

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156. I think “this is correct” refers, not to the assertion of a view, but to the assertion that the other is a fool. Niddesa takes it to mean the assertion of one of the 62 views, but this seems to be reading into the text. It might mean that the Buddha does not make dogmatic assertions; but on the face of it, the Buddha is constantly saying that his teaching is correct. It is the four noble truths, after all.

157. Here I take *bālā* as the quoted speech, as in the lines above and below. The commentary supplies the expected quotation indicator: *‘bālo’ti āhu*. If we take *bālā* as subject of the verb here, per Bodhi, Norman, and Nāṇadīpa, then the Buddha is adopting the reductive language of those he seeks to counter, obscuring the sense of the verse.

158. It’s important to maintain the past sense of *akāmsu* here: a view is something they have constructed and built up over time; it has solidified and become part of them, which is why it’s so hard to give up.

159. With these lines the Buddha dismisses subjectivist notions of truth.

160. Read *su tāni*.

- “No, there are not many different truths 9.1  
that, apart from perception, are lasting in the  
world.<sup>161</sup>  
Having formed their reasoning regarding different  
views,  
they say there are two things: true and false.
- The seen, heard, or thought, or precepts or vows— 10.1  
<sup>162</sup>  
based on these they show disdain.  
Standing in judgment, they scoff,  
saying, ‘The other is a fool, an amateur!’
- They take the other as a fool on the same grounds<sup>163</sup> 11.1  
that they speak of themselves as an expert.  
Claiming to be an expert on their own authority,  
they disdain the other while saying the same thing.
- They are perfect, according to their own extreme 12.1  
view;  
drunk on conceit, imagining themselves proficient.  
They have anointed themselves in their own mind,  
for such is the view they have embraced.
- If the word of your opponent makes you deficient, 13.1  
then they too are lacking wisdom.

161. The Niddesa glosses *aññatra saññāya niccaggāhā*, which is translated by Bodhi as “apart from the grasping of permanence by perception”. But this seems impossible to me: *saññāya* is an ablative constructed with *aññatra*, and *niccāni* surely agrees with *saccāni*. Further, the sense of this reading is a stretch, as we haven’t dealt with impermanence at all so far. I think the allusion is, rather, to the idea of *dhammaniyāmatā*, the “fixity” or “regularity” of the Dhamma as an “eternal truth”.

162. This verse begins a rather striking pattern where the first couplet is essentially restated in the second couplet.

163. Again the two couplets repeat the same meaning.

But if on your own authority you're a knowledge master,  
 a wise person,<sup>164</sup>  
 then there are no fools among the ascetics.

- 14.1      ‘Those who proclaim a teaching other than this  
 have fallen short of purity, and are inadequate’:  
 so say each one of the sectarians,  
 for they are deeply attached to their own view.
- 15.1      ‘Here alone is purity,’ they say,  
 denying that there is purification in other teachings.  
 Thus each one of the sectarians, being dogmatic,  
 speaks forcefully within the context of their own journey.
- 16.1      But in that case, so long as they are speaking forcefully  
 of their own journey,  
 how can they take the other as a fool?  
 They are the ones who provoke conflict  
 when they call the other a fool with an impure teaching.
- 17.1      Standing in judgment, measuring by their own standard,  
 they keep getting into disputes with the world.<sup>165</sup>  
 But a person who has given up all judgments  
 creates no conflict in the world.”

164. This must refer back to the previous verse, where *sayam* means “on one’s own account”.

165. Cf. *Na, bhikkhave, dhammavādī kenaci lokasmim vivadati.*



Snp 4.13

## The Longer Discourse on Arrayed for Battle

*Mahābyūhasutta*

“Regarding those who maintain their own view, 1.1  
 arguing that, ‘This is the only truth’:  
 are all of them subject only to criticism,  
 or do some also win praise for that?”

“That is a small thing, insufficient for peace, 2.1  
 these two fruits of conflict, I say.  
 Seeing this, one ought not get into arguments,  
 looking for sanctuary in the land of no conflict.<sup>166</sup>

One who knows does not get involved 3.1  
 with any of the many different convictions.  
 Why would the uninvolved get involved,  
 since they do not believe based on the seen or the  
 heard?

Those who champion ethics speak of purity through 4.1  
 self-control;  
 having undertaken a vow, they stick to it:  
 ‘Let us train right here, then we will be pure.’  
 Claiming to be experts, they are led on to future lives.

If they fall away from their precepts and vows, 5.1  
 they tremble, having failed in their task.  
 They pray and long for purity,  
 like one who has lost their caravan while journeying  
 far from home.

166. If we render *khema* as “security” and *bhūmi* as “stage” then we miss the metaphor. *Abhi-√pas* is found at AN 3.39:11.4 and AN 5.57:15.4 where it has a similar sense of “looking forward to”.

- 6.1 But having given up all precepts and vows,  
and these deeds blameworthy or blameless;  
not longing for ‘purity’ or ‘impurity’,  
live detached, fostering peace.<sup>167</sup>
- 7.1 Relying on mortification in disgust at sin,<sup>168</sup>  
or else on what is seen, heard, or thought,  
they moan that purification comes through heading  
upstream,<sup>169</sup>  
not rid of craving for life after life.
- 8.1 For one who longs there are prayers,  
and trembling too over ideas they have formed.  
But one here for whom there is no passing away or  
reappearing:  
why would they tremble? For what would they pray?”
- 9.1 “The very same teaching that some say is ‘ultimate’,  
others say is inferior.  
Which of these doctrines is true,  
for they all claim to be an expert?”
- 10.1 “They say their own teaching is perfect,  
while the teaching of others is inferior.  
So arguing, they quarrel,  
each saying their own convictions are the truth.

---

167. The Niddesa’s explanation of *santi* as “view” is not plausible. I follow Norman.

168. Reading *tapūpanissāya*; see Bodhi’s note 1961. Since in prose *tapojigucchā* usually occur together, I treat them as such here.

169. This refers to the doctrine of *samsārasuddhi*, that the process of rebirth leads to release. See MN 102:11.3. *Anutthunati* rather consistently means “bemoans”, and here I think it is used in a disparaging way of those who, suffering under self-inflicted mortification, moan that purity is just around the corner.

If you became inferior because someone else dispar- 11.1  
aged you,  
no-one in any teaching would be distinguished.  
For each of them says the other's teaching is lacking,  
while forcefully advocating their own.

But if they honor their own teachings<sup>170</sup> 12.1  
just as they praise their own journeys,  
then all doctrines would be equally valid,  
and purity for them would be an individual matter.<sup>171</sup>

After judging among the teachings, a brahmin has 13.1  
adopted nothing  
that requires interpretation by another.  
That's why they've gotten over disputes,  
for they see no other doctrine as best.

Saying, 'I know, I see, that's how it is,'<sup>172</sup> 14.1  
some believe that purity comes from view.  
But if they've really seen, what use is that view to  
them?  
Overlooking what matters, they say purity comes  
from another.<sup>173</sup>

170. Here I follow Ñāṇadīpa, who takes the whole verse as a conditional argument, whereas Bodhi and Norman treat each couplet separately. I think the verse is making the argument that each ascetic bases their teaching on their own experience, and so if their teachings were equally valid, then purity would be attained by many (mutually exclusive) means.

171. Cp. Dhṛp 165:5, where an apparently similar idea (*suddhī asuddhi pa-cattam*) is Buddhist. There, the emphasis is on the personal realization of the teachings, here on different, contradictory, realizations.

172. This signifies that we are speaking of ascetics who are, in Jayatilleke's terms, "experientialists", relying on their meditation experiences to justify their views. The same phrase describes the Buddha at AN 4.24:9.3.

173. *Atisitvā* is normally used in the sense of someone who "overlooks" the Buddha to seek answers elsewhere. In AN 3.39:4.1 it's used in the sense of "overlooking oneself", which Ñāṇadīpa takes as the relevant sense here. Either reading would make sense here.

- 15.1 When a person sees, they see name and form,  
and having seen, they will know just these things.  
Gladly let them see much or little,  
for experts say this is no way to purity.
- 16.1 It's not easy to educate someone who is dogmatic,  
promoting a view they have formulated.  
Speaking of the beauty in that which they depend  
on,<sup>174</sup>  
they talk of purity in accord with what they saw there.
- 17.1 The brahmin does not get involved with formulating  
and calculating;  
they're not followers of views, nor kinsmen of notions.<sup>175</sup>  
Having understood the many different convictions,  
they look on when others grasp.
- 18.1 Having untied the knots here in the world,  
the sage takes no side among factions.  
Peaceful among the peaceless, equanimous,  
they don't grasp when others grasp.
- 19.1 Having given up former defilements, and not making  
new ones,  
not swayed by preference, nor a proponent of  
dogma,<sup>176</sup>  
that wise one is released from views,  
not clinging to the world, nor reproaching themselves.
- 20.1 They are remote from all things

---

174. Here the ascetic appears to refer to their meditative attainment. Compare the use of *nissita* at Snp 5.7.

175. To render *nāṇa* here as knowledge would be a mistake.

176. Here, as at Snp 4.3:2.2, *chanda* is better read as "preference" than "desire".

seen, heard, or thought.

With burden put down, the sage is released:  
not formulating, not abstaining, not longing.”

Snp 4.14

## Speedy

*Tuvaṭṭakasutta*

“Great hermit, I ask you, the Kinsman of the Sun,  
about seclusion and the state of peace.  
How, having seen, is a mendicant quenched,  
not grasping anything in this world?” 1.1

“They would cut off the idea, ‘I am the thinker,’  
*said the Buddha,*  
“which is the root of all concepts of identity due to  
proliferation.<sup>177</sup> 2.1

Ever mindful, they would train to remove  
any internal cravings.

Regardless of what things they know,  
whether internal or external,  
they wouldn’t be proud because of that,  
for that is not extinguishment, say the good. 3.1

They wouldn’t let that make them conceited,  
thinking themselves better or worse or alike. 4.1

---

177. *Mantā* is explained by Niddesa (followed by Bodhi) as “wisdom” and treated as a truncated instrumental. It is elsewhere found as an agent noun in a positive sense, and is thus rendered by Ñāṇadīpa as “deep thinker”. These renderings are certainly possible, but the context, as the next verses make clear, deal with someone who suffers conceit due to their learning and understanding. A *mantā* is one to whom others turn for advice or wise counsel. Furthermore, *asmīti* commonly follows nominatives in a similar sense, eg. *seyyohamasmīti*. Thus I take *mantā asmīti* as a single phrase.

When questioned in many ways,<sup>178</sup>  
they wouldn't keep justifying themselves.

5.1 A mendicant would find peace inside themselves,  
and not seek peace from another.  
For one at peace inside themselves,  
there's no picking up, whence putting down?

6.1 Just as, in the mid-ocean deeps<sup>179</sup>  
no waves arise, it stays still;  
so too one unstirred is still—  
a mendicant would nurse no pride at all.”

7.1 “He whose eyes are open has explained  
the truth he witnessed, where adversities are re-  
moved.  
Please now speak of the practice, sir,  
the monastic code and immersion in samādhi.”

8.1 “With eyes not wanton,  
they'd turn their ears from village gossip.  
They wouldn't be greedy for flavors,  
nor possessive about anything in the world.

9.1 Though struck by contacts,

---

178. Reading *puṭṭho* per variants, and contra most translators and the Nid-  
desa. I find the renderings by Bodhi, Norman, and Ñāṇadīpa to be borderline  
incomprehensible. Norman and Ñāṇadīpa are surely incorrect in taking *rūpa*  
here as “forms”, but that is a tempting direction once we read *phuṭṭho*. The  
passage up till now has been about conceit that arises from knowledge. I think  
the sense here is the same as AN 9.14:1.1.1: *Sādhū kho tvam, samiddhi, puṭṭho*  
*puṭṭho vissajjesi, tena ca mā maññī* (“It's good that you answered each question.  
But don't get conceited because of that.”)

179. The commentary explains *majjhe* “in the middle” firstly as between top  
and bottom layers, or alternatively as in-between the mountains (i.e. land  
masses). While it's possible that there was a folk belief that the center of the  
ocean was waveless, surely a striking feature of the ocean is how the surface  
movement conceals a stillness beneath.

a mendicant would not lament at all.  
 They wouldn't pray for another life,  
 nor tremble in the face of dangers.

When they receive food and drink, 10.1  
 edibles and clothes,  
 they wouldn't store them up,  
 nor worry about not getting them.

Meditative, not footloose, 11.1  
 they'd avoid remorse and not be negligent.  
 Then a mendicant would stay  
 in quiet places to sit and rest.

They wouldn't take much sleep, 12.1  
 but, being keen, would apply themselves to wakeful-  
 ness.  
 They'd give up sloth, illusion, mirth, and play,  
 and sex and ornamentation.

They wouldn't cast Artharvaṇa spells, interpret 13.1  
 dreams<sup>180</sup>  
 or omens, or practice astrology.  
 My followers would not decipher animal cries, prac-  
 tice healing,<sup>181</sup>  
 or cast pregnancy spells.

Not shaken by criticism, 14.1  
 a mendicant would not pride themselves when  
 praised.

180. This is the only mention in the Pali EBTs of the texts later known as the Arthavaveda. Niddesa explains it as casting harmful spells.

181. PTS Dictionary suggests this should be read as the better-established *viruddhagabbhakaraṇaṃ* (DN 1:1.26.2). If it is an error in the reading, it predates the Niddesa. Nonetheless, I translate *gabbhakaraṇa* in a way that encompasses causing both pregnancy and abortion.

They'd reject greed and stinginess,  
anger, and slander.

15.1 They'd not stand for buying and selling;  
a mendicant would not speak ill at all.  
They wouldn't linger in the village,  
nor cajole people from desire for profit.

16.1 A mendicant would be no boaster,  
nor would they speak suggestively.  
They wouldn't train in impudence,  
nor speak argumentatively.

17.1 They wouldn't be led into lying,  
nor be deliberately devious.  
And they'd never look down on another  
because of livelihood, wisdom, or precepts and vows.

18.1 Though provoked from hearing much talk  
from ascetics saying all different things,<sup>182</sup>  
they wouldn't react harshly,  
for the virtuous do not retaliate.

19.1 Having understood this teaching,  
inquiring, a mendicant would always train mindfully.  
Knowing extinguishment as peace,  
they'd not be negligent in Gotama's bidding.

20.1 For he is the undefeated, the champion,  
seer of the truth as witness, not by hearsay—  
that's why, being diligent, they would always train  
respectfully in the Buddha's teaching."

---

182. The MS reading seems unlikely to me, these are not usually paired. More likely it's an example of the Aṭṭhakavagga idiom where *puṭhu* refers to all the many different things said by ascetics.



Snp 4.15

## Taking Up Arms

*Attadaṇḍasutta*

Peril stems from those who take up arms— 1.1  
 just look at people in conflict!  
 I shall extol how I came to be  
 stirred with a sense of urgency.

I saw this population flounder, 2.1  
 like a fish in a little puddle.  
 Seeing them fight each other,  
 fear came upon me.

The world around was hollow, 3.1  
 all directions were in turmoil.  
 Wanting a home for myself,  
 I saw nowhere unsettled.<sup>183</sup>

But even in their settlement they fight—<sup>184</sup> 4.1  
 seeing that, I grew uneasy.

---

183. *Osita* (and *osāna* in the next line) has the root sense “lay to rest”. Originally it probably meant the place that one laid down one’s burdens at the end of the day (cf. *khema*). From there we see two main applications, to “end” (cf. *pariyosāna*), or to “reside”. The fact that it follows right after the mention of finding “home” in the “world” in an unafflicted “quarter” shows that the sense “reside” applies. Nonetheless, both Norman and Bodhi translate the two occurrences as “unoccupied” and “at the end”, obscuring the fact that they are the same word in different form. Meanwhile *Ñāṇadīpa* has “obstruct”. In this case the Niddesa’s explanation should be taken as a creative extension of the text.

184. Here, *tveva* has an adversative sense, “but even then ...”. This verse contrasts with the previous, a contrast lost in the translations by Norman, Bodhi, *Ñāṇadīpa*, Thanissaro, Olendzki, Ireland, Mills, and Hare. Nor is the sense “settlement” for *osāna* found in DoP, CPD, or PTS Dictionary. So far as I know, the only source with the correct reading of these terms is the Digital Pāli Dictionary.

Then I saw a dart there,  
so hard to see, stuck in the heart.

- 5.1 When struck by that dart,  
you run about in all directions.  
But when that same dart has been plucked out,  
you neither run about nor sink down.
- 6.1 (On that topic, the trainings are recited.)<sup>185</sup>  
Whatever attachments there are in the world,  
don't pursue them.  
Having pierced through sensual pleasures in every  
way,  
train yourself for quenching.
- 7.1 Be truthful, not rude,  
free of deceit, and rid of slander;  
without anger, a sage would cross over  
the evils of greed and avarice.
- 8.1 Prevail over sleepiness, sloth, and drowsiness,  
don't abide in negligence,  
A person intent on quenching  
would not stand for arrogance.
- 9.1 Don't be led into lying,  
or get caught up in fondness for form.  
Completely understand conceit,  
and desist from hasty conduct.
- 10.1 Don't relish the old,  
or welcome the new.  
Don't grieve for what is running out,

---

185. Agreeing with Norman that this line is likely a reciter's remark. However I take *tattha* as the locative of reference, else it would be *ettha*. The practical guidelines that follow show how to extract the dart.

or get attached to things that pull you in.

Greed, I say, is the great flood, 11.1  
and longing is the current—  
the basis, the compulsion,  
the swamp of sensuality so hard to get past.

The sage never strays from the truth; 12.1  
the brahman stands firm on the shore.  
Having given up everything,  
they are said to be at peace.

They have truly known, they're a knowledge master, 13.1  
understanding the teaching, they are independent.  
They rightly proceed in the world,  
not coveting anything here.

One who has crossed over sensuality here, 14.1  
the snare in the world so hard to get past,  
grieves not, nor hopes;  
they've cut the strings, they're no longer bound.

What came before, let wither away, 15.1  
and after, let there be nothing.  
If you don't grasp at the middle,  
you will live at peace.

One who has no sense of ownership 16.1  
in the whole realm of name and form,  
does not grieve for that which is not,  
they suffer no loss in the world.

If you don't think of anything 17.1  
as belonging to yourself or others,  
not finding anything to be 'mine',  
you won't grieve, thinking 'I don't have it'.

- 18.1 Not bitter, not fawning,  
unstirred, everywhere even;  
when asked about one who is unshakable,  
I declare that that is the benefit.
- 19.1 For the unstirred who understand,  
there's no performance of deeds.  
Desisting from instigation,  
they see sanctuary everywhere.
- 20.1 A sage doesn't speak of themselves as being  
among superiors, inferiors, or equals.  
Peaceful, rid of stinginess,  
they neither take nor reject.

Snp 4.16

With Sāriputta

*Sāriputtasutta*

- 1.1 “Never before have I seen,”  
*said Venerable Sāriputta,*  
“or heard from anyone  
about a teacher of such graceful speech,  
come from Tusita heaven to lead a community.
- 2.1 To all the world with its gods  
he appears as a seer  
who has dispelled all darkness,  
and alone attained to bliss.
- 3.1 On behalf of the many here still bound,  
I have come in need with a question  
to that Buddha, unattached and impartial,  
free of deceit, come to lead a community.

Suppose a mendicant who loathes attachment 4.1  
 frequents a lonely lodging—  
 the root of a tree, a charnel ground,  
 on mountains, or in caves.

In these many different lodgings, 5.1  
 how many dangers are there  
 at which a mendicant in their silent lodging  
 ought not tremble?<sup>186</sup>

On their journey to the untrodden place, 6.1  
 how many adversities are there in the world  
 that must they overcome  
 in their remote lodging?

What ways of speech should they have? 7.1  
 Where should they go for alms?  
 What precepts and vows  
 should a resolute mendicant uphold?

Having undertaken what training, 8.1  
 unified, alert, and mindful,  
 would they purge their own stains,  
 like a smith smelting silver?"

"If one who loathes attachment frequents a lonely 9.1  
 lodging,"  
*said the Buddha to Sāriputta,*  
 "in their search for awakening—as accords with the  
 teaching—  
 I shall tell you, as I understand it,  
 what is comfortable for them.

186. Usually *nigghosa* means "message, noise", but here it is glossed in Niddesa with the opposite meaning, *appasadde appanigghose*.

- 10.1 A wise one, a mindful mendicant living on the pe-  
riphery  
should not be afraid of five perils:<sup>187</sup>  
flies, mosquitoes, snakes,  
human contact, or four-legged creatures.
- 11.1 Nor should they fear followers of other teachings,  
even having seen the many threats they pose.  
And then one seeking the good  
should overcome any other adversities.
- 12.1 Afflicted by illness and hunger,  
they should endure cold and excessive heat.  
Though afflicted by many such things, the homeless  
one  
should exert energy, firmly striving.
- 13.1 They must not steal or lie;  
and should touch creatures firm or frail with love.  
If they notice any clouding of the mind,  
they should dispel it as Māra's ally.
- 14.1 They must not fall under the sway of anger or ar-  
rogance;  
having dug them out by the root, they would stand  
firm.  
Then, withstanding likes and dislikes,  
they would overcome.
- 15.1 Putting wisdom in the foremost place, rejoicing in  
goodness,  
they would put an end to those adversities.

---

187. *Pariyāntacārī* is read by Niddesa, and followed by Bodhi, Norman, and Ñāṇadīpa, as “of bounded conduct”. However at DN 25:5.5 it means “living on the periphery”, which agrees with the current theme of the mendicant living remotely.

They'd vanquish discontent in their remote lodging.  
And they'd vanquish the four lamentations:

'What will I eat? Where will I eat? 16.1  
Oh, I slept badly! Where will I sleep?'  
The trainee, the homeless migrant,  
would dispel these lamentable thoughts.

Receiving food and clothes in due season, 17.1  
they would know moderation for the sake of content-  
ment.  
Guarded in these things, walking restrained in the  
village,  
they wouldn't speak harshly even when provoked.

Eyes downcast, not footloose, 18.1  
devoted to absorption, they'd be very wakeful.<sup>188</sup>  
Grounded in equanimity, serene,  
they should cut off worrisome habits of thought.

A mindful one should welcome repoach, 19.1  
breaking up hard-heartedness towards their spiritual  
companions.  
They may utter skillful speech, but not for too long,  
and they shouldn't provoke people to blame.

And there are five more taints in the world, 20.1  
for the removal of which the mindful one should  
train,  
vanquishing desire for sights,  
sounds, flavors, smells, and touches.

Having removed desire for these things,<sup>189</sup> 21.1  
a mindful mendicant, their heart well freed,

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188. *Bahujāgar'assa*.

189. *Vineyya* here is absolutive, not optative.

rightly investigating the Dhamma in good time,<sup>190</sup>  
unified, would shatter the darkness.”

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190. I think the force of *kālena* here is not, “at the right time” (when is the wrong time?) but “before it’s too late”.



# The Chapter on the Way to the Beyond

Snp 5.1

## Introductory Verses

*Vatthugāthā*

From the fair city of the Kosalans  
to the southern region  
came a brahmin expert in hymns,<sup>191</sup>  
aspiring to nothingness. 1.1

In the domain of Assaka,  
close by Aḷaka,  
he lived on the bank of the Godhāvarī River,  
getting by on gleanings and fruit. 2.1

He was supported  
by a prosperous village nearby.  
With the revenue earned from there 3.1

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191. *Ākiñcaññaṃ* could mean either “owning nothing” (per commentary, followed by Norman) or the “dimension of nothingness” (suggested by Bodhi). Given that just a little below we hear of him performing an expensive sacrifice; and further, that the dimension of nothingness is an important part of the conversation with of his students Upasīva and Posāla, the latter seems more likely. Anyway, “aspiring to own nothing” is hardly a noteworthy trait among ascetics.

he performed a great sacrifice.

4.1 When he had completed the great sacrifice,  
he returned to his hermitage once more.  
Upon his return,  
another brahmin arrived.

5.1 Foot-sore and thirsty,  
with grotty teeth and dusty head,  
he approached the other  
and asked for five hundred coins.

6.1 When Bāvari saw him,  
he invited him to sit down,  
asked of his happiness and well-being,  
and said the following.

7.1 “Whatever I had available to give,  
I have already distributed.  
Believe me, brahmin,  
I don’t have five hundred coins.”

8.1 “If, good sir, you do not  
give me what I ask,  
then on the seventh day,  
let your head explode in seven!”

9.1 After performing a ritual,  
that charlatan uttered his dreadful curse.  
When he heard these words,  
Bāvari became distressed.

10.1 Not eating, he grew emaciated,  
stricken by the dart of sorrow.  
And in such a state of mind,  
he could not enjoy absorption.

Seeing him anxious and distraught, 11.1  
 a goddess wishing to help,<sup>192</sup>  
 approached Bāvari  
 and said the following.

“That charlatan understands nothing 12.1  
 about the head, he only wants money.  
 When it comes to heads or head-splitting,  
 he has no knowledge at all.”

“Madam, surely you must know— 13.1  
 please answer my question.  
 Let me hear what you say  
 about heads and head-splitting.”

“I too do not know that, 14.1  
 I have no knowledge in that matter.  
 When it comes to heads or head-splitting,  
 it is the Victors who have vision.”

“Then, in all this vast territory, 15.1  
 who exactly does know<sup>193</sup>  
 about heads and head-splitting?  
 Please tell me, goddess.”

“From the city of Kapilavatthu<sup>194</sup> 16.1  
 the World Leader has gone forth.  
 He is a scion of King Okkāka,  
 a Sakyan, and a beacon.

192. Her gender is indicated below.

193. Note that, in the EBTs, *pathavimaṇḍala* primarily refers to the region ruled by a Wheel-Turning Monarch. Thus it doesn't mean “circle” in the sense of “the circle of the earth” but rather a “sphere of influence”, i.e. “territory”.

194. *Purā* can be either “from the city” (Norman), or “formerly” (commentary, followed by Bodhi and Jayawickrama). I think the poet is deliberately echoing the opening line of the text, where it must mean “from the city”.

- 17.1 For he, brahmin, is the Awakened One!  
 He has gone beyond all things;  
 he has attained to all knowledge and power;  
 he is the seer into all things,  
 he has attained the end of all deeds;  
 he is freed with the ending of attachments.
- 18.1 That Buddha, the Blessed One in the world,  
 the Seer, teaches Dhamma.  
 Go to him and ask—  
 he will answer you.”
- 19.1 When he heard the word “Buddha”,  
 Bāvari was elated.  
 His sorrow faded,  
 and he was filled to brimming with joy.
- 20.1 Uplifted, elated, and inspired,  
 Bāvari questioned that goddess:  
 “But in what village or town,  
 or in what land is the protector of the world,  
 where we may go and pay respects  
 to the Awakened One, best of men?”
- 21.1 “Near Sāvattihī, the home of the Kosalans, is the Vic-  
 tor<sup>195</sup>  
 abounding in wisdom, vast in intelligence.  
 That Sakyan is indefatigable, free of defilements, a  
 bull among men.<sup>196</sup>

195. *Mandira* is unusual and probably a sign of lateness. Bodhi has “realm”, Norman “city”, but the normal meaning in Sanskrit is a “dwelling place”, and in the Jātakas it is always used in the sense of a home.

196. The commentary gives the senses *vigatadhuro* “free of burden” (followed by Norman) and *appaṭimo* “unrivalled” (followed by Bodhi), but at AN 3.20:2.1 it has the sense “indefatigable” and there seems no reason why it shouldn’t have the same meaning here.

he understands head-splitting.

Therefore he addressed his pupils, 22.1  
 brahmins who had mastered the hymns:  
 “Come, students, I shall speak.  
 Listen to what I say.

Today has arisen in the world 23.1  
 one whose appearance in the world  
 is hard to find again—  
 he is renowned as the Awakened One.  
 Quickly go to Sāvattḥī  
 and see the best of men.”

“Brahmin, how exactly are we to know 24.1  
 the Buddha when we see him?  
 We don’t know, please tell us,  
 so we can recognize him.”

“The marks of a great man 25.1  
 have been handed down in our hymns.  
 Thirty-two have been described,  
 complete and in order.

One upon whose body is found 26.1  
 these marks of a great man  
 has two possible destinies,  
 there is no third.

If he stays at home, 27.1  
 having conquered this land  
 without rod or sword,  
 he shall govern by principle.

But if he goes forth 28.1  
 from the lay life to homelessness,

he becomes an Awakened One, a perfected one,  
with veil drawn back, supreme.

- 29.1 Ask him about my birth, clan, and marks,  
my hymns and students; and further,  
about heads and head-splitting—  
but do so only in your mind!
- 30.1 If he is the Buddha  
of unobstructed vision,  
he will answer with his voice  
the questions in your mind.”
- 31.1 Sixteen brahmin pupils  
heard what Bāvari said:  
Ajita, Tissametteyya,  
Puṇṇaka and Mettagū,
- 32.1 Dhotaka and Upasiva,  
Nanda and then Hemaka,  
both Todeyya and Kappa,  
and Jatukaṇṇi the astute,
- 33.1 Bhadrāvudha and Udaya,  
and the brahmin Posala,  
Mogharājā the intelligent,  
and Piṅgiya the great hermit.
- 34.1 Each of them had their own following,  
they were renowned the whole world over.  
Those wise ones, meditators who love absorption,<sup>197</sup>  
were redolent with the potential of their past  
deeds.<sup>198</sup>

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197. Bodhi omits *dhīrā*.

198. One of the many signs of lateness in this passage.

Having bowed to Bāvāri, 35.1  
 and circled him to his right,  
 they set out for the north,  
 with their dreadlocks and hides.

First to Patitṭhāna of Aḷaka, 36.1  
 then on to the city of Mahissati;<sup>199</sup>  
 to Ujjenī and Gonaddhā,  
 and Vedisa, and Vanasa.

Then to Kosambi and Sāketa, 37.1  
 and the supreme city of Sāvattḥi;  
 on they went to Setavyā and Kapilavatthu,<sup>200</sup>  
 and the homestead at Kusinārā.<sup>201</sup>

To Pāvā they went, and Bhoganagara, 38.1  
 and on to Vesālī and the Magadhan city.  
 Finally they reached the Pāsāṇaka shrine,  
 fair and delightful.

Like a thirsty person to cool water, 39.1  
 like a merchant to great profit,  
 like a heat-struck person to shade,  
 they quickly climbed the mountain.

At that time the Buddha 40.1  
 at the fore of the mendicant Saṅgha,  
 was teaching the mendicants the Dhamma,  
 like a lion roaring in the jungle.

Ajita saw the Buddha, 41.1

199. Bodhi accepts the reading “former” but, given that there seems no evidence that the name was abandoned at this time, this seems unlikely.

200. Bodhi and Norman have Setavya, but DN 23 shows it is feminine.

201. See my remarks on *mandira* above. Kusinārā was famously *not* a city, contra Bodhi and Norman.

like the sun shining with a hundred rays,  
like the moon on the fifteenth day  
when it has come into its fullness.

- 42.1      Then he saw his body,  
             complete in all features.  
             Thrilled, he stood to one side  
             and asked this question in his mind.
- 43.1      “Speak about the brahmin’s birth;  
             of his clan; and his own marks;  
             what hymns is he proficient in;  
             and how many he teaches.”
- 44.1      “His age is a hundred and twenty.  
             By clan he is a Bāvari.  
             There are three marks on his body.  
             He is a master of the three Vedas,
- 45.1      the teachings on the marks, the testaments,  
             the vocabularies, and the rituals.  
             He teaches five hundred,  
             and has reached proficiency in his own teaching.”
- 46.1      “O supreme person, cutter of craving,  
             please reveal in detail  
             Bāvari’s marks—  
             let us doubt no longer!”
- 47.1      “He can cover his face with his tongue;  
             there is a tuft of hair between his eyebrows;  
             his private parts are concealed in a foreskin:  
             know them as this, young man.”
- 48.1      Hearing the answers  
             without having heard any questions,



all the people, inspired,  
with joined palms, wondered:

“Who is it that asked a question with their mind? 49.1  
Was it a god or Brahmā?  
Or Indra, Sujā’s husband?  
To whom does the Buddha reply?”

“Bāvari asks 50.1  
about heads and head-splitting.  
May the Buddha please answer,  
and so, O hermit, dispel our doubt.”

“Know ignorance as the head, 51.1  
and knowledge as the head-splitter,  
when joined with faith, mindfulness, and immersion,  
and enthusiasm and energy.”

At that, the brahmin student, 52.1  
full of inspiration,  
arranged his antelope-skin cloak over one shoulder,  
and fell with his head to the Buddha’s feet.

“Good sir, the brahmin Bāvari 53.1  
together with his pupils,  
elated and happy,  
bows to your feet, O seer!”

“May the brahmin Bāvari be happy, 54.1  
together with his pupils.  
And may you, too, be happy!  
May you live long, young man.

To Bāvari and you all 55.1  
I grant the opportunity to clear up all doubt.  
Please ask

whatever you want.”

- 56.1      Granted the opportunity by the Buddha,  
              they sat down with joined palms.  
              Ajita asked the Realized One  
              the first question right there.

*The introductory verses are finished.*

Snp 5.2

## The Questions of Ajita

*Ajitaṃāṇavapucchā*

- 1.1      “By what is the world shrouded?”  
              *said Venerable Ajita.*  
              “Why does it not shine?  
              Tell me, what is its tar pit?  
              What is its greatest fear?”
- 2.1      “The world is shrouded in ignorance.”  
              *replied the Buddha.*  
              “Avarice and negligence make it not shine.  
              Prayer is its tar pit.  
              Suffering is its greatest fear.”
- 3.1      “The streams flow everywhere,”  
              *said Venerable Ajita.*  
              “What is there to block them?  
              And tell me the restraint of streams—  
              by what are they locked out?”
- 4.1      “The streams in the world,”  
              *replied the Buddha,*  
              “are blocked by mindfulness.  
              I tell you the restraint of streams—

they are locked out by wisdom.”

“That wisdom and mindfulness,” 5.1  
*said Venerable Ajita,*  
 “and that which is name and form, good sir;  
 when questioned, please tell me of this:  
 where does this all cease?”

“This question which you have asked, 6.1  
 I shall answer you, Ajita.  
 Where name and form  
 cease with nothing left over—  
 with the cessation of consciousness,  
 that’s where they cease.”

“There are those who have assessed the teaching, 7.1  
 and many kinds of trainees here.  
 Tell me about their behavior, good sir,  
 when asked, for you are alert.”

“Not greedy for sensual pleasures, 8.1  
 their mind would be unclouded.  
 Skilled in all things,  
 a mendicant would wander mindful.”

### Snp 5.3

## The Questions of Tissametteyya

*Tissametteyyamāṇavapucchā*

“Who is content here in the world?” 1.1  
*said Venerable Tissametteyya.*  
 “Who has no disturbances?  
 Who, having known both ends,  
 is not stuck in the middle?  
 Who do they say is a great man?”

Who here has escaped the seamstress?”

- 2.1 “Leading the spiritual life among sensual pleasures,”  
*replied the Buddha,*  
 “rid of craving, ever mindful;  
 a mendicant who, after assessing, is quenched:  
 that’s who has no disturbances.
- 3.1 That sage, having known both ends,  
 is not stuck in the middle.  
 He is a great man, I declare,  
 he has escaped the seamstress here.”

Snp 5.4

## The Questions of Puṇṇaka

*Puṇṇakamāṇavapucchā*

- 1.1 “To the imperturbable, the seer of the root,”  
*said Venerable Puṇṇaka,*  
 “I have come in need with a question.  
 On what grounds have hermits and men,  
 aristocrats and brahmins here in the world  
 performed so many different sacrifices to the gods?  
 I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this.”
- 2.1 “Whatever hermits and men,”  
*replied the Buddha,*  
 “aristocrats and brahmins here in the world  
 have performed so many different sacrifices to the  
 gods:  
 all performed sacrifices bound to old age,  
 hoping for some state of existence.”
- 3.1 “As to those hermits and men,”  
*said Venerable Puṇṇaka,*

“and aristocrats and brahmins here in the world  
who have performed so many different sacrifices to  
the gods:  
being diligent in the methods of sacrifice,  
have they crossed over rebirth and old age, good sir?  
I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this.”

“Hoping, invoking, praying, and worshiping,” 4.1  
*replied the Buddha,*  
“they pray for pleasure derived from profit.  
Devoted to sacrifice, besotted by rebirth,  
they’ve not crossed over rebirth and old age, I de-  
clare.”

“If those devoted to sacrifice,” 5.1  
*said Venerable Puṇṇaka,*  
“have not, by sacrificing, crossed over rebirth and old  
age,  
then who exactly in the world of gods and humans  
has crossed over rebirth and old age, good sir?  
I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this.”

“Having assessed the world high and low,” 6.1  
*replied the Buddha,*  
“there is nothing in the world that disturbs them.  
Peaceful, unclouded, untroubled, with no need for  
hope—  
they’ve crossed over rebirth and old age, I declare.”

Snp 5.5

## The Questions of Mettagū

*Mettagūmāṇavapucchā*

“I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this,” 1.1  
*said Venerable Mettagū,*

“for I think you are a knowledge master, evolved.  
Where do all these sufferings come from,  
in all their countless forms in the world?”

2.1 “You have rightly asked me of the origin of suffering,”  
*replied the Buddha,*

“I shall tell you as I understand it.  
Attachment is the source of suffering  
in all its countless forms in the world.

3.1 When an ignorant person builds up attachments,  
that idiot returns to suffering again and again.  
So let one who understands not build up attach-  
ments,  
contemplating the birth and origin of suffering.”

4.1 “Whatever I asked you have explained to me.  
I ask you once more, please tell me this:  
How do the wise cross the flood  
of rebirth, old age, sorrow, and lamenting?  
Please, sage, answer me clearly,  
for truly you understand this matter.”

5.1 “I shall extol a teaching to you,”  
*replied the Buddha,*  
“that is apparent in the present, not relying on tradi-  
tion.  
Having understood it, one who lives mindfully  
may cross over clinging in the world.”

6.1 “And I rejoice, great hermit,  
in that supreme teaching,  
having understood which, one who lives mindfully  
may cross over clinging in the world.”

7.1 “Once you’ve expelled relishing and dogmatism,”

*replied the Buddha,*

“regarding everything you are aware of—  
above, below, all round, between—<sup>202</sup>  
having uprooted consciousness, don’t continue in  
existence.

A mendicant who wanders meditating like this, 8.1  
diligent and mindful, calling nothing their own,  
would, being wise, give up the suffering  
of rebirth, old age, sorrow and lamenting right here.”

“I rejoice in the words of the great hermit! 9.1  
You have expounded non-attachment well, Gotama.  
Clearly the Buddha has given up suffering,  
for truly you understand this matter.

Surely those you’d regularly instruct 10.1  
would also give up suffering.  
Therefore, having met, I bow to you, O spiritual gi-  
ant;  
hopefully the Buddha may regularly instruct me.”

“Any brahmin recognized as a knowledge master, 11.1  
who has nothing, unattached to sensual life,  
clearly has crossed this flood,  
crossed to the far shore, kind, wishless.

And a wise person here, a knowledge master, 12.1  
having untied the bond to live after life,  
free of craving, untroubled, with no need for hope,  
has crossed over rebirth and old age, I declare.”

202. Taking *nivesana* here as “dogma”, the same sense as in the Aṭṭhakavagga. Otherwise it might just mean “strong attachment”.

## Snp 5.6

## The Questions of Dhotaka

*Dhotakamāṇavapucchā*

- 1.1 “I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this,”  
       *said Venerable Dhotaka,*  
 “I long for your voice, great hermit.  
 After hearing your message,  
 I shall train myself for quenching.”
- 2.1 “Well then, be keen, alert,”  
       *replied the Buddha,*  
 “and mindful right here.  
 After hearing this message, go on  
 and train yourself for quenching.”
- 3.1 “I see in the world of gods and humans  
 a brahmin travelling with nothing.  
 Therefore I bow to you, all-seer:  
 release me, Sakyan, from my doubts.”
- 4.1 “I am not able to release anyone  
 in the world who has doubts, Dhotaka.  
 But when you understand the best of teachings,  
 you shall cross this flood.”
- 5.1 “Teach me, brahmin, out of compassion,  
 the principle of seclusion so that I may understand.  
 I wish to practice right here, peaceful, independent,  
 as unimpeded as space.”
- 6.1 “I shall extol that peace for you,”  
       *replied the Buddha,*  
 “that is apparent in the present, not relying on tradi-  
       tion.



Having understood it, one who lives mindfully  
may cross over clinging in the world.”

“And I rejoice, great hermit, 7.1  
in that supreme peace,  
having understood which, one who lives mindfully  
may cross over clinging in the world.”

“Once you have understood that everything,” 8.1  
*replied the Buddha,*  
“you are aware of in the world—  
above, below, all round, between—  
is a snare, don’t crave for life after life.”

Snp 5.7

## The Questions of Upasiva

*Upasīvamāṇavapucchā*

“Alone and independent, O Sakyan,” 1.1  
*said Venerable Upasiva,*  
“I am not able to cross the great flood.  
Tell me a support, All-seer,  
depending on which I may cross this flood.”

“Mindfully contemplating nothingness,” 2.1  
*replied the Buddha,*  
depending on the perception ‘there is nothing’, cross  
the flood.<sup>203</sup>  
Giving up sensual pleasures, refraining from chat-  
ter,<sup>204</sup>

203. This is an abbreviated form of the phrase *natthi kiñcī’ti* that normally marks the dimension of nothingness.

204. Niddesa explains *kathāhi* as either “doubts” (hence a truncated form of *kathaṅkathā*), or “talks”; the former is followed by Bodhi, the latter by Norman and Ñāṇadīpa. While “doubts” seems contextually more likely, elsewhere

watch day and night for the ending of craving.”

- 3.1 “One who is free of all sensual desires,”  
       *said Venerable Upasiva,*  
 “depending on nothingness, all else left behind,  
 freed in the ultimate liberation of perception:  
 would they remain there without travelling on?”
- 4.1 “One free of all sensual desires,”  
       *replied the Buddha,*  
 “depending on nothingness, all else left behind,  
 freed in the ultimate liberation of perception:  
 they would remain there without travelling on.”
- 5.1 “If they were to remain there without travelling on,  
 even for many years, All-seer,  
 and, growing cool right there, were freed,  
 would the consciousness of such a one pass away?”
- 6.1 “As a flame tossed by a gust of wind,”  
       *replied the Buddha,*  
 “comes to an end and no longer counts;<sup>205</sup>  
 so too, a sage freed from mental phenomena<sup>206</sup>  
 comes to an end and no longer counts.”
- 7.1 “One who has come to an end—do they not exist?  
 Or are they eternally well?  
 Please, sage, answer me clearly,  
 for truly you understand this matter.”

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(*paṭi*)*virato* is commonly used with speech and never, to my knowledge, with doubt.

205. Compare the stock idiom *Saṅkhampi na upeti upanidhimpi na upeti ka-labhāgampi na upeti* at eg. SN 20.2:1.7; also Snp 1.12:3.4.

206. *Nāmakāya* appears only here and in DN 15, apparently in the same sense. It means neither *nāmarūpa* nor *manomayakāya*, but rather the “group” of “mental phenomena”. In this case it refers to one who is freed based on a formless attainment, for whom the *rūpakāya* has been formerly abandoned.

- “One who has come to an end cannot be measured,”  
*replied the Buddha.* 8.1  
 “They have nothing by which one might describe  
 them.  
 When all things have been eradicated,  
 eradicated, too, are all ways of speech.”

Snp 5.8

## The Questions of Nanda

*Nandamāṇavapucchā*

- “People say there are sages in the world,”  
*said Venerable Nanda,* 1.1  
 “but how is this the case?  
 Is someone called a sage because of their knowledge,  
 or because of their way of life?”
- “Experts do not speak of a sage in terms of<sup>207</sup>  
 view, oral transmission, or notion. 2.1  
 Those who are sages live far from the crowd, I say,  
 untroubled, with no need for hope.”
- “As to those ascetics and brahmins,” 3.1  
*said Venerable Nanda,*  
 “who speak of purity in terms of what is seen or heard,  
 or in terms of precepts and vows,  
 or in terms of countless different things.  
 Living self-controlled in that matter,  
 have they crossed over rebirth and old age, good sir?  
 I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this.”

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207. As at Snp 4.9:5.1, read as “instrumental of relation”. Curiously, the extraneous phrase *silabbatena* (not in Niddesa) appears where the reciter’s identification of the speaker should be.

- 4.1 “As to those ascetics and brahmins,”  
*replied the Buddha,*  
 “who speak of purity in terms of what is seen or heard,  
 or in terms of precepts and vows,  
 or in terms of countless different things.  
 Even though they live self-controlled in that matter,  
 they’ve not crossed over rebirth and old age, I de-  
 clare.”
- 5.1 “As to those ascetics and brahmins,”  
*said Venerable Nanda,*  
 “who speak of purity in terms of what is seen or heard,  
 or in terms of precepts and vows,  
 or in terms of countless different things.  
 You say they have not crossed the flood, sage.  
 Then who exactly in the world of gods and humans  
 has crossed over rebirth and old age, good sir?  
 I ask you, Blessed One; please tell me this.”
- 6.1 “I don’t say that all ascetics and brahmins,”  
*replied the Buddha,*  
 “are shrouded by rebirth and old age.  
 There are those here who have given up all  
 that is seen, heard, and thought, and precepts and  
 vows,  
 who have given up all the countless different things.  
 Fully understanding craving, free of defilements,  
 those people, I say, have crossed the flood.”
- 7.1 “I rejoice in the words of the great hermit!  
 You have expounded non-attachment well, Gotama.  
 There are those here who have given up all  
 that is seen, heard, and thought, and precepts and  
 vows,  
 who have given up all the countless different things.

Fully understanding craving, free of defilements,  
those people, I agree, have crossed the flood.”

Snp 5.9

## The Questions of Hemaka

*Hemakamāṇavapucchā*

- “Those who have previously answered me,” 1.1  
*said Venerable Hemaka,*  
 “before I encountered Gotama’s teaching,  
 said ‘thus it was’ or ‘so it shall be’.  
 All that was just the testament of hearsay;  
 all that just fostered speculation:  
 I found no delight in that.
- But you, sage, explain to me 2.1  
 the teaching that destroys craving.  
 Having understood it, one who lives mindfully  
 may cross over clinging in the world.”
- “The removal of desire and lust, Hemaka, 3.1  
 for what is seen, heard, thought, or cognized here;  
 for anything liked or disliked,  
 is extinguishment, the imperishable state.
- Those who have fully understood this, mindful, 4.1  
 are extinguished in this very life.  
 Always at peace,  
 they’ve crossed over clinging to the world.”

Snp 5.10

## The Questions of Todeyya

*Todeyyamāṇavapucchā*

- 1.1 “In whom sensual pleasures do not dwell,  
*said Venerable Todeyya,*  
 “and for whom there is no craving,  
 and who has crossed over doubts—  
 of what kind is their liberation?”
- 2.1 “In whom sensual pleasures do not dwell,  
*replied the Buddha,*  
 “and for whom there is no craving,  
 and who has crossed over doubts—  
 their liberation is none other than this.”
- 3.1 “Are they free of hope, or are they still in need of hope?  
 Do they possess wisdom, or are they still forming  
 wisdom?<sup>208</sup>  
 O Sakyan, elucidate the sage to me,  
 so that I may understand, All-seer.”
- 4.1 “They are free of hope, they are not in need of hope.  
 They possess wisdom, they are not still forming wis-  
 dom.  
 That, Todeyya, is how to understand a sage,  
 one who has nothing, unattached to sensual life.”

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208. Bodhi reads *kappi* (against the Niddesa) in the sense “manner”. But it seems unlikely Todeyya, or anyone really, would ask whether a sage merely *seemed* wise. Surely the question must be whether a sage is someone who is still in the process of learning, a question that has been important to the Buddhist traditions and still is today.

Snp 5.11

## The Questions of Kappa

*Kappamāṇavapucchā*

“For those overwhelmed by old age and death,” 1.1

*said Venerable Kappa,*

“stuck mid-stream  
as the terrifying flood arises,  
tell me an island, good sir.  
Explain to me an island  
so that this may not occur again.”

“For those overwhelmed by old age and death,” 2.1

*replied the Buddha,*

“stuck mid-stream  
as the terrifying flood arises,  
I shall tell you an island, Kappa.

Having nothing, taking nothing: 3.1

this is the isle of no return.  
I call it extinguishment,  
the ending of old age and death.

Those who have fully understood this, mindful, 4.1

are extinguished in this very life.  
They don’t fall under Māra’s sway,  
nor are they his lackeys.”

Snp 5.12

## The Questions of Jatukaṇṇī

*Jatukaṇṇimāṇavapucchā*

“Hearing of the hero with no desire for sensual plea- 1.1

sures,”

said Venerable Jatukaññī,

“who has passed over the flood, I’ve come with a  
question for that desireless one.

Tell me the state of peace, O natural visionary.<sup>209</sup>

Tell me this, Blessed One, as it really is.

2.1 For, having mastered sensual desires, the Blessed One  
proceeds,<sup>210</sup>

as the blazing sun shines on the earth.

May you of vast wisdom explain the teaching  
to me of little wisdom so that I may understand  
the giving up of rebirth and old age here.”

3.1 “With sensual desire dispelled,”<sup>211</sup>

replied the Buddha,

“seeing renunciation as sanctuary,  
don’t be taking up or putting down<sup>212</sup>  
anything at all.

4.1 What came before, let wither away,  
and after, let there be nothing.  
If you don’t grasp at the middle,  
you will live at peace.

209. While the exact sense of the unique term *sahajanetta* is open to interpretation, surely Norman’s “omniscient one” (following Niddesa) is not right.

210. The following line lacks a verb, and Norman, Bodhi, and Ñāṇadīpa all construe it with *abhibhuyya*: the sun “overcomes” the earth. But that doesn’t make sense. Rather, the idiom *abhibhuyya iriyati* leans on *iriyati* in the sense “to keep going, to proceed”. The Buddha “proceeds” (i.e. keeps living) after mastering desires, like the sun “proceeds” shedding light on the earth.

211. Niddesa, followed by Bodhi, Norman, and Ñāṇadīpa, takes *vinaya* as optative. But where the same phrase occurs at Kp 9:10.3 and Snp 1.8:10.3 it is clearly absolutive. Moreover, the next includes the absolutive *daṭṭhu*, which elsewhere follows a similar line with an absolutive verb: *kāmesvādīnavam disvā*.

212. As in the Aṭṭhakavagga, it is essential that this phrase be rendered in an active present tense. It is not that nothing *has ever* been taken up or put down, but that they are no longer actively engaging in taking up and putting down.



One rid of greed, brahmin, 5.1  
 for the whole realm of name and form,  
 has no defilements by which  
 they might fall under the sway of Death.”

Snp 5.13

## The Questions of Bhadrāvudha

*Bhadrāvudhamāṇavapucchā*

“I have a request for you, the shelter-leaver, the craving-  
 cutter, the imperturbable,” 1.1

*said Venerable Bhadrāvudha,*

“the delight-leaver, the flood-crosser, the freed,  
 the formulation-leaver, the intelligent.  
 Many people have gathered from different lands

wishing to hear your word, O hero. 2.1

After hearing the spiritual giant they will depart from  
 here.

Please, sage, answer them clearly,  
 for truly you understand this matter.”

“Dispel all craving for attachments,” 3.1

*replied the Buddha,*

“above, below, all round, between.

For whatever a person grasps in the world,  
 Māra pursues them right there.

So let a mindful mendicant who understands 4.1

not grasp anything in all the world,  
 observing that, in clinging to attachments,<sup>213</sup>

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213. Norman’s suggestion to read *ādānasatte* (against *Niddesa*) as locative singular would be tempting were it not that at Snp 5.13:4.3 and Thag 19.1:20.3 *iti pekkhamāno* qualifies the former part of the line.

these people cling to the domain of death.”

Snp 5.14

## The Questions of Udaya

*Udayamāṇavapucchā*

- 1.1 “To the meditator, rid of hopes,”  
       *said Venerable Udaya,*  
 “who has completed the task, is free of defilements,  
 and has gone beyond all things,  
 I have come in need with a question.  
 Tell me the liberation by enlightenment,  
 the smashing of ignorance.”
- 2.1 “The giving up of sensual desires,”  
       *replied the Buddha,*  
 “and aversions, both;  
 the dispelling of dullness,  
 and the cessation of remorse.
- 3.1 Pure equanimity and mindfulness,  
 preceded by investigation of principles—  
 this, I declare, is liberation by enlightenment,  
 the smashing of ignorance.”
- 4.1 “What fetters the world?  
 What explores it?  
 With the giving up of what  
 is extinguishment spoken of?”
- 5.1 “Delight fetters the world.  
 Thought explores it.  
 With the giving up of craving  
 extinguishment is spoken of.”

“For one living mindfully, 6.1  
 how does consciousness cease?  
 We’ve come to ask the Buddha;  
 let us hear what you say.”

“Not taking pleasure in feeling 7.1  
 internally and externally—  
 for one living mindfully,  
 that’s how consciousness ceases.”

Snp 5.15

## The Question of Posala

*Posālamāṇavapucchā*

“To the one who reveals the past,”<sup>214</sup> 1.1  
*said Venerable Posala,*  
 who is imperturbable, with doubts cut off,  
 and who has gone beyond all things,  
 I have come in need with a question.

Consider one who perceives the disappearance of 2.1  
 form,<sup>215</sup>  
 who has entirely given up the body,  
 and who sees nothing at all  
 internally and externally.  
 I ask the Sakyan about knowledge for them;<sup>216</sup>  
 how should one like that be guided?”

“The Realized One directly knows,” 3.1

214. This is an unusual idiom.

215. See Snp 4.11. The question refers to a meditator who has attained the dimension of nothingness.

216. The Niddesa explains, in line with the Buddha’s answer, that the question is about the kind of knowledge needed to guide one with such an attainment. Thus it must be dative, not genitive.

*said the Buddha,*

“all the planes of consciousness.  
And he knows this one who remains,  
committed to that as their final goal.”<sup>217</sup>

- 4.1 Understanding that desire for rebirth  
in the dimension of nothingness is a fetter,  
and directly knowing what this really means,  
one then sees that matter clearly.  
That is the knowledge of reality for them,  
the brahmin who has lived the life.”

Snp 5.16

## The Questions of Mogharājā

*Mogharājamāṇavapucchā*

- 1.1 “Twice I have asked the Sakyan,”  
*said Venerable Mogharājā,*  
“but you haven’t answered me, O Seer.  
I have heard that the divine hermit  
answers when questioned a third time.
- 2.1 Regarding this world, the other world,  
and the realm of Brahmā with its gods,  
I’m not familiar with the view  
of the renowned Gotama.
- 3.1 So I’ve come in need with a question  
to the one of excellent vision.  
How to look upon the world  
so the King of Death won’t see you?”

217. Read *’dhimuttam* per Niddesa, see discussion in Bodhi. The sense is the same as eg. an4.125. This refers to someone, such as Āḷāra Kālāma, whose spiritual goal is rebirth in the dimension of nothingness.

“Look upon the world as empty, 4.1  
 Mogharājā, ever mindful.  
 Having uprooted the view of self,  
 you may thus cross over death.  
 That’s how to look upon the world  
 so the King of Death won’t see you.”

Snp 5.17

## The Questions of Piṅgiya

*Piṅgiyamāṇavapucchā*

“I am old, feeble, and pallid,” 1.1  
*said Venerable Piṅgiya,*  
 “my eyes unclear, my hearing faint.  
 Don’t let stupid me perish meanwhile;  
 explain the teaching so that I may understand  
 the giving up of rebirth and old age here.”

“Having seen those stricken by forms,” 2.1  
*replied the Buddha,*  
 “negligent people afflicted by forms;  
 therefore, Piṅgiya, being diligent,  
 give up form so as not to be reborn.”

“The four quarters, the intermediate directions, 3.1  
 below, and above: in these ten directions  
 there’s nothing at all in the world  
 that you’ve not seen, heard, thought, or cognized.  
 Explain the teaching so that I may understand  
 the giving up of rebirth and old age here.”

“Observing people sunk in craving,” 4.1  
*replied the Buddha,*  
 “tormented, mired in old age;  
 therefore, Piṅgiya, being diligent,

give up craving so as not to be reborn.”

Snp 5.18

## Homage to the Way to the Beyond

*Pārāyanatthutigāthā*

- 1.1 This was said by the Buddha while staying in the land of the Magadhans at the Pāsāṇake shrine. When requested by the sixteen brahmin devotees, he answered their questions one by one. If you understand the meaning and the teaching of each of these questions, and practice accordingly, you may go right to the far shore of old age and death. These teachings are said to lead to the far shore, which is why the name of this exposition of the teaching is “The Way to the Beyond”.
- 2.1 Ajita, Tissametteyya,  
Puṇṇaka and Mettagū,  
Dhotaka and Upasiva,  
Nanda and then Hemaka,
- 3.1 both Todeyya and Kappa,  
and Jatukaṇṇi the astute,  
Bhadrāvudha and Udaya,  
and the brahmin Posala,  
Mogharājā the intelligent,  
and Piṅgiya the great hermit:
- 4.1 they approached the Buddha,  
the hermit of consummate conduct.  
Asking their subtle questions,  
they came to the most excellent Buddha.
- 5.1 The Buddha answered their questions  
in accordance with truth.  
The sage satisfied the brahmins

with his answers to their questions.

Those who were satisfied by the all-seer, 6.1  
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun,  
led the spiritual life in his presence,  
the one of such splendid wisdom.

If you practice in accordance 7.1  
with each of these questions  
as taught by the Buddha,  
you'll go from the near shore to the far.

Developing the supreme path, 8.1  
you'll go from the near shore to the far.  
This path is for going to the far shore;  
that's why it's called "The Way to the Beyond".

Snp 5.19

## Preserving the Way to the Beyond

*Pārāyanānugītigāthā*

"I shall keep reciting the Way to the Beyond,"<sup>218</sup> 1.1  
*said Venerable Piṅgiya,*  
"which was taught as it was seen  
by the immaculate one of vast intelligence.  
He is desireless, unentangled, a spiritual giant:  
why would he speak falsely?

Come, let me extol 2.1

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218. To *anugāyati* is to keep on reciting, as the brahmins did with their hymns descended from seers of old (as eg. AN 5.192:3.1). Here, Piṅgiya, as an experienced Vedic reciter himself, announces that he will keep the this teaching alive in just the same way. This is perhaps the most explicit evidence for a direct historical link between the oral recitation methods of the brahmins and the Buddhists.

in sweet words of praise  
the one who's given up stains and delusions,  
conceit and contempt.

3.1 The Buddha, all-seer, dispeler of darkness,  
has gone to world's end, beyond all rebirths;  
he is free of defilements, and has given up all pain,  
the rightly-named one, brahmin, is revered by me.

4.1 Like a bird that flees a little copse,  
to roost in a forest abounding in fruit,  
I've left the near-sighted behind,  
like a swan come to a great river.

5.1 Those who explained to me previously,  
before I encountered Gotama's teaching,  
said 'thus it was' or 'so it shall be'.  
All that was just the testament of hearsay;  
all that just fostered speculation.

6.1 Alone, the dispeler of darkness  
is splendid, a beacon:  
Gotama, vast in wisdom,  
Gotama, vast in intelligence.

7.1 He is the one who taught me Dhamma,  
visible in this very life, immediately effective,  
the untroubled, the end of craving,  
to which there is no compare."

8.1 "Why would you dwell apart from him  
even for an hour, Piṅgiya?  
From Gotama, vast in wisdom,  
from Gotama, vast in intelligence?

9.1 He is the one who taught you Dhamma,



visible in this very life, immediately effective,  
the untroubled, the end of craving,  
to which there is no compare.”

“I never dwell apart from him, 10.1  
not even for an hour, brahmin.  
From Gotama, vast in wisdom,  
from Gotama, vast in intelligence.

He is the one who taught me Dhamma, 11.1  
visible in this very life, immediately effective,  
the untroubled, the end of craving,  
to which there is no compare.

Being diligent, I see him 12.1  
in my mind’s eye day and night.  
I spend the night in homage to him,  
hence I think I dwell with him.

My faith and joy and intent and mindfulness 13.1  
never stray from Gotama’s teaching.  
I bow to whatever direction  
the one of vast wisdom heads.

I’m old and feeble, 14.1  
so my body cannot go there,  
but I always travel in my thoughts,  
for my mind, brahmin, is bound to him.

Lying floundering in the mud, 15.1  
I drifted from island to island.  
Then I saw the Buddha,  
the undefiled one who has crossed the flood.”

“Just as Vakkali was committed to faith— 16.1  
Bhadrāvudha and Gotama of Āḷavī too—

so too you should commit to faith.  
You will go, Piṅgiya, beyond the domain of death.”

- 17.1 “My confidence grew  
when I heard the word of the sage,  
the Buddha with veil drawn back,  
so kind and eloquent.
- 18.1 Having directly known all about the gods,  
he understands all top to bottom,  
the teacher who settles all questions  
for those who admit their doubts.
- 19.1 Unfaltering, unshakable;  
that to which there is no compare.  
For sure I will go there, I have no doubt of that.  
Remember me as one whose mind is made up.”

THE ANTHOLOGY OF DISCOURSES IS COMPLETED.

# Colophon

## The Translator

Bhikkhu Sujato was born as Anthony Aidan Best on 4/11/1966 in Perth, Western Australia. He grew up in the pleasant suburbs of Mt Lawley and Attadale alongside his sister Nicola, who was the good child. His mother, Margaret Lorraine Huntsman née Pinder, said “he’ll either be a priest or a poet”, while his father, Anthony Thomas Best, advised him to “never do anything for money”. He attended Aquinas College, a Catholic school, where he decided to become an atheist. At the University of WA he studied philosophy, aiming to learn what he wanted to do with his life. Finding that what he wanted to do was play guitar, he dropped out. His main band was named Martha’s Vineyard, which achieved modest success in the indie circuit. Then it broke up, because everyone thought they personally were reason for the success, which, oddly enough, turns out not to have been the case.

A seemingly random encounter with a roadside joey took him to Thailand, where he entered his first meditation retreat at Wat Ram Poeng, Chiang Mai in 1992. He decided to devote himself to the Buddha’s path, and took full ordination in Wat Pa Nanachat in 1994, where his teachers were Ajahn Pasanno and Ajahn Jayasaro. In 1997 he returned to Perth to study with Ajahn Brahm at Bodhinyana Monastery.

He spent several years practicing in seclusion in Malaysia and Thailand before establishing Santi Forest Monastery in Bun-

danoon, NSW, in 2003. There he was instrumental in supporting the establishment of the Theravada bhikkhuni order in Australia and advocating for women's rights. He continues to teach in Australia and globally, with a special concern for the moral implications of climate change and other forms of environmental destruction. He has published a series of books of original and groundbreaking research on early Buddhism.

In 2005 he founded SuttaCentral together with Rod Bucknell and John Kelly. In 2015, seeing the need for a complete, accurate, plain English translation of the Pali texts, he undertook the task, spending nearly three years in isolation on the isle of Qi Mei off the coast of the nation of Taiwan. He completed the four main Nikāyas in 2018, and the early books of the Khuddaka Nikāya were complete by 2021. All this work is dedicated to the public domain and is entirely free of copyright encumbrance.

In 2019 he returned to Sydney where, together with Bhikkhu Akaliko, he established Lokanta Vihara (The Monastery at the End of the World).

## Creation Process

Translated from the Pali. Primary source was the Mahāsaṅgīti edition, with reference to several English translations, especially those of K.R. Norman, Bhikkhu Bodhi, and Bhikkhu Ñāṇadīpa.

## The Translation

This translation aims to retain the directness and urgency of the Suttanipāta. The Suttanipāta includes verses from the earliest and latest periods within the period encompassed by the early texts, and so it covers a challenging variety of styles and themes, by turns fierce, devotional, or incisive. In several portions, most notably the Aṭṭhakavagga, there are a range of highly specific usages that demand careful attention.

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