

# Linked Discourses

Bhikkhu Sujato



# LINKED DISCOURSES

A plain translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya



*translated and introduced by*

BHIKKHU SUJATO

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THE GROUP OF LINKED DISCOURSES WITH  
VERSES

SAGĀTHĀVAGGASĀMYUTTA

 SUTTACENTRAL

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

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“WELL-SPOKEN WORDS”

*Subhāsitasutta*

Saṃyutta Nikāya 8.5



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# The SuttaCentral Editions Series

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# Preface to *Linked Discourses*

I was introduced to Buddhism through the Theravāda tradition. I found my way to it through meditation, and pursued my studies so I could more deeply understand my experiences in meditation. It didn't take me long to notice the rather odd fact that, while meditation was supposed to reveal direct, experiential truths, there was a lot of disagreement about what these things were and what they meant. It seemed that even direct experience was filtered by beliefs and expectations.

I found that, while many modern teachers dismissed the role of theory, insisting that experience alone was the standard, this was not the case in the Suttas. The Buddha placed right view at the start of the path, insisting that the framing of our ideas is what gives meaning to our experiences.

Living in Thailand, I was surrounded by Thai-flavored Theravada. My English-speaking monastic community at Wat Pa Nanachat was somewhat more eclectic. There were monks and visitors from all over, and while the “official” teachings were mainstream Theravada and forest tradition, behind the scenes there was a whole range of spiritual ideas and priorities. I learned about different flavors of Buddhism, but I didn't really have a way of understanding how it all fit together, or how it related to my meditation. Many of the things I heard about seemed quite silly or far from the Buddha's teaching, and I confess, I became quite dogmatic, convinced that Theravada was the one and only original and true way. It was the great Sri Lankan monk K. Sri Dhammananda who

checked this impulse, gently reminding me of the respect we owe to all practitioners of Dhamma.

I read some books of Buddhist history, notably A.K. Warder's *Indian Buddhism*, and from them learned that there were early discourses in languages other than Pali, especially Chinese. This was at once exciting and a little disturbing. One monk said to me that when he thought of the existence of parallels, it was like a nervous, lurking anxiety: what if we're wrong? What if the things we take to be true turn out to be no more than an institutional dogma, or an accidental artefact of history? Some modern schools of interpretation take this doubt as a starting point to dismantle the very idea that we can know what the Buddha taught, replacing knowledge with destructive nihilism.

Some years later, I met Rod Bucknell, from whom, during our discussions when starting SuttaCentral, I learned of a different approach. The Taiwanese monk Master Yin Shun (印順) had developed a powerful theory of the origins and shared teachings in Buddhism. His insight was based on a comparative reading of all the texts (he read the Pali canon mainly from the Japanese translation), and was sparked by one of the great Mahayana treatises, Asanga's *Yogacārabhūmi*.

Yin Shun posited that the *Saṃyutta* was the first and primary collection of texts in Buddhism. By this he meant the original *Saṃyutta*, not the developed forms we have today in the Pali *Saṃyuttanikāya*, multiple Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*, and various portions in Sanskrit and Tibetan. These are, like all extant collections, the outcome of a redaction process which left its discernable fingerprints. Nonetheless, the close relation between all these texts suggests that changes have been minor.

Once you take this idea on board, the signs leap out from everywhere. For example, some accounts of the First Council speak of the *Saṃyutta* being recited first, and we find that the first three sermons are in the *Saṃyutta*. Most convincing, however, is the observation that the list of topics found in the *Saṃyutta* is central

to the Buddha's teaching: the aggregates, the senses, dependent origination, the elements, the path, the four noble truths. When the Suttas list the Buddha's essential teachings, they do so with topics from the Saṃyutta. And when later generations organized the Buddha's teachings into coherent wholes, the same list of topics provided a handy scaffold.

This is far from a complete theory of early Buddhist texts; it is a complex situation, and there are many factors at play. But Yin Shun's fundamental thesis offered a compelling framework to make sense of the vast mass of texts and their interrelations.

The Saṃyutta theory suggests a simple guideline for interpreting Suttas: look for the main understanding of key teachings in the simple Suttas of the Saṃyutta, and see other discourses, especially those of the Majjhima and Dīgha, as being built upon these foundations. The theory doesn't mean that all Saṃyutta discourses are earlier than others. It simply means that they were organized in this collection before other collections. It clarifies priority and perspective.

This was a revelation for me, and I pursued this insight in my book *A History of Mindfulness*. And ever since, I have found it to be a reliable means of sorting out what the Buddha really taught.

It was challenging. Over and over again, I had to confront my own expectations and biases. The anxieties of my friend turned out to be not completely baseless. I found that I could no longer believe in Theravada as the one true, original sources of Buddhism: it was, rather, one of many schools, and like all schools it preserved much and changed much. I could see the many different flavors of Buddhism—some quite alien to me—while recognizing that underneath them all lie the same fundamental teachings of the Saṃyutta.

At a deeper level, this helped me realize how my own biases and expectations had been shaping my understanding of my meditation experiences, and hence what I did in meditation, and hence the nature of those experiences. If you think meditation is a certain

way, you will meditate in accord, and your experiences will confirm your ideas. And if you tell yourself, “This is my personal experience, and has nothing to do with theory”, then you’ll never find a way out of the cycle. For that, we need critical inquiry based on the best available facts.

The truth was literally right in front of my nose all along, yet for years I did not see it. I was practicing “mindfulness” in the belief that this was the way of insight (*vipassanā*). But along the way, I found that mindfulness led to serenity (*samatha*). This wasn’t what I had learned to expect from the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as explained by modern teachers, for whom mindfulness and insight are intrinsically linked.

Studying the Saṃyutta closely I noticed that the teachings on insight—hundreds of Suttas—almost never mention mindfulness. And the teachings on mindfulness emphasize how it leads to serenity. It is serenity—the deep, immersive peace of mind called *samādhi* or *jhāna*—which then leads to liberating insight.

Suddenly my own experiences made sense. And so I changed the way I approached meditation in all sorts of subtle ways. I had thought of meditation as “noting” various “objects” with “momentary concentration” that would give rise to “dry insight”. But I realized that none of these words or ideas was found in the Suttas at all. It simply isn’t how the Buddha taught. Rather, he spoke of breathing mindfully, of the natural process of settling the mind, of how when one is informed by right view, wisdom emerges from a mind at peace.

This is my experience, and yours is different. It is not that the traditions, schools, and methods are wrong. They are fine for what they are, but what they are not is carbon copies of the Buddha’s teachings. Think of them as degrees of approximation. It is in the Suttas, and especially the Saṃyutta, that we find the closest thing to the Buddha’s words. I found that those words matched my experiences and informed my practice in ways that the schools and methods did not. And I am always grateful for those teachers

who have made it possible for to learn from the greatest teacher of them all.



# The Linked Discourses: the blueprint for Buddhist philosophy

*Bhikkhu Sujato, 2019*

The Saṃyutta Nikāya is the third of the four main divisions in the Sutta Piṭaka of the Pali Canon (*tipiṭaka*). It is translated here as *Linked Discourses*, and has been previously translated as the *Connected Discourses* or the *Kindred Sayings*. As the title suggests, its discourses are grouped thematically. These thematic groups of texts are called *saṃyuttas*, and the Saṃyutta Nikāya is the collection of such *saṃyuttas*.

The Saṃyutta Nikāya consists of 56 *saṃyuttas* collected in five large “books” (*vagga*), containing over a thousand discourses. The Mahāsaṅgīti text as used on SuttaCentral contains 2837 discourses; but the total number is somewhat arbitrary, as it depends on how the abbreviated texts are expanded, which differs in different editions. This variation, however, applies only to the way the texts are counted, and does not affect the content, which is virtually identical in every edition.

It is in the Saṃyutta Nikāya that we find the core doctrines that have formed the basis for all subsequent Buddhist philosophy. It is largely structured around major doctrinal sections that correspond with the template of the four noble truths.

**Suffering** Aggregates (SN 22)

**The origin of suffering** Six sense media (SN 35)

**The cessation of suffering** Dependent origination (SN 12)

**The practice that leads to the end of suffering** Dependent cessation (SN 12)

The four noble truths themselves are treated in the final chapter, the *Sacca Saṃyutta* (SN 56).

Not all the *saṃyuttas* fit so easily into this scheme. There are many minor *saṃyuttas*, which are sometimes connected with a major *saṃyutta*, and sometimes not. In addition, the first book, the *Sagāthāvagga*, is not organized by subject. Rather, the thematic linking here is the type of person involved in the discourse. These texts are also unified in literary form; they are in mixed prose and verse.

This collection has a full parallel in the *Saṃyuktāgama* (SA) of the Sarvāstivāda school in Chinese translation. In addition, there are two partial collections in Chinese (SA-2 and SA-3) as well as a number of miscellaneous or fragmentary texts in Chinese, Sanskrit, and Tibetan. Much of the organizational structure of SN is shared with SA, suggesting that this structure preceded the split between these two collections.

## How the *Saṃyutta* is Organized

The *Saṃyutta Nikāya* is conveniently divided into five large *vaggas* or “books”. As noted in the General Guide, the *Saṃyutta* is an example of the “nested *vagga*” structure, where the (unusual) *vagga* as “book” includes many of the normal kind of “small” *vagga*, i.e. groups of about ten suttas.

Within each of the five “big” *vaggas* there are several *saṃyuttas*, each containing a set of discourses that are linked by person or theme (sometimes both). For example, each of the discourses in SN 5 features a nun (*bhikkhunī*), while each discourse in SN 24 deals with the subject of “views” (*diṭṭhi*).

In SuttaCentral, the discourses of the Saṃyutta are referenced by *saṃyutta* and *sutta*. Thus SN 1.1 is the first discourse of the first *saṃyutta*, while SN 56.11 is the eleventh discourse of the fifty-sixth *saṃyutta*. The SuttaCentral system is the same as that used by Bhikkhu Bodhi in his *Connected Discourses of the Buddha* and on Access to Insight.

The five books are named according to various principles:

- Vol. 1 Sagāthāvagga contains sets of discourses that contain verses, as indicated by the title.
- Vols. 2–4 are each named after the first and largest *saṃyutta* of the book.
- Vol. 5 is called the “Great Book” (*Mahāvagga*) due to its size. The Chinese version is called, appropriately, “The Book of the Path” (*Maggavagga*).

In this essay I will give an overview of each of the five books. However, I will not summarize each of the 56 *saṃyuttas*, for that would make it far too long. For such summaries, see the lists of suttas on SuttaCentral, which include explanations of the various structural levels of the *saṃyutta*, as well as individual discourses. Here I will focus more on general questions of content and interpretation.

## The Book With Verses

The “Book With Verses” (Sagāthāvagga) is divided into eleven *saṃyuttas*, with a total of 271 suttas.

While most of the Saṃyutta is organized around subject matter, here the organizational principle is *people*. Each *saṃyutta* depicts a conversation involving the Buddha or his disciples with a different person or kind of person, such as gods, kings, nuns, or brahmins.

A typical sutta has a bare narrative framework, where someone comes to the Buddha and utters a verse, and the Buddha replies with a better one. In some cases, notably the Sakka Saṃyutta, the narrative element is developed into a lively exchange.

## Verse & Prose

Each of the suttas in this collection contains verse with a prose narrative background, although in many cases the prose has been omitted through abbreviation. This kind of literary form is common in Indic literature, so it is worth spending a little time to understand it.

The oldest Indic literature is the *Ṛg Veda*, a collection of about 10,600 verses. These were passed down in the oral tradition of the brahmins for thousands of years. One of the keys to accurate transmission of this sacred lore was the use of metre: rhythmic patterns of long and short syllables. Such metres provide a scaffolding that organize words, and hence knowledge, in a form that is as memorable as a song; and indeed, they would have been sung in a simple melody. In this way, the verses become set in a precise and defined form, one that may be preserved and passed down unaltered through the generations.

But poetry is not just technically complex; it is ecstatic, inspired, divine. The brahmins did not see the Vedas as being authored in the normal sense, but channeled as the divine word of god (*Brahmā*) through human sages (Pali: *isi*; Sanskrit: *ṛṣi*). The Vedic verses constantly allude to stories, myths, and events—for example, the slaying of the dragon *Vṛtra* by the god-hero *Indra*—that were well known to their audience, and thus did not require spelling out in the text itself. The verses are in fact hymns, invoked in ritual to heighten the emotional response, to inspire awe, fear, or devotion. They are given meaning and context by the background understanding of the mythology. Thus the verses imply a story, of which they are the emotional and narrative climax.

So we can think of a verse as the seed crystal around which a more flexible prose narrative grows and evolves. The prose may be adjusted to time and place, presented in greater or lesser detail, or adapted for the audience. It may comment on contemporary events or express a personal perspective; but the verse is (in theory) always the same.

We are speaking here of the verses found in the *Sagāthāvagga*. But it is worth bearing in mind that there are plenty of verses in the *nikāyas* outside the *Sagāthāvagga*, and they are not all of the same type. Here is a brief summary of the main verse types you will encounter. This is just to help a reader get a rough orientation, and exceptions and blurred lines are easily found.

**Climactic verse** As in the *Sagāthāvagga*, such verses appear at the climax of a narrative. The narrative may be very thin, or even absent, yet it is always assumed. Sometimes it is supplied in later commentaries. This form is used outside the *Sagāthāvagga* in such texts as the *Dhammapada*, *Udāna*, and *Jātakas*. We might also consider under this head longer devotional verses such as those of *Sela* (MN 92, Snp 3.7).

**Independent poems** A set of verses that makes up a unified literary and thematic whole, and is independent of a prose narrative. There are relatively few of these in the four *nikāyas*, but they dominate the *Sutta Nipāta*. The last *vagga* of that book contains a series of such independent poems, all united within a narrative set in verse. Some of the verses of the *Sagāthāvagga* might be considered under this head, if the prose narrative is dismissed as negligible.

**Devotional invocations** Such texts as the *Mahāsamaya Sutta* (DN 20), the *Āṭṭhāṇṭiya Sutta* (DN 32), or the *Isigili Sutta* (MN 116) occupy an unusual place in the early Buddhist corpus. Thin in their doctrinal content, they appear more as incantations for protection or blessings.

**Summary verse** Like the climactic verses, these accompany prose. But rather than being an emotional highlight, they serve as a mnemonic device to help preserve the content of the prose. These are most familiar in the *uddānas* that appear at the end of *vaggas* and other sections throughout the EBTs, typically listing a keyword from each text and thus acting as a kind of table of contents. These are not to be confused with the genre of climactic verse known as *udāna*, “inspired saying”, which, despite the similar spelling, is a completely different word. In addition to the formal *uddānas*, we

can consider under this head many of the verses of the *Āṅguttara*, especially in the *Fours*, which often serve purely to summarize the content of the prose, although occasionally they are developed into a more satisfying poetic reflection on the theme. Occasionally a longer sutta will contain mixed portions of prose and summary verse, notably the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* (Sn̐ 3.12). A much later development of this style is found in the *Lakkhaṇa Sutta* (DN 30).

In my translations, I have rendered verse as prose broken into lines, rarely attempting poetic virtue. To render these highly didactic verses, dense with doctrinal terms, into genuine English verse is no easy task. In many cases, especially with the summary verses, the text in Pali has little in the way of literary merit. Other texts, especially the later verses, display learned command of complex and sophisticated literary forms such as is rare to find, even among writers of English poetry. Combined with the often obscure vocabulary, rare and archaic grammatical forms, and syntactic flexibility of Pali verses, the task of rendering them in readable and accurate English is hard and time-consuming, even without aspiring to poetic beauty. So my verse is workmanlike, and I can only hope that poets take up the task of rendering selected verses with the beauty they deserve.

## The Play of the Gods

In the *Book With Verses* we see the ancient Vedic pattern adopted to serve a Buddhist purpose. It is no coincidence that here we meet various deities, many of whom hail from Vedic mythology, in contexts that sometimes directly respond to specific Vedic or brahmanical passages.

The casual appearance of deities throughout these texts is, of course, problematic. These days, we don't normally see gods manifesting with glorious light at spiritual gatherings. So how are we to understand this?

One obvious answer is that such texts are literally true: gods of these names did appear in exactly the way depicted and have these exact conversations. If so, why are such things not seen in our day? One might be tempted to point regretfully to the decline of religious and ethical life in modern times. But this is just another unverifiable claim: how could we possibly know such a thing? And it creates an even bigger problem. For when we see the past as a uniquely privileged era, one blessed with a degree of purity and wholesomeness that is lost to us, then what is the point of practice? Are we not better off pining for the glories of old, and wishing for the renewal of the Dhamma under the future Buddha Metteyya? Such views forget a basic principle of the teaching: it is *akālika*—we can realize it here & now, no matter when we live.

So perhaps we are better off adopting a skeptical view: such deities do not exist, and such events did not happen. They are simply religious propaganda, fictions whose purpose is to convert simple people by importing a familiar Indic cosmology. If there is any reality at all to them, it is purely psychological; such beings represent different aspects of the mind. Despite its scientific appearance, this reductive view, too, is unsustainable. The ideas of rebirth and the existence of multiple dimensions of existence are not found just in popular narratives, but are central to core teachings such as dependent origination and the four noble truths—the second noble truth is precisely “the craving that leads to future rebirth” (*yāyam taṇhā ponobbhavikā*). They can’t be simply written off as an uncritical inheritance from Indian culture.

These views are polar opposites; and like all pairs of opposites, they share more in common than they like to admit. Both of them are concerned with *facts*, with whether these events were true or not. But the texts as we have them are not collections of facts: they are stories. And the significance of a story lies in its meaning. Whether a story is real or not is at best secondary, and often beside the point entirely. It serves to engage an audience, provoking wonder, surprise, awe, or joy.

The Buddhist traditions understood this well, as evidenced by the textual situation. While in some cases the verses and story are tightly linked, it is very common for the same verse to be accompanied by completely different background narratives, or by no background at all. The verses, which convey the essential Dhamma teaching, the core of meaning and emotion, remain the same, while the story varies. To insist on the factuality or otherwise of the story is to miss the point. The story provides a context that brings the teaching in the verses to life for an audience.

Thus the best lens through which to see such texts is neither as history nor as propaganda but as sacred story; that is, as myth. Each of the short suttas tells a story that conveys a timeless spiritual truth in a way that spoke to the audience of that time and place. They take place within a wider mythology that helps people find their place in a vast and unknown cosmos.

As always, the early Buddhist response to the earlier religious traditions is complex and nuanced. And, while it is true that many of the details of both literary form and subject matter are drawn from the Vedas, it is in the differences that the distinctively Buddhist character of the texts shows itself.

In the Vedas, the human agents are merely the transmitters of the sacred word of the gods. Exactly how this happened is unclear, but it probably involved a combination of drugs (*soma* is one of the great Vedic deities), ritual, creative inspiration, traditional lore, devotion, and communal empowerment, all of which inspired the sacred poets to heights of ecstatic visioning through which the words of the gods manifested. But regardless of the details, the key point is that the traditions regarded the human agent in the relationship as incidental, and the real value of the texts as stemming from the divine.

In the Buddhist texts, the situation is reversed. The gods do not inspire human hosts, they speak for themselves. And they are no infallible reserves of Truth; they may be right or wrong, skillful or foolish, just like anyone else. While the magnificence



of their presence is emphasized, the ultimate effect is to show the worthlessness of such displays, for the gods are constantly being schooled by the Buddha. The most characteristic form of dialogue is where a god presents an idea that is pretty good, within in a limited, mundane (i.e. Vedic) world view, but which the Buddha elevates to an entirely new level.

It is an elementary axiom of Buddhism that the gods are not metaphysical, in the sense that they do not exist in a separate realm governed by different principles than our own. On the contrary, they are impermanent and suffering, trapped in the cycle of transmigration just like us. It follows from this that they do not have access to any special form of knowledge or wisdom. Buddhists do not look to the gods for teachings; rather, the Buddha is “teacher of gods and humans”.

I have focused on the interactions with divine beings in this collection, as these require the most contextualizing. But not all of the collections feature divine beings. Many of the *samyuttas* feature kinds of people familiar from other texts of the time. And even when divine beings are involved, in the majority of cases, the verses themselves do not require a divine setting, as there’s nothing about the gods and their divine dramas in the verses themselves.

Some of the texts in this collection are well known and widely quoted, such as the invitation of Brahmā or the nun Vajirā’s simile of the person as a chariot. Most of the suttas here have parallels in the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama translations; the partial translations SA-2 and SA-3 include Sagāthāvagga material. In addition, many of the verses have parallels elsewhere throughout the Buddhist literature in all languages.

## The Book of Causation

The Book of Causation (Nidānavagga) is the second of the five books of the Linked Discourses. It is named after the first and longest section, the Nidāna Saṃyutta. This deals with causation

through the core Buddhist teaching of dependent origination, which explains how rebirth happens without a soul. The next three *samyuttas* can be seen as appendices to the Book of Causation, dealing with the elimination of the suffering of transmigration (SN 13), various sets of conditioned elements (SN 14), and the unknowability of the extent of transmigration (SN 15). The remaining six *samyuttas* are not related thematically. Instead, they are mostly grouped by person rather than subject.

The theme of causation runs through all the Buddha's teaching. We find it in contexts such as meditation practice, societal ills, biological evolution, medicine, psychological stress, and many more. However, when we refer to dependent origination we are not speaking about a general principle of causality—although such a principle is presented at SN 12.21—but of a specific series of conditional links laying bare how suffering originates and how it ends. As such, it is an extended treatment of the second and third noble truths (SN 12.27). It integrates psychological and existential aspects of suffering, showing how, when bound by craving, we make choices that bind us to transmigrating into future lives (SN 12.38). The reason why we have not escaped the process of rebirth is that we do not understand dependent origination (SN 12.60). Thus one of the core purposes of the teaching is to explain how rebirth takes place without speaking in terms of “me” or “mine” (SN 12.37).

It is a deeply human need to want to understand how things came to be. Virtually every religious or spiritual path feels the need to offer some kind of explanation of where this world came from and what is our place in it. Such creation myths are found all over the world, and bear striking resemblances. They speak of a time when the world was formless, covered in a watery darkness, before light appeared and the world took shape. In the usual way of myths, these stories work at multiple levels, reflecting both the physical evolution of the planet (macrocosm) and the growth of an individual in the womb (microcosm).

Long before the Buddha, the Nasadiya Sukta of the R̥g Veda (10.129) told the story of creation in a radically new way. It drew upon the motifs of the classic creation myth—water, darkness, formlessness—but showed their development with a new emphasis on desire and agency. Creation evolved not from divine decree, but due to the energies found within. And we cannot know what came before this process; even the highest God came afterwards.

The Buddha shared the epistemological humility of the Nasadiya Sukta, insisting that the ultimate origin of things was unknowable (SN 15.1). Dependent origination, indeed, took things much further, entirely dispensing with both theology and mythology. However, it retained the richness and depth of the mythology, encapsulating within its sparse formulation both immediate experience and cosmic transmigration.

The Nidāna Saṃyutta begins by stating (SN 12.1) and defining (SN 12.2) each of the terms in the standard 12-linked chain, definitions which are assumed to apply throughout. Remaining discourses iterate on this theme, introducing new perspectives and formulations. These sometimes vary the standard 12 links, and so can shed light on unexpected nuances and hidden depths. Here's a summary of the definitions given for the 12 links, together with some explanatory notes.

**Ignorance (*avijjā*)** Not understanding the four noble truths. This does not, of course, mean ignorance of everyday facts and details. A Buddha or an arahant is not omniscient.

**Choices (*saṅkhārā*)** Intentional acts (*kamma*) of good or bad, which are expressed through body, speech, or mind. The Indic term *saṅkhāra* may refer to any kind of activity that generates a result. It is used in a mundane context for such things as construction work. The Vedic ritual is a *saṅkhāra*, which was intended to produce a result of benefit in this life or the next. In Buddhism, *saṅkhāra* is sometimes used in a general sense of “conditioned (and conditioning) phenomena”. In dependent origination, however, it is defined as moral choices or intentions to do good or bad (SN

12.51). A *saṅkhāra* is a force or energy in the mind that propels consciousness towards rebirth in a particular state. This may be consciously formulated as a wish or aspiration (see MN 120), but is normally unconscious, i.e. born out of ignorance.

**Consciousness (*viññāṇa*)** The six kinds of sense consciousness. In the suttas, all forms of consciousness are regarded as making up the “stream of consciousness” (*viññāṇasota*) that is established both in this life and the next (DN 28). This consciousness is empowered and directed by the choices that we have made.

**Name & form (*nāma-rūpa*)** “Name” is various mental factors (feeling, perception, attention, contact, and intention), while “form” is the four material elements that make up the body. This is a tricky concept. It stems from Upaniṣadic usage, where it refers to the various individuated entities in the world, each with their own “form” and “name”. Each of the rivers on the earth, to take a metaphor from the Prasna Upaniṣad (6.5), has its own individual shape, and is called by its own name; but when they return to the ocean they lose their names and shapes and are just known as the great ocean. The ocean in this metaphor stands for consciousness, which in the Upaniṣads is taken to be the eternal and infinite divinity of the cosmos. The Buddha directly rebuts this idea by showing that consciousness and name & form are dependent on each other. In DN 15 *The Great Discourse on Causation* (*Mahānidānasutta*), name & form is described as the embryo taking shape within the mother’s womb, while MN 38 *The Longer Discourse on the Ending of Craving* (*Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya*) speaks of how the child then grows and matures. Thus it primarily means the individual organism with its mental and physical attributes. Since *nāma-rūpa* stands in mutual dependence with consciousness, however, it is not correct to translate it as “mind & body”—mind/body dualism has no place in early Buddhism. It was only in much later Abhidhamma texts that *nāma-rūpa* came to be used as an umbrella term for all mental and physical properties, in which context the translation “mind & body” is appropriate.

**Six sense fields (*saḷāyatana*)** The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. These are treated in detail in SN 35 Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta. In dependent origination they are said to develop and evolve as the individual grows up, enabling them to experience the world in ever more sophisticated ways. This is the first of four links that, like consciousness, are six-fold following the six senses. These integrate the process of immediate sense experience within the broader context of dependent origination.

**Contact (*phassa*)** This is the operation of sense stimulus, when the six sense organs are activated and perform their function. It occurs with the coming together of the inner sense organ, the outer sense stimulus, and the corresponding consciousness. The conscious individual does not exist in isolation, but can only live and grow in an environment that provides them with stimulation.

**Feeling (*vedanā*)** The pleasant, painful, or neutral tone that accompanies all conscious experience. Certain kinds of experience are enjoyable, others are unpleasant, while some have no particular affect. Note that *vedanā* in Buddhism does not refer to feelings in the sense of “emotions”, which are far more complex. *Vedanā* is a fundamental property of all experience, and is treated in detail in SN 36 Vedana Saṃyutta.

**Craving (*taṇhā*)** Craving or desire for the six sense stimuli. Here the definition follows the theme of the six senses, rather than the definition given in the four noble truths, which is craving for future rebirth, i.e. sensual craving, craving to continue existence, and craving to end existence. In both cases, craving refers to a primal instinct that responds to sense stimulus, seeking to get more pleasure or to avoid pain.

**Grasping (*upādāna*)** Grasping at sensual pleasures, views, religious observances, and theories of self. Apart from the first factor, the kinds of grasping are more sophisticated than the primal desires of “craving”. They require the development of thought and language. This represents a further stage in the growth of a person, as they mature and become fully responsible for their actions. It is

for this reason that in Buddhism it is primarily mature humans who perform the deeds that generate rebirth and shape the course of future lives. Animals or children may indeed perform such deeds, but they are less weighty in effect.

**Continued existence (*bhava*)** Existence may be in the sensual realm (*kāma-bhava*), the realm of luminous form (*rūpa-bhava*), or the formless realm (*arūpa-bhava*). *Bhava* may be translated as “existence” or “life”. It refers to the ongoing process of existence. By grasping at various aspects of the present life, beings generate kam-mic energy in accordance with that. Most beings are attached to the sensual realm, but those who have practiced advanced meditation may become attached to the realms of luminous form (through the four absorptions) or the formless (through the formless attainments). Such attachment or grasping stimulates and activates these aspects of existence, creating a corresponding rebirth. *Bhava* is therefore like a thread that runs through the various steps of dependent origination; and indeed, the whole of dependent origination is sometimes called the *bhavacakka*, the “Wheel of Existence”. *Bhava* is a countable noun, so the older rendering as “becoming” is incorrect: you can’t speak of multiple “becomings”. Nevertheless, *bhava* has a distinctly pregnant sense. While we might long for a life of stable and eternal joy, it is the nature of existence that, even as it passes away, it contains the seeds for a new life in the future. Thus in AN 3.76 the Buddha explains *bhava* by saying that “deeds are the field, consciousness is the seed, and craving is the moisture” (*kammaṃ khettaṃ, viññāṇaṃ bījaṃ, taṇhā sneho*) for generating a new life in the future (*āyatim punabbhavābhiniḍḍatti*).

**Rebirth (*jāti*)** The rebirth or conception of the aggregates in the various orders of sentient beings. The Pali *jāti* is often translated as “birth”, but in doctrinal contexts it always refers to rebirth in the sense of reincarnation in a new life. Despite the claims of some modern commentators, the suttas never use rebirth as a psychological metaphor.

**Old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress** Old age is the breaking of teeth, wrinkling of skin, and failing of the faculties. Death is the laying down of the body at the end of life. Like rebirth, old age and death are defined in purely physical terms. Psychological suffering is covered by the other terms.

Dependent origination is core to the insight not just of the historical Buddha Gotama, but of other Buddhas of the past (SN 12.4–10). His own realization was like a person who stumbles upon an ancient city, lost and overgrown in the jungle (SN 12.65). Thus dependent origination is not an invention of the Buddha, but is a description of a natural principle, one that operates in the same way whether or not a Buddha appears (SN 12.20).

The Buddha distinguished between the phenomena that are dependently originated and the process of dependent origination (SN 12.20). While all of the dependently originated phenomena can be seen in the present, the reality of the process in the past and future must be inferred (SN 12.34).

This is the difference between knowledge of dependent origination and the psychic powers of seeing the specific details of past lives and present rebirths. Such psychic visions arise from deep immersion in meditation, and are useful but not essential for understanding and letting go. Dependent origination is not about seeing the specifics of past and future lives, but understanding the principles by which rebirth operates. If memories of past lives are like watching a show on TV, insight into dependent origination is like understanding the science and technology of how television transmission works. This is why dependent origination is always regarded as unique and central to Buddhism, while psychic visions have only a limited role to play.

This conscious body, with its complex systems of mental and physical processes, was produced due to ignorance and craving in a past life (SN 12.19). This is how our present existence came to be. So long as we continue to be trapped in craving for sensory

experience, we repeat the cycle, fueling craving and generating yet another new body that will be reborn in the future. When we understand the theory of dependent origination it gives us an opening for developing insight.

It is, of course, self evident that all the factors of dependent origination may be observed in the present. But in terms of the functioning of the process, we begin by examining the central factors, the unfolding of sense experience. Gradually we realize that the implications of what we are seeing are far deeper than the mere present. Like a scientist who, examining tree rings or ice cores, realizes that they can make reliable inferences about the deep past, we understand that the same processes that brought us here will propel us into the future. And we see that it is that very understanding which is the beginning of the end for ignorance.

Thus while this teaching is a profoundly philosophical one, it is not mere theory, but a praxis as well (SN 12.3). Its understanding unfolds as a natural consequence of developing faith in the Dhamma (SN 12.23). It is realized by one who has experiential realization of the Dhamma, commonly known as a stream-enterer (SN 12.28). This is true for both monastics (SN 12.29) and lay people (SN 12.41). This is why a noble disciple has no doubts about the meaning or origin of life: they have seen it for themselves (SN 12.49). Such an individual is independent of others and need not rely on a teacher. One need not be a perfected one (*arahant*) to understand dependent origination (SN 12.68).

The Buddha illustrates dependent origination with many similes, the imagery often drawn from ideas of fire, fuel, or food. Focusing on things that give pleasure tends to stimulate craving, like a fire fueled by dry grass (SN 12.52) or a tree drawing up sap (SN 12.58). It is in this collection that we find the now-classic simile of the mind like a monkey, although the application is somewhat unexpected (SN 12.61).

A number of suttas take up the idea of conditionality as “food” or “fuel” or “sustenance” and apply it to a set of four things: solid



food, contact, intention, and consciousness (SN 12.11). Each of these is, in turn, illustrated with similes that are as horrifying as they are unforgettable (SN 12.63).

While the standard presentation of the 12 links might give the impression that they occur one after the other, like a series of dominoes falling down, the reality is more complex. Certain factors, such as consciousness and name & form, are interdependent, relying on each other (SN 12.65) like two sheaves of reeds (SN 12.67). Sometimes a factor might be implied rather than mentioned outright (SN 12.13), sometimes the sequence is altered (SN 12.43 and SN 12.44), while elsewhere the teaching might be presented in a quite different way (SN 12.38). Conditionality in Buddhism is always understood to be complex and ramified: many causes, many effects, all interacting. The simple schema is not meant to be reductive, but to clarify crucial aspects of the process in a way that is easily memorized and understood.

Philosophically, dependent origination is said to be the “middle teaching” that avoids extreme views. Such extreme views are the polar opposites that often define philosophical positions. They include views of moral responsibility: is the person who does the deed identical with the one who experiences the result? Or is it experienced by a different person? The Buddha rejects these alternatives: the deed has an effect, and that effect is suffering (SN 12.46).

Similarly the Buddha rejects the ideas that “everything exists” or that “nothing exists” (SN 12.48). While these notions might seem odd, even bizarre, to our way of thinking, they stem from the Indian philosophical tendency to see “being” as inherent, absolute, even divine. Thus if something exists, it exists in an absolute and essential sense, and if all exists, it means the reality of the cosmos itself is absolute and eternal. If nothing “exists”, it does not mean that there is nothing real in the world; it means that things do not have any essence, and so will perish. Thus the Buddha rejects these opposing views as forms of eternalism and annihilationism, the

ideas that the self will last forever, and that the self will be destroyed (SN 12.15).

Finally, perhaps the single most important thing to remember is that dependent “origination” is only half the picture. Of equal importance is “cessation”, the ending of each of the factors, which is what is called “extinguishment” (*nibbāna*). The true purpose of studying dependent origination is not for philosophical mastery, not for winning debates or passing a course, but for realizing the ending of suffering. Dependent origination stands as a truly empowering teaching, as it assumes that human understanding is quite sufficient to comprehend the essence of existence itself, to find salvation through wisdom.

## The Book of the Aggregates

The “Book of the Aggregates” is the third of the five books of the Linked Discourses. It is named after the first and longest *samyutta*, which deals with the core Buddhist teaching of the five aggregates in 159 discourses. Of the remaining twelve *samyuttas*, three also take up the theme of the aggregates, while the remainder deal with miscellaneous secondary themes, some organized by subject, others by person.

The “five grasping aggregates” (*pañc’upādānakkhandhā*) were mentioned in the first sermon as the summary of the noble truth of suffering (SN 56.11), and became a foundational teaching in all forms of Buddhism.

The basic idea of an “aggregate” (*khandha*) is a set or class of phenomena. The “five aggregates” are the various sets of phenomena so classified.

The five aggregates are almost always said to be “grasping” aggregates. The term “grasping” (*upādāna*) has a complex and multi-layered relation to the basic term.

- The aggregates are the *subject* of grasping, in that they are the things that are normally attached to and taken to be the permanent “self”.
- But they are not merely passive spectators: they are also the *functional support* of grasping, the things that make grasping work. This is probably the basic metaphor of the set, as the five aggregates correspond to the five fingers of a hand, which perform the act of grasping. Grasping is itself something that the aggregates do. In this metaphor, the “thumb” is consciousness, which stands against the other four.
- As active participants in the process of grasping, they *stimulate* grasping to themselves (*upādāniya*).
- And finally, they are the *product* of grasping in the sense that attachments in past lives have given rise to the aggregates in this life (*upādīṇṇa*).

Here is a brief analysis of each of the five.

**Form (*rūpa*)** “Physical phenomena”, or sometimes simply “body”, understood as consisting of the four primary physical properties: earth (solid), water (liquidity), fire (heat), and air (gas), and anything material derived from these, such as the impressions of the five material senses. *Rūpa* is more extensive in scope than the Western concept of “matter”. It includes material properties that are perceived purely in the mind, such as shape or color seen as visions in meditation.

**Feeling (*vedanā*)** The pleasant, painful, or neutral tone of experience born from the six senses.

**Perception (*saññā*)** The recognition or interpretation of experience through the six senses. Perception refers to that function of the mind which organizes the dizzyingly complex and chaotic input of present experience based on past experience. The eye, for example, does not see “blue” or “yellow”, it only sees light in various frequencies and amplitudes. Perception recognizes that these inputs correspond to the concept “blue” or “yellow” (SN

22.79), and so it enables us to live in a world of (relatively) permanent and predictable entities and ideas. While perception thus makes consciousness possible, it also can trap us into seeing things only in terms of the past. In the legal discussions of the Vinaya, it is common to discuss cases where a mendicant's actions are based on a perception that turns out to be incorrect.

**Choices (*saṅkhārā*)** Intention, will, or volition (*cetanā*); the choice to perform an act, especially one with an ethical dimension. It is choices that create the five aggregates (SN 22.79). Later forms of Buddhism, starting with the Abhidhamma texts, treated this aggregate as if it were a catch-all, whose purpose was to include everything not mentioned under the other aggregates. However this is not the case in the early texts, where there is no indication that *saṅkhārā* in this context means anything other than “volition, choice”.

**Consciousness (*viññāṇa*)** The subjective process of awareness itself. As in dependent origination, consciousness is said to depend on name & form.

With the exception of perception, all of these are also found in dependent origination, where they have similar definitions. Whereas dependent origination shows the unfolding of the process of suffering in time, the teaching on the aggregates focuses on those aspects of present experience that are most apt to be taken as a self. In SN 22.5 the grasping to the aggregates is shown as the very same grasping that leads to rebirth as shown in dependent origination. SN 22.54 furthers this argument, asserting that it is impossible to speak of rebirth without referring to the aggregates.

From the very first teaching of the Buddha (SN 56.11) we learn that the aggregates are suffering. In the second sermon—the Discourse on Not-Self (Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta) at SN 22.59—this brief statement is drawn out in a further dialogue with the group of five ascetics. Each of the aggregates leads to affliction and one cannot simply decree that the aggregates be whatever one wants; hence they cannot be a self. Further, each of the aggregates is

impermanent and therefore suffering, which again rules out the possibility that they are a self. Seeing in this way, a practitioner lets go of attachment to the aggregates and realizes freedom. It was while listening to this discourse that the five ascetics all became perfected ones.

While the doctrine of the “three marks” is found throughout all Buddhist texts, it is here in the Khandha Saṃyutta that it rises to prominence. Here is a brief outline.

**Impermanence (*anicca*)** All conditioned phenomena are produced and maintained by causes and hence can only last so long as the causes sustain them. Impermanence is a fractal phenomena; it is how reality is structured at every level. It applies equally to the grandest scale of universes and the lifespans of the gods as it does to the incessant breaking up and vanishing of conditions from moment to moment. But in the five aggregates the main focus is on the scale of human existence, where the emotional impact of impermanence is felt most keenly in death.

**Suffering (*dukkha*)** At its simplest level this refers to painful feelings, whether physical or mental (*dukkha-dukkhatā*). By itself this is a profound observation, as virtually every moment of our waking lives is afflicted by some form of pain or irritation. But suffering runs deeper than that, for even when we do experience pleasure, it cannot be sustained. The second bite of a mango is delicious—but not quite as delicious as the first (*vipariṇāma-dukkhatā*). Finally, even the most profound of pleasures, such as the bliss of deep meditation, is never as peaceful as *nibbāna*, since by its nature it is conditioned and unstable (*saṅkhāradukkhatā*). No experience is as peaceful as cessation.

**Not-self (*anattā*)** The most subtle and distinctive of the three marks, not-self is the most apt to be misunderstood. It is primarily an anti-metaphysical doctrine, not a psychological one. It is intended to rule out the various kinds of self or soul proposed by the philosophers at the time of the Buddha. It does this by pointing out that all the self doctrines end up identifying one or other of the

aggregates as self; but they do not have the nature that the self is supposed to have. This meaning is quite different from the modern psychological notion of self, and it is inappropriate, and potentially harmful, to apply the teaching of not-self in cases where a person is suffering from a disorder of identity.

Let us dwell a little further on the idea of self and not-self, which is best understood in its historical context. From a few centuries before the Buddha, Indian sages and philosophers had become fascinated by the subjective nature of experience. They wondered who it was, in the true and ultimate sense, that was the one referred to as “I”.

Initial theories built on simple animist notions, imaging the self as an external physical totem, or even as a little man who lived in the chest. Others theorized that the self was the heart, or the breath, or some other physical attribute. But all of these may be refuted by simple empirical observation. Sometimes a totem may be destroyed, yet a person lives. When you watch a person who is asleep, no little man may be observed leaving by the mouth. And when a trumpeter expels all their breath, they do not drop down dead.

So what then is this self if not something material? Perhaps, rather, it is feeling, the bliss experienced by one who goes to a beautiful realm after death. But this cannot be so, for feeling, too, is impermanent (DN 15). Then could the self be perception (DN 1)? But no, perception too is tricky and unreliable, like an illusion. Is self then one’s choices? A man, after all, is defined by the decisions he makes. But these too are seen to be impermanent and unreliable; oft-times one makes bad choices, or the results of a choice are not what one hopes.

Unsatisfied, the sages of the Upaniṣads rejected all such limited conceptions of the Self (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.9.26: *neti! neti!*). They arrived at their most profound thesis: the self in its highest sense was awareness itself, the sheer mass of consciousness (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.12: *vijnāna-ghanam’eva*). The true

nature of the self is the supreme divinity (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10: *aham brahmāsmīti*; cp. DN 1:2, DN 11:81, DN 24:2: *ahamasmi brahmā*). This insight is expressed in the Upaniṣads as the famous “thou art that” (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7: *tat tvam asi*), and the Pali texts as “I am that” (SN 22.8: *eso hamasmi*). “That” may be anything one identifies as self. But to one who understands rightly (*ya evaṃ veda*) the divine self is nothing less than the entirety of the universe: “the self is identical with the cosmos” (SN 22.81: *so attā so loko*, cp. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.2.7: *tasyeme lokā ātmānaḥ*, 4.5.7: *idaṃ brahmedaṃ kṣatram ime lokā ime devā ime vedā imāni bhūtānīdaṃ sarvaṃ yad ayam ātmā*). This philosophy is most closely associated with Yajñavalkya, a brahmanical sage who lived in the same region as the Buddha (Mithila), perhaps a century or two earlier.

While the exact form of these arguments may seem archaic, we still cling to the aggregates in similar ways. We think of our possessions and belongings—homes, clothes, cars—as expressions of our self, and are upset when they are damaged or criticized. We attach, too, to our physical bodies, reveling in health, or imagining that we will survive through the propagation of our DNA. We attach to pleasure, thinking that happiness will last. We attach to our perceptions, such as our sense of belonging to a nation or religion, or our idea of ourselves as a good person. We attach to our choices, taking pride in our ability to make decisions. Finally, we attach to our consciousness, especially as we purify awareness in meditation.

Thus one of the key functions of the aggregates was to categorize theories of the self, moving from simple to profound. This seems to have been familiar to philosophers before the Buddha. The aggregates are mentioned in passing in the first sermon, as if it is taken for granted that the five ascetics would know them. Many of the sectarian views of self in DN 1 Brahmajala Sutta refer to the aggregates in one way or another. And elsewhere, the non-Buddhist ascetic Saccaka asserted that the five aggregates were the self (MN

35). Nevertheless, the aggregates have not been identified in any pre-Buddhist texts.

Regardless of whether the set of categories was pre-Buddhist, the Buddha treated them in his own distinctive way, emphasizing that when examined, the aggregates turn out to lack the qualities of permanence, surety, and refuge that are intrinsic to the idea of a true self. But our grasping and identification are strong and have been built up over a long time, so it is not enough to merely acknowledge this on an intellectual level. Hence in the Khandha Saṃyutta we find the core teachings emphasized again and again. The Buddha constantly reminds the mendicants that the aggregates lead to sorrow and despair (SN 22.7), that they are aggravating (SN 22.79), that desire for them must be given up (SN 22.137), that they are alien (SN 22.33). One who identifies with the aggregates is like a man who hires an assassin as a servant (SN 22.85). They are suffering in the past and future just as they are today (SN 22.10).

The view that the aggregates are self is called “identity view” (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*). It is possible to identify with any or all of the aggregates in a myriad of ways, commonly set out as twenty forms of identity view (SN 22.1, etc.). Identity view leashes an unenlightened person to transmigration like a dog tied to a post, pointlessly running around and around (SN 22.99).

Several discourses emphasize that in order to understand the aggregates it is essential to develop the deep stillness of immersion meditation (SN 22.5, SN 22.6). But meditative realization is not something that just happens automatically; one must continually contemplate and observe the aggregates (SN 22.40, etc.).

In this collection we find a large number of striking and lively narratives, showing how the aggregates could be a solace at the time of old age (SN 22.1), a guide to the knotty theoretical debates on identity, or a framework for insight meditation.



## The Book of the Six Sense Fields

The “Book of the Six Sense Fields” is the fourth of the five books of the Linked Discourses. It is named after the first and longest *samyutta*. The second *samyutta* on Feelings also deals with a major doctrinal topic, one that is closely related to the main theme. The remaining eight *samyuttas* deal with secondary themes organized by subject or by person.

The number of discourses in the “Linked Discourses on the Six Sense Fields” varies between editions, mainly due to the way repetitions are counted; SuttaCentral follows Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation in counting 248 discourses; see his introduction to this chapter for a discussion of the problems in counting the Suttas of this collection. They are collected in four *pañṇasakas*.

This *samyutta* has an especially close relationship with the “Linked Discourses on the Aggregates”, one that goes far beyond the apparent thematic similarities. In fact, many of the discourses in the two collections are constructed on virtually identical lines. Bhikkhu Bodhi explores these connections with his notion of “template parallels”, which are found throughout the *Samyutta Nikāya*, but especially with these two sections.

The six sense fields complement the five aggregates as the summary of the noble truth of suffering. Where the aggregates focus on the functional structure of experience as basis for views of self, the emphasis here is on how sense experience stimulates desire.

The six sense fields are the means through which the world is known, and so each of them has two aspects. The “inner” aspect is the sense organs, for example the “eye” or the “ear”, which make it possible for an organism to experience the outside world by receiving sense stimuli. These are paired with the external sense stimuli, such as “sights” or “sounds”, which impact the sense organ (contact, *phassa*) and give rise to the appropriate form of consciousness.

It’s best to avoid thinking of the external sense fields as “objects”, since in the suttas they are depicted in relation to the observing mind, and not as independently existing entities. There is no word

for “object” in this sense in the early texts: existence is not objective, it is relational. The term *ārammaṇa*, which came to be used in this sense much later in the Abhidhamma, means “support” in the suttas.

The operation of the senses is relatively straightforward until we come to the last sense, the “mind” and “thoughts” or “mental phenomena”. To clear up a possible confusion, this “sixth sense” is simply the mental faculty and has nothing to do with psychic powers. And unlike the five external senses, the “inner” sense field is not a physical organ: *mano* does not mean “brain”.

The exact meaning of “mind” (*mano*) in this context is not spelled out in detail, so let us consider this first. The suttas use three main terms for the mind: *mano*, *citta*, and *viññāṇa*. In general these are synonyms and it is not possible to draw hard and fast distinctions between them (AN 3.60, DN 1:2, SN 12.61). Nevertheless, they tend to be used in different contexts, each with a distinct nuance. These contexts can be understood in terms of the four noble truths; thus the different terms refer to the same thing, but imply a different aspect or response to that thing.

**Viññāṇa** In doctrinal contexts this is awareness itself, the sheer knowing of things. It appears in this sense in dependent origination, the aggregates, and the sense fields. Hence it pertains to the first noble truth, the suffering of the world, and it needs to be fully understood. In colloquial usage, however, it can take on a variety of shades of meaning, such as “understanding”.

**Mano** The mind in action, one of the three spheres of *kamma*, a sense it inherits from the Upaniṣads. It is that which creates results, as in the famous first line of the Dhammapada: *mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā*, “mind is the forerunner of all things”. It is particularly used in ethical contexts, the performance of mental acts that bear fruit of either good or bad. So it may be understood as primarily relating to the second and third noble truths, the origination and ending of suffering.

**Citta** The most general, and the least tightly bound to a particular technical sense. It is used widely as “mind”, “thought”, “heart”, etc. But when found in technical contexts it refers to *samādhi*, to the purified awareness of deep meditative immersion. For this reason it is specially used in contexts relating to the path, the fourth noble truth.

In the six senses, *mano* is clearly not identical with the “knowing” (*viññāṇa*), as it gives rise to it. Nor is it the “known”, the phenomena of which the mind is aware, for that is *dhammā*. Nor is it the turning towards or paying attention to the thing known, as is revealed in MN 28 *The Longer Simile of the Elephant’s Footprint* (*Mahāhatthipadopamasutta*):

Though the mind is intact internally, so long as exterior thoughts don’t come into range and there’s no corresponding attention, there’s no manifestation of the corresponding type of consciousness.

This passage suggests that, like the physical sense organs, *mano* in some way pre-exists the actual moment of conscious awareness. This does not mean that it is some mystical substrata of consciousness, for as we have seen *mano* is consistently used in the sense of the mind that performs acts, especially those with a moral dimension. So the *mano* is that which has performed deeds in the past, fueling an ongoing mental continuum within which the results of those deeds may be experienced in the present. It is the mental faculty that bears the potential for conscious experience, created and conditioned by choices made in the past.

The “outer” aspect of the sixth sense is *dhammā*, a term so ambiguous its translation is always difficult. Here it refers to anything that may be known directly by the mind, distinct from the five physical senses. The most technically correct translation is probably “mental phenomena”. However, this is clumsy and opaque, so “thought” may be used as a more colloquial rendering, so long as

it is understood to include ideas, imagination, and so on, not just verbalized cognition.

The term *āyatana* refers to something “stretched out”, a domain, field, or dimension of activity. However, the Visuddhimagga suggests that the sense of the word is primarily a “cause”, or perhaps “stimulus”:

... base (*āyatana*) should be understood as such (a) because of its actuating (*āyatana*), (b) because of being the range (*tanana*) of the origins (*āya*), and (c) because of leading on (*nayana*) what is actuated (*āyata*). *Path of Purification*, XV.4, translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoḷi.

Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoḷi rendered the term accordingly as “base”, which has been followed by Bhikkhu Bodhi. But this commentarial explanation is merely a series of false etymologies, or rather, puns. The point of such explanations is to provide material for teachers to reflect on and use in teaching, and they shouldn’t be taken uncritically. In fact the verbal root is not the obscure *āyatati* (“to actuate”) but *āyamati*, “to stretch, to extend”. *Āyatana* is commonly used in this sense, and may be translated “field”, “dimension”, etc.

As so often, the context draws upon and redefines brahmanical terminology. The “six sense fields” (*saḷāyatana*) were first mentioned in the Buddha’s third teaching, the famous Fire Discourse (*Ādittapariyāya Sutta*) which appears in this collection at SN 35.28. This sermon was given to a large assembly of brahmanical ascetics, following a period when the Buddha stayed in their “fire house”, a kind of shrine room for worshiping the sacred flame. And in Sanskrit, this place is called an *āyatana*. The Upaniṣads also call the senses *āyatana* in the sense of fields or scopes of activity and experience (eg. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.1.4: *cakṣur evāyatanaṁ*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 6.1.5: *mano vā āyatanaṁ*; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 5.1.5: *mano ha vā āyatanaṁ*).

When the Buddha told those ascetics that “all is burning”, he was not giving an Abhidhamma analysis, for it was many centuries

before Abhidhamma was developed. He was speaking in terms that the brahmins could understand.

One of the key projects of the brahmanical Upaniṣads was to reinterpret the deities of the Vedas. Rather than thinking of them as entities who lived in the sky, they became forces or essences that imbued all of reality. So for the brahmin ascetics, the flame (*agni*) was worshiped as the embodiment of a sacred energy that was imminent in all things.

The teachings of the Fire Sermon respond to several key Upaniṣadic passages. In Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.3, it is told how evil entered into the world by the actions of the demons (*asuras*). While the gods (*devas*) were performing the ritual, they entered into the various senses and corrupted them, tainting them with evil and death. Hence when suffering is experienced through the senses, this is the reason. But those same senses can be freed from this corruption by being carried beyond death.

These purified, divine senses are further described at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.5.1, the famous “Honey-Knowledge”, regarded as one of the highest and most secret teachings. It presents a template, applied to various different kinds of things. These are not organized so rationally as the Buddhist doctrines, but include quite different kinds of things in the same set, such as the elements, truth, the sun, etc. Nevertheless, the parallels with the teachings of the six senses are quite apparent.

*ayam ādityaḥ sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ madhu*

This sun is the honey of all beings.

*asyādityasya sarvāṇi bhūtāni madhu*

All beings are the honey of the sun.

*yaś cāyam asminn āditye tejomayo 'mṛtamayaḥ puruṣo yaś cāyam  
adhyātmaṃ cākṣuṣas tejomayo 'mṛtamayaḥ puruṣo 'yam eva sa yo  
'yam ātmā*

This person in the sun made of fire and immortality, and this person in the internal eye made of fire and immortality: this is that—that which is the self.

*idam amṛtam idaṃ brahmedaṃ sarvam*

This is the immortal, this is the divine, this is the all.  
(Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.5.5, translation by myself.)

The Brahmanical view is that all creation stems from Brahmā and hence is, in its truest essence, overflowing with divinity and bliss—honey. Any suffering is merely a temporary imperfection.

This is how they handled the great challenge to any theistic system, the problem of evil. For the brahmins, to focus on suffering is to miss the point. This is not merely a facile “positive thinking” doctrine, it is a profoundly contemplative philosophy, worked out in great detail across many complex sacred texts, and informed by deep meditative practice. It does not deny the reality of suffering, but it evokes a deeper reality where suffering cannot reach.

Rather than tackling the textual and philosophical issues, the Buddha preferred to point directly at experience. Divested of theology, the experience of our senses is not “honey” but “fire”. And while our philosophy may say that fire is sacred, the reality is that it burns. The Buddha was showing the ascetics that there is no need to invoke deities and metaphysics in order to understand their experience: they could see how it worked right here.

The forces lighting that fire can be readily discerned: greed, hate, and delusion. This classic Buddhist presentation of the fundamental defilements appears first in this passage. It is correlated with the three feelings: pleasant feeling stimulates desire; painful feeling provokes hate; and neutral feeling slips into delusion (MN 44:25, MN 128:28, SN 36.3).

The Fire Sermon, in its brevity, foreshadows several distinctive features of the teachings on the six senses as compared to the five aggregates. It is direct, emotional and powerful, speaking of the world that is burning, in contrast with the more intellectual approach of the aggregates.

By invoking the idea of the “all”, the Fire Sermon suggests that the scope of the six senses includes all that is experienced and known. This idea was expanded in multiple Suttas (SN 35.33–52). By contrast, no such claim to completeness is made of the aggregates.

And the text treats sense experience as a conditioned process, the immediately visible dimension of dependent origination.

Since the sense fields make experience possible, it is through them that suffering comes to be (SN 35.106). It is in order to understand this suffering that one undertakes the spiritual path (SN 35.81, SN 35.152). The sense fields are, in fact, the world (*loka*) that wears away (*lujjati*; SN 35.82, SN 35.84), for “whatever in the world through which you perceive the world and conceive the world is called the world in the training of the noble one” (SN 35.116). This world is empty of self (SN 35.85).

Since the sense fields are produced by choices made in past lives, they are said to be “old kamma”; in this they contrast with the aggregates, for they include “choices”, which are the kamma made in the present. Having inherited the senses as the result of past deeds, however, we proceed to respond to them through thinking or conceiving of them in terms of a “self”, a process known in Pali as “identifying” (*maññita*; SN 35.146, SN 35.30–32, SN 35.90–91, SN 35.248).

“Conceiving” and the closely related “conceit” (*māna*) refer to the tendency of the mind to shape experience in terms of the self. Much of our thought is devoted to justifying, explaining, and interpreting our experience in ways that reinforce our notion of self. This can end up spinning out of control, in which case it is called “proliferation” (*papañca*). To cut through this process the Buddha urges us to stop short with sense experience (SN 35.94, SN 35.95).

It is significant that, while the texts repeatedly speak of how the aggregates form the basis for theories of self (*sakkāya*), the same is *not* said of the sense fields. If the aggregates provoke grasping to theories, the sense fields provoke grasping at *pleasure*, at the sheer vitality of sensory experience. Thus while the teachings on the aggregates emphasize *views*, here the focus shifts to *restraint*. A standard passage on sense restraint, familiar from the Gradual Training, speaks of preventing harmful qualities from invading the

mind in the midst of sense experience (SN 35.120, SN 35.127, SN 35.239, SN 35.240). A person who chases the pleasure afforded by the senses is no less trapped by the pain they bring, and it is only by setting up mindfulness that one can achieve peace (SN 35.132, SN 35.243–244, SN 35.247).

In this way, by choosing the sense fields as a locus of practice one cuts directly at the roots of craving. This is emphasized in the final two *vaggas*, which are especially rich in unforgettable imagery. The senses are an ocean traversed during the spiritual journey (SN 35.228). We'd be better off being tortured by hot poker than being caught up in sense experience (SN 35.235). If you wish to train in meditation, you must learn to withdraw the senses like a tortoise drawing in its limbs, becoming safe from predators (SN 35.240). Pleasant experiences are the bait of Māra (SN 35.230). The six senses are like six very different animals, all tied together, and fighting to get to their own territory (SN 35.247).

## The Great Book

The “Great Book” is the last and largest of the five books of the Linked Discourses. It consists of twelve *samyuttas*, almost all of which deal with an aspect of Buddhist practice, or the path. The first of these, indeed, is the “Section on the Path” (*Magga Samyutta*), and in the northern canons the book as a whole is referred to as the “Book of the Path” (*Maggavagga*).

The first seven *samyuttas* offer a detailed treatment of seven sets of factors on Buddhist practice. These sets came to be known to the later traditions as the 37 *bodhipakkhiyā dhammā*, or “qualities leading to awakening”. Note that this term is not used in this way in the suttas; it is, rather, applied to one of the sets, the five faculties (SN 48.55, etc.). While the 37 factors are mentioned throughout the canon, it is in this book that we find the primary source for these teachings. Subsequent *samyuttas* deal with the path from



different perspectives, while the final two deal with stream-entry and the four noble truths respectively.

While most books of the Sāmyutta are dominated by one major collection, the Great Book features several *sāmyuttas* of comparable importance. For this reason I will briefly discuss most of the substantive *sāmyuttas*. I leave aside those that are merely sets of template repetitions, and also the final two *sāmyuttas* on stream entry and the truths, as I have covered these topics elsewhere. I preface the discussion of the individual *sāmyuttas* with a general discussion of the “qualities leading to awakening”.

The *sāmyuttas* in the Great Book display considerable complexity in their structure and use of repetitions. But for fear of overburdening the discussion, I refer anyone interested to the relevant sections of Ven Bodhi’s *Connected Discourses*.

## The 37 Qualities Leading to Awakening

For the early Buddhist texts, the primary concern was the spiritual practice that leads to the escape from suffering. This is the fourth noble truth. From the very first discourse, this was spelled out by a specific set of factors comprising the path to awakening: the noble eightfold path. During the course of his long teaching career, the Buddha presented this path in many different ways, formally or informally, briefly or in detail, emphasizing different aspects to suit the occasion or the person.

Before his death, it seems, the Buddha had begun to systematize these various presentations, putting together seven sets of qualities pertaining to the path, totaling 37 factors. Each set presented the path to liberation from a slightly different perspective.

The seven primary *sāmyuttas* of the Mahāvagga contain the same teachings, albeit in a different sequence. The Mahāvagga begins with the noble eightfold path, due to its prestige and importance as *the* teaching on the path. But when presented elsewhere in the suttas we find the sets arranged numerically.

- Four kinds of mindfulness meditation. The observation of:

1. body
  2. feelings
  3. mind
  4. principles
- Four right efforts:
    1. to prevent the bad
    2. to give up the bad
    3. to give rise to the good
    4. to maintain and grow the good
  - Four bases of psychic power:
    1. enthusiasm
    2. energy
    3. mind
    4. inquiry
  - Five faculties:
    1. faith
    2. energy
    3. mindfulness
    4. immersion
    5. wisdom
  - Five powers:
    1. faith
    2. energy
    3. mindfulness
    4. immersion
    5. wisdom
  - Seven factors of awakening:
    1. mindfulness
    2. investigation of principles
    3. energy
    4. rapture

- 5. tranquility
- 6. immersion
- 7. equanimity
- Noble eightfold path:
  - 1. right view
  - 2. right thought
  - 3. right speech
  - 4. right action
  - 5. right livelihood
  - 6. right effort
  - 7. right mindfulness
  - 8. right immersion

A cursory glance at the Pali texts shows how influential and widespread this set of 37 qualities was. It appears in each of the four *nikāyas* (DN 28, DN 29, DN 16, MN 103, MN 104, SN 22.81, SN 22.101, SN 43.12, AN 8.19) as well as the *Udāna* (Ud 5.5). It is one of the few doctrinal teachings to be mentioned several times in the *Vinaya* (Pj 4, Pc 8, Kd 19). It occurs constantly in the late canonical texts of the *Khuddaka* (Ne 8, Cnd 12, Cnd 15, Cnd 20, Cnd 22, Mnd 6, Mnd 7, Mnd 14, Mnd 16, Ps 1.5, Ps 2.8, Ps 2.9, Mil 3.1.13, Mil 6.4.1, Mil 6.4.2, etc.) as well as the *Abhidhamma* (Vb 17, Dt 1.2, Dt 2.1, Dt 2.6, Kv 4.3, Kv 12.5, Kv 14.9, Kv 15.6, Kv 21.1, Kv 21.5, etc.).

But its influence was not to stop there, for it remained a central doctrinal principle in later forms of Buddhism. In the *Mahāyāna*, for example, the same 37 qualities came to be known as the “37 practices of the Bodhisattva”.

The Buddha declared that these teachings emerged from his own direct knowledge. Clearly they are factors of practice, to be developed and experienced by those on the spiritual journey. However, from their earliest appearances, they were also treated as teachings to be learned, memorized, and recited. From DN 29:

You should all come together and recite in concert, without disputing, those things I have taught you from my direct knowledge, comparing meaning with meaning and phrasing with phrasing, so that this spiritual path may last for a long time.

Such passages place the 37 factors at the heart of the Buddha's scriptural legacy. But what, exactly, was to be recited? Surely such a momentous teaching must have entailed something more than simply listing the factors. There must have been an agreed upon body of texts, a canon of scripture recited in unity by the early community. And what could that have been if not these very teachings, the collected discourses on the factors of the path found today in the Mahāvagga? This is not to deny that expansion and elaboration of these has occurred, but the core teachings of the Mahāvagga were, in all probability, the heart of the scriptures for the earliest Buddhists.

Certain of the sets focus on a specific area, such as mindfulness or effort, while others have a more overall view, such as the noble eightfold path. Nevertheless, they are deeply interconnected, with the same factors recurring in multiple sets. Overall, they strongly emphasize meditation, although other dimensions of spiritual practice, such as ethics and study, are also found. Here is a brief overview of the general distinctions in perspective between the groups. Note that the first three sets loosely correspond to the final three factors of the noble eightfold path: right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

**Four kinds of mindfulness meditation** The practice of undertaking meditation leading to serenity and insight.

**Four right efforts** The putting forth of effort in mental cultivation.

**Four bases of psychic power** Development of deep immersion leading to various extraordinary abilities.

**Five faculties** The mental qualities that lead to liberation, and which characterize the mind of one on the path.

**Five powers** The same as the faculties.

**Seven factors of awakening** Retention and investigation of teachings lead to the progressive deepening of the emotional qualities that ripen in liberation.

**Noble eightfold path** The broadest in scope of the sets and the only one to explicitly mention ethics.

As is common in the suttas, these sets sometimes refer to similar qualities with different terms. The quality of wisdom, for example, is called “observation of principles” (*dhāmānupassanā*) as the fourth kind of mindfulness meditation, “inquiry” (*vīmaṃsa*) in the bases for psychic power, “wisdom” (*paññā*) in the faculties and powers, “investigation of principles” (*dharmavicaya*) in the factors of awakening, and “right view” (*sammāditṭhi*) in the noble eightfold path. The relations between all these terms are analyzed in detail in the Abhidhamma and commentarial texts.

Bear in mind, though, that each context has its own integrity, its own specific purpose and orientation, and the choice of different terms is by no means arbitrary. “Right view”, being placed at the *start* of the path, emphasizes the theoretical understanding gained by hearing the teaching. “Investigation of principles”, similarly located near the beginning, refers to the reflection and inquiry into these teachings as realized in oneself. “Observation of principles” and “inquiry” occur after the development of deep stillness in absorption meditation, and refer to the inquiry and investigation into the nature of that experience, and the meditative processes and conditions that shape such profound experiences. And “wisdom”, the culmination of all these, is the realization of the four noble truths, the liberating insight of the stream-enterer. So when considered on its own, as a distinct mental factor, they can be regarded as synonyms. But their true depth is realized only by understanding the role they play in their context.

When surveying these teachings and reflecting on them as a spiritual path, there is something rather odd about them. They appear quite different from the practices that one normally considers to be “religious”. Where are the rituals? The sacrifice? The

devotion to deity? The allegiance to an institution? The symbols, rites, and mythology? These things are starkly, dramatically absent. To be sure, some such things may be found, in one form or another, elsewhere in the canon, and more so in later Buddhist traditions. But here, in the teachings regarded by the Buddha himself as his core message and practice, we find only balanced and reasoned development of the behavior, emotions, and intellect. It is an integrated and rational path, one that does not depend on cultural or historical specifics, but on universal human qualities. The factors that lead to awakening, all 37 of them, are things that every human may find within themselves. In pointing to these qualities, the Buddha was pointing to the spiritual potential of all beings, and offering us the means to grow and develop the best parts of ourselves.

## SN 45: Linked Discourses on the Path

The noble eightfold path was famously declared to be the “middle way” in the Buddha’s very first teaching (SN 56.11). It covers the entire spiritual path (SN 45.6, SN 45.19, SN 45.20), beginning with the acquisition of right view as the starting point (SN 45.1), and leading to deep meditative immersion as the immediate precursor to the realization of the four noble truths.

The noble eightfold path is said to be a “divine vehicle” which carries us to awakening, its factors compared to the parts of a chariot (SN 45.4). Practicing it leads to the end of suffering (SN 45.5), but only if it begins with right view, else it will lead to harming oneself (SN 45.9).

The factors are defined at SN 45.8, as well as several other places in the canon.

**Right view** (*sammādiṭṭhi*) Understanding the four noble truths.

**Right thought** (*sammāsaṅkappa*) Thoughts of letting go, love, and kindness.

**Right speech** (*sammāvācā*) Speech that is true, harmonious, gentle, and meaningful.

**Right action (*sammākamanta*)** Avoiding killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct.

**Right livelihood (*sammāājīva*)** Avoiding harmful livelihood.

**Right effort (*sammāvāyāma*)** The four right efforts.

**Right mindfulness (*sammāsati*)** The four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

**Right immersion (*sammāsamādhi*)** The four absorptions.

The eight factors have a clear progressive aspect, as made clear from the beginning of this collection (SN 45.1). They follow the same general course that is spelled out in detail in the Gradual Training, though with less emphasis on the monastic life, as both renunciates and lay folk should practice them (SN 45.24). One hears the teaching and gains an initial understanding (right view). Then one determines to live in accordance with this (right thought), undertaking the essentials of ethical conduct in speech (right speech) and body (right action), and ensuring that one does not earn money in a manner that causes harm (right livelihood). With this foundation one makes an effort to purify the mind (right effort), undertaking meditation (right mindfulness) leading to deep absorption (right immersion) (SN 45.28).

When all these factors have been fulfilled, the mind is ready to make the breakthrough to the realization of the four noble truths. In this way the understanding of four noble truths, beginning as a concept accepted on faith, gradually deepens throughout the spiritual journey, nourished by experience and reflection. Right view guides us on each step of the path, learning from mistakes, revealing our hidden motivations, and uncovering unexpected possibilities. Ultimately it transforms into the liberating insight of the noble ones (SN 45.13, SN 45.35, etc.). The key to this transformation is the brilliant clarity and stillness of meditative absorption, a higher consciousness that sees further and deeper than ever before, and which has the power to completely eradicate greed, hate, and delusion (SN 45.36, etc.).

Nevertheless, despite this progression, it is obviously not the case that the factors are to be undertaken in a literal one-at-a-time fashion. The “path” is only a metaphor, and in real life spiritual development is more complex.

The factors of the path are best seen as providing a framework for reflecting on and if necessary changing one’s own life and practice. Each of these factors is essential, and if you find yourself missing out on higher factors, try asking whether you’ve put enough work into the basics. Sometimes people seem enthusiastic to get to the higher states of consciousness, without laying the broad and secure foundations offered by the simpler factors of the path. If developing deep meditation is proving difficult, then the answer is not to try to force it to ripen quicker, nor, worse, to explain it away as being somehow unnecessary. Rather, pay closer attention to improving right view through study and discussion of Dhamma; to developing right thought by becoming more generous and open-hearted; or to being more careful in one’s ethical and business conduct (SN 45.50–54).

And remember, this path is not walked alone. For all the emphasis on solitary meditation, this *samyutta* reminds us that good friendship is the whole of the spiritual life (SN 45.2, SN 45.3), for good friendship precedes the noble eightfold path (SN 45.49).

## SN 46: Linked Discourses on the Awakening Factors

These seven factors are called the “awakening factors” (*bojjaṅga*, i.e. *bodhi* + *aṅga*) because they lead to awakening (SN 46.5, SN 46.21). Of themselves, they focus on the psychology of contemplation, but the *samyutta* makes it clear from the start that, like all presentations of the path, they rest on ethics (SN 46.1).

Unlike the factors of the path, there is no explicit definition. Nevertheless, we should of course interpret these factors in the same way as they occur in the eightfold path and elsewhere. However, there are some new factors, as well as a few places that offer a



new perspective on some familiar factors. Most of the following details come from SN 46.52.

**Mindfulness (*sati*)** Includes both the recollection of teachings (SN 46.3) as well as mindful awareness of phenomena internal and external.

**Investigation of principles (*dhammavicaya*)** Includes both reflection and investigation of the teachings (SN 46.3) as well as investigation into phenomena internal and external.

**Energy (*virīya*)** Both mental and physical.

**Rapture (*pīti*)** This is the experience of uplifting joy that emerges as the mind becomes peaceful in meditation. It includes the rapture of the first and second absorptions.

**Tranquility (*passadhi*)** Both physical and mental

**Immersion (*samādhī*)** The absorptions.

**Equanimity (*upekkhā*)** This may be both the equanimity of the higher states of immersion as well as that of deep insight.

One detail of the preceding probably needs further explanation; that is, the idea that mindfulness includes recollection of the teachings. Mindfulness is defined throughout the suttas as the ability to recollect things that were said and done long ago (DN 33, DN 34, MN 53, SN 48.9, SN 48.50, AN 4.35, AN 8.13, AN 10.17, etc.). The root meaning of the word *sati* is in fact “memory” and in the Brahmanical traditions it refers to the memorized scriptures. But of course today we understand mindfulness as “clear awareness” of phenomena in the present.

This *samīyutta* offers a clue that helps resolve these two senses. In SN 46.56, a brahmin asks the Buddha why he can sometimes remember his chanting and sometimes cannot. The Buddha explains that the presence of the hindrances obscures his memory, giving an elaborate series of similes comparing water in various states with the various hindrances. How, we might wonder, does a reciter of oral texts achieve this? *By maintaining continued and clear focus during the act of recitation.* When the mind wanders and gets

distracted, the recitation is lost. *Sati* does not mean the unstructured memories that happen to come to mind, but the steady flow and continuity of consciously focused awareness. And in this way the act of recollecting scriptures suddenly seems a lot like keeping attention on ones' meditation.

The factors are sequential, with each serving as condition or fuel for the next (SN 46.3). Multiple suttas stress this aspect of conditionality. Each of the awakening factors is nourished by a specific kind of fuel (SN 46.51). The set as a whole emerges from the practice of the four kinds of mindfulness meditation and the series of practices that underlie them (SN 45.6). They affect and condition the mind in distinct ways; thus when the mind is tired, it's best to develop investigation, energy, and rapture, but when restless, develop tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. But mindfulness is always useful (SN 46.53). And the factors themselves are the condition for awakening (SN 46.56).

Nevertheless, even the perfected ones continue to practice them, donning any one of them whenever they wish, like a garment (SN 46.4). Such a one has "acquired the path" and understands the true power of the awakening factors to lead to the end of rebirth (SN 46.30).

The *samyutta* repeatedly opposes the awakening factors with their dark counterparts, the five hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are compared to corruptions in gold (SN 46.33) or to parasites (SN 46.39).

One of the unique aspect of the awakening factors is that their recitation is said to be effective in helping cure disease. Several suttas speak of how a sick monk—and even the Buddha himself—becomes inspired by hearing them recited and rises up cured (SN 46.14–16). Understandably, this has ensured that reciting passages on the awakening factors for sick people remains popular in Theravadin culture. If such recitation seems less effective today than in the suttas, it should be borne in mind that these are cases of

advanced and experienced meditators, perfected ones indeed, who had already developed these factors to completion. Their inspiration is on a different level than that of an ordinary person. And even so there is no guarantee: there are plenty of cases in the early texts where perfected ones fall ill with no cure.

Most of the awakening factors refer to the emotional aspects of spiritual path, the joy and peace of meditation. This is further emphasized in SN 46.54, which connects the awakening factors with the four immeasurables or divine meditations—love, compassion, rejoicing, and equanimity. The Buddhist mendicants are challenged by followers of other paths, who say that they too teach the development of these things. The Buddha points out, however, that he describes *how* to develop these things to their fullest potential. And to do this the immeasurables are empowered by the awakening factors.

## SN 47: Linked Discourses on Mindfulness Meditation

The Pali term *satipaṭṭhāna* means the “establishing of mindfulness”. I usually render it more colloquially as simply “mindfulness meditation”. While elsewhere *sati* is defined as “memory”, here it is described as *anupassanā*, “sustained observation”. It refers to the meditative practice of setting up and maintaining continued and unbroken awareness in four distinct arenas:

**Body (*kāya*)** Any aspect of the physical, including the breath, the postures, parts of the body, and so on.

**Feelings (*vedanā*)** Different kinds of feeling, whether painful, pleasurable, or neutral, spiritual or carnal.

**Mind (*citta*)** States of awareness, whether under the influence of greed, hate, and delusion, or free of such.

**Principles (*dhammā*)** Understanding the causal relations that lead to suffering or to peace, especially by reflecting on the process of meditation itself.

Each of these can include a diverse range of experience. But in meditation it is important to keep focus. The standard formula phrases this through the use of the reflexive idiom *kāye kāyānupassī*. Here the locative case is used quite literally to mean “one of the bodies in the body”, or as we would say in English, a particular aspect of the body. Thus the meditator does not continually shift attention to whatever comes into mind, but maintains a steady, continuous awareness on a specific aspect of physical experience.

This is a progressive practice. The nature of this progress becomes more clear when it is recognized that mindfulness of breathing is a form of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice.

1. Meditation begins with attention to the relatively coarse phenomena of the physical breath until it becomes calm and still.
2. A subtle sense of joy and bliss pervades the breath and the body.
3. The mind becomes freed, immersed in the singular experience of the bliss of release.
4. One contemplates the changing process of meditation that has led to this point. The mind, empowered by immersion, lets go.

But *satipaṭṭhāna* is broader than I have indicated here, for it includes not only the positive experiences that evolve during meditation, but also the negative ones: the pain, the constricted mind, the hindrances. By encompassing the full range of experience, *satipaṭṭhāna* promotes a broad, inclusive approach to meditation, one based on awareness rather than control, laying the groundwork for the flowering of wisdom.

This *samyutta* presents a series of insightful and often delightful suttas on *satipaṭṭhāna*, but it does not define the scope of the meditation. The definitions above are derived from the longer discourses today found at MN 10 and DN 22. However, these have clearly undergone considerable late development as compared with the short discourses of the *samyutta*, and one cannot simply assume that everything in MN 10 and DN 22 applies in the *samyutta*.

The Pali compound *satipaṭṭhāna* resolves to *sati* + *upaṭṭhāna*. This phrase is familiar from the Gradual Training, where it refers to

the moment when a practitioner sits down in seclusion and begins meditation by “establishing mindfulness” (*satim upaṭṭhapetvā*). It thus refers primarily to the formal practice of meditation.

Today it is common to speak of “mindfulness in daily life”, but in the suttas this is called *sampajañña*, which I translate as “situational awareness”. This is one of the series of practices in the Gradual Training that lays the groundwork for formal meditation. SN 47.2 makes plain the distinction between these two by treating them as two qualities the mendicant should develop. This is not to say, of course, that they are completely separate, for nothing in spiritual and mental development happens in isolation. *Sampajañña* is not limited to “mindfulness in daily life”, but plays a role in absorptions and insight as well (see SN 47.35). But it is to say that these two practices are primarily distinct, with situational awareness helping to prepare the mind for mindfulness meditation.

The standard formula describes the mindful meditator with four terms. These refer back to the fundamental helper practices of the Gradual Training, reminding us that *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation does not happen in isolation:

**Keen (*ātāpi*)** possessing persistent and unflagging energy.

**Aware (*sampajāno*)** possessing situational awareness.

**Mindful (*satimā*)** possessing mindfulness.

**Rid of desire and aversion for the world (*vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam*)** having eliminated the overt forms of desire and aversion through the practice of sense restraint. The phrase *abhijjhādomanassa* is elsewhere used only in the context of sense restraint (DN 10, MN 33, SN 35.120, AN 4.14, etc.).

In the eightfold path, the awakening factors, the faculties, and the powers, mindfulness meditation is one of the key factors leading to deep meditative stillness and immersion. It is defined elsewhere as “the basis for immersion in *samādhi*” (MN 44: *cattāro satipaṭṭhānā samādhinimittā*). With the charming parable of a cook, SN 47.8 shows how a skillful mindfulness meditator, by understanding the

characteristics of their own mind, enters immersion and abandons defilements, while a poor meditator fails. In SN 47.4 the Buddha urges all meditators, whether beginners or advanced, to practice mindfulness to the level of full immersion (*ekodibhūtā vipassannacittā samāhitā ekaggacittā*; “at one, with minds that are clear, immersed in *samādhi*, and unified”).

The centrality of meditative immersion is reinforced by the saying that *satipaṭṭhāna* is the “path to convergence” (*ekāyano maggo*). This saying is famous from MN 10 but sourced from the Saṃyutta, where the saying is placed in the mouth of Brahmā (SN 47.1, SN 47.18, SN 47.43). It is a term from the Upaniṣads, which in contemplative contexts means “the place where all things come together as one” (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4:11).

The meditative absorptions (*jhānas*) are explicitly brought into *satipaṭṭhāna* in the extended and late passage on the four noble truths in DN 22. However they are implicit in many places, including the observation of feelings under the notions of “spiritual rapture” and “spiritual bliss”, which are defined in terms of the absorptions (SN 36.31); as well as in the observation of mind under the mind that is “expansive”, “unexcelled”, “immersed”, “freed”, all of which are terms for deep states of absorption; or the discussion at MN 125.

This is not to say that insight (or discernment, *vipassanā*) has no place in *satipaṭṭhāna*. On the contrary, the fourth of the *satipaṭṭhānas*, the observation of principles, is primarily concerned with the insight that follows from meditative immersion. Here, as described in MN 10, one does not merely observe the presence and absence of various factors, one understands the reason why they appear and disappear. And understanding causality is the heart of insight. This is reinforced in the teaching on mindfulness of breathing, which introduces the contemplation of impermanence at this point.

Two suttas bring the *vipassanā* aspect to the fore. In SN 47.40, the Buddha first teaches the standard *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, then introduces the “development” of *satipaṭṭhāna*. In the suttas, “devel-

opment” means the enhancement and expansion of what is already there. (*Bhāvanā* is derived from the causative form of the word “to be”, i.e. “to make be more”.) This further development involves contemplating all four of the *satipaṭṭhānas* in terms of origin and cessation. The exact meaning of this is spelled out in SN 47.42, which gives the origin of each of the four.

A distinctive feature of this collection is the number of charming parables, which are as memorable as they are amusing. In addition to the story of the cook which we mentioned above (SN 47.8), we hear how a quail learned to escape a hawk (SN 47.6), how a foolish monkey got trapped in tar (SN 47.7), and how two acrobats support each other (SN 47.19). Another discourse sets a seemingly impossible challenge for mindfulness practice: to walk, carrying a bowl of oil filled to the brim, between a popular performer and the crowd jostling to see her, while a man with a drawn sword waits to chop off your head if you spill a drop (SN 47.20)!

## SN 48: Linked Discourses on the Faculties

The word *indriya* has a rather interesting history. It occurs 39 times in the Ṛg Veda in the general sense of “the power of Indra”, the great warrior-god and dragon-slayer known in Pali as Sakka. But the nature of this power is perhaps not what one might imagine, for more than two-thirds of these cases connect *indriya* with *soma*.

Now, *soma* was of course a drug, probably a preparation from the amphetamine-like stimulant ephedra. It was drunk by the ancient Indo-Europeans to imbue warriors with a berserk energy on the battlefield. As well as taming the horse and inventing the fast two-wheeled chariot, drug-enhanced combat was one of the key innovations underlying the military success of the Indo-Europeans.

In the Vedic culture this was ritualized as religious practice: Indra himself drinks *soma* to magnify his potency. He becomes unstoppable and crushes all his enemies before him. His devotees follow his example, manifesting the power of the god within themselves. The drug-induced high gave them the might of the gods.

But the crucial point is that the power is not borrowed from Indra; rather, both god and devotee draw power from the same source. It was inside them all along, it just needed the *soma* to bring it out.

By the time of the Buddha, the Vedic age was long-gone and the *soma* largely forgotten. Later commentators, unfamiliar with its Vedic roots, defined *indriya* as “rulership”, and the various *indriyas* in Buddhism as the governing faculties that exercise control over their domains. But the use in the suttas shows that the meaning lies closer to the Vedic sense of “potency”. The *indriyas* are innate potentials that can be manifested in the right conditions.

This is why, after the Buddha’s awakening, he surveyed the world and assessed the *indriyas* of the many different beings in it. He saw the spiritual potential latent within each person to different degrees, and realized that this hidden potential could be drawn out with the right teaching and encouragement (SN 6.1).

To formulate a teaching on the *indriyas*, the Buddha drew upon a set of five qualities he had developed under his former teachers Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta (MN 26:17, etc.). That these really are a set of teachings in the brahmanical tradition is confirmed by their mention in the Yogasūtra (1.20). He called this set the five *indriyas*.

The same qualities were also known as the *balas* or “powers”. At SN 48.43 the Buddha discusses the relation between these two sets, saying they are like a river that flows around an island. They are part of the same stream and go to the same place, but from a certain perspective they can be distinguished. The term *bala*, like *indriya*, is Vedic, with the same basic sense of potency or strength, and occurs in contexts featuring Indra and his *soma*. The *balas* have only some repetition templates in the *saṃyutta*, and are defined in the Aṅguttara (AN 5.14).

The *indriyas* (together with the *balas*) came to be included in the 37 *bodhipakkhiyadhammā*, and form the heart of the Indriya Saṃyutta, where they are defined as follows (SN 48.8, SN 48.9, SN 48.10):



**Faith** (*saddhā*) Faith in the Buddha’s awakening.

**Energy** (*virīya*) The effort to give up the bad and develop the good.

**Mindfulness** (*sati*) Recollection of things said and done long ago, and the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

**Immersion** (*samādhi*) Unification of mind based on letting-go; further defined as the four absorptions (*jhānas*).

**Wisdom** (*paññā*) Understanding impermanence and the four noble truths.

By beginning with faith (*saddhā*), the text introduces a quality not explicitly mentioned in the earlier sets. In Buddhism, faith is essential. In traditional Buddhist lands to this day, the quiet yet steadfast faith and devotion to the Buddha and his teachings is ever-present, expressed through offerings of flowers, through grace and humility in the presence of the sacred, or through uplifting recollection of the Buddha’s words. It is an emotional quality, often paired with *pema*, “affection”. But the Buddha explicitly rejected blind or “baseless faith” (MN 95:13: *amūlikā saddhā*) and urged his followers to develop a “grounded faith” (MN 47:16: *ākāravātī saddhā*) based on careful and critical inquiry.

This is a faith that is akin to the confidence and trust that a scientist needs when relying on the findings and theories of others in their field. It is essential in order to get anywhere; but at the same time, it is completely provisional. If there is anything that is contradicted by the evidence, it should be rejected. And once you have seen the truth for yourself, there is no need for faith, as pointed out by Venerable Sāriputta in SN 48.44.

Following the pattern we have seen in previous sets of qualities, the mention of faith aligns the faculties with the progress of one following the Gradual Training. First one hears the teaching and gains faith, then one goes forth and applies energy in practice, undertaking mindfulness meditation, realizing the absorptions and the wisdom into impermanence that follows on from them. At this point a practitioner goes beyond simple belief or reasoned

argument and sees the truth for themselves. Their faith is described as *aveccappasāda*, “experiential” or “confirmed” confidence. The word *avecca* literally means “having undergone”. It is only at this point that faith is unshakable.

Many of suttas on the five faculties are built along the same kinds of patterns and templates as the *saṃyuttas* on the noble eightfold path or the awakening factors. But in two related respects they are quite distinctive. And both of these distinctive features stem from the root sense of *indriya* as “potency” or “potential”.

The first of these two features is the use of the faculties to grade practitioners. One who truly understands the faculties is a stream-enterer (SN 48.2, SN 48.3), while one who, based on this understanding, completely lets go is a perfected one (SN 48.4, SN 48.5). This grading of practitioners based on their development of the faculties is extended in more detail in a further series of discourses (SN 48.12–18, SN 48.24).

So while, in one sense, we all have these faculties within us as a hidden potential, they do not manifest their strength until empowered by the path. Once that happens, at the moment of stream-entry, they are as unstoppable as Indra on a dragon-slaying rampage.

To understand the second distinctive feature, recall that in these *saṃyuttas* we are dealing with the path, the fourth of the noble truths, which is “to be developed” (*bhāvetabba*). And while the Indriya Saṃyutta, like other *saṃyuttas* on the path, does indeed speak of the “development of the faculties”, a series of suttas also speaks of understanding the faculties in light of the four noble truths (SN 48.2–7). Normally such phrasing is found in discourses dealing with the first noble truth, such as those on the aggregates or sense fields, which are “to be fully understood”. Here the texts are blurring the distinction between the first and fourth noble truths. To be sure, this is not unique; we have already noted that a couple of discourses on *satipaṭṭhāna* do a similar thing in a different way. But it is unusual, and certainly the emphasis is unique.

There is nothing doctrinally difficult about this; after all, the path is conditioned (AN 4.34), and all conditioned things are suffering. But the Buddha usually spoke of the path in glowingly positive terms, not about its suffering and drawbacks.

Once again, this makes sense when we consider the faculties as inner potentials, as something that we already possess in a latent form to one degree or another. In understanding the faculties we are understanding *who we are* and *who we might become*.

This idea that an *indriya* is a potency or ability or strength possessed by a person is further developed in the remainder of the *samyutta*, which introduces a series of faculties beyond the basic five. Together with the five faculties these make up a list of 22 faculties, which became a standard set in the Abhidhamma (see Vb 5). Here they are in the Abhidhamma sequence:

- The six sense faculties (SN 48.25).
- Three biological faculties: femininity, masculinity, and vitality (SN 48.22).
- Five kinds of feeling as faculties (SN 48.31).
- The five spiritual faculties.
- Three faculties relating to stages of awakening (SN 48.23).

Senses, feelings, even biological attributes, are things that everyone possesses. They must be understood as part of conditioned reality, and hence suffering, but they can be harnessed to empower the spiritual path.

## SN 51: Linked Discourses on the Bases for Psychic Power

We have learned that the terms *indriya* and *bala*, which we translate as “faculty” and “power” were Vedic terms closely associated with the divine might of the war-god Indra. The current *samyutta* deals with *iddhi*, another Vedic term with a similar meaning of “success, power, potency”. Note that the Pali *iddhi* is identical in meaning with two Vedic terms, *siddhi* and *ṛddhi*, but formally it is derived

from the latter. *Pāda* literally means “foot”, and since *iddhipāda* is defined as the “path or practice to gaining *iddhi*” (SN 51.27), it’s tempting to maintain the metaphor by speaking of the “four footsteps to psychic power”.

*Iddhis* may refer to various kinds of success, potency, or power, but in this context they consist of various astonishing feats of psychic power or superpowers. Such feats have a long and colorful history in India. In the Vedas, as we have seen, they originated in the legendary military prowess of the gods, to which mortals aspired with the aid of stimulants. As the *soma* vanished, it seems, other means of transcending normal human and physical limits were sought. Ascetics undertook punishing mortifications (*tapas*), torturing their bodies in search of superpowers. While some pre-Buddhist religious practitioners—notably those of the Jains and the Upaniṣads—had set themselves more lofty and worthy goals than mere powers, there remained many for whom spiritual practice was a means to these decidedly worldly ends.

The modern cultural fascination with superheroes shows that this is not bound to a specific cultural time or place. It is about the very human longing for transcendence and transformation, becoming other, becoming more. Superheroes display many of the same kinds of powers talked about in the Buddhist and other ancient Indian texts: mind-reading, enhanced senses, the ability to control the elements or to multiply one’s form, to fly in the sky and even through space (SN 51.11). And the means by which powers are gained remain similar to the pre-Buddhist traditions: they may be of divine or alien origin; or derived from a drug or chemical agent; or the outcome of enduring trials and suffering.

Dispensing with these methods, however, the Buddha said that superpowers are gained through pure mental development or meditation. The focus shifted from the powers themselves to the means for attaining them; which, it turns out, also happens to be the path to awakening. The various powers extend or enhance ordinary

human abilities, and they may be developed in the same way as any other ability is developed: by practice.

Despite their frequent mention in Buddhist texts, psychic powers are notably omitted when it comes to the things that are really important. They are side-effects of the spiritual path, things that may be fun and of some worth as preliminary exercises, but far from the true goal (see SN 12.70). The Buddha in fact had a decidedly ambiguous attitude to powers, especially when they were shown off. He forbade the monastics from displaying them publicly, saying monks who make such displays were like a woman who shows her private parts for a cheap coin (Kd 15:8.2). Displays of psychic powers are moreover criticized because they seem like mere magic (DN 11:5, AN 3.60). And the possession of superpowers was by no means a sign of genuine spiritual attainment, for even Devadatta, the Buddha's arch-nemesis, was said to have attained them (Kd 17:1.4).

None of this addresses the question of whether such powers are real. The suttas assume throughout that they are, and there is no reason to think this does not reflect the Buddha's own views. Traditional Buddhism has always accepted the reality of experiences and powers beyond the normal, and Buddhist cultures are full of anecdotes and stories about such events. Rigorous studies, however, are harder to come by. The extraordinary *Irreducible Mind*, a sustained critique of reductionist theories of mind, assembles hundreds of studies into various kinds of extraordinary phenomena. While a reasonable person may well remain skeptical, it seems there is a significant body of evidence in support of such things as mind-reading or recollection of past lives. The ability to fly or to touch the sun remain, sadly, unattested.

Normally in the suttas the term *iddhi* is used for a specific set of psychic powers, which primarily exhibit mastery over the physical realm (SN 51.19, etc.). These are typically included within a broader set of six "direct knowledges" (*abhiññā*), which are also mentioned in this *samyutta* (SN 51.11). The final one of these is

the ending of defilements and rebirth, the true goal of Buddhist practice.

As to the substance of the *iddhipādas*, there are four basic terms:

**Enthusiasm (*chanda*)** This is one of the most common words for “desire”. While not formally mentioned as an item in the other lists of the *bodhipakkhiyadhammā*, it appears in the formula for the four right efforts. It is the desire to do good, to practice, to escape suffering.

**Energy (*viriya*)** This is the single most common factor among the 37 *bodhipakkhiyadhammā*. However in the bases for psychic power it receives special emphasis as it is not only one of the factors, but also qualifies each of the factors.

**Mind (*citta*)** Thought, idea, resolve, or awareness (see below).

**Inquiry (*vīmaṃsā*)** Inquiry or investigation into the Dhamma, but especially into what obstructs meditation and what helps it. In this context, it is not too far in meaning from “curiosity”.

Curiously enough, though the word *citta* has a wide range of meanings, it is not clearly defined in this context. Even the Abhidhamma and commentaries offer little more than the usual list of synonyms for “mind” (Vb 9). Normally in the context of the path, the mind is “to be developed” (see SN 5.1.9) and such “development of mind” (*cittabhāvanā*) is a term for *samādhi* and the path to it. Accordingly, *citta* falls between the energy and wisdom factors, in the place normally occupied by *samādhi* and mindfulness, and is said to be developed in the normal way of *samādhi* (see SN 5.1.11). And *samādhi* itself, like energy, is constantly emphasized as essential to this practice at every point.

However, *citta* is also the thought or intention that gets you to your destination (SN 5.1.15). In line with this, one gains *samādhi* by relying on *citta* (SN 5.1.13), which suggests that *citta* cannot be exactly identical with *samādhi*.

Perhaps the term *citta* was used here precisely because of its breadth of meaning. It encompasses the “thought” of the Dhamma,

of practice, or of the goal; the “idea” one has in mind that leads one on; the “resolve” that keeps attention focused; the growing “awareness” as the goal comes into view; and the purified “consciousness” of deep meditation. In this way *citta* here covers the same ground as it does as one of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*: it refers to the mind state with which one develops the path, including, but not limited to, states of *samādhi*.

The four bases are almost always presented in a stock formula that consists of a long compound, the meaning of which is explained at SN 5.1.13. Each of the four qualities may be relied on to develop deep unification of mind, or *samādhi*. This process involves making an active effort, defined in terms of the four right efforts. Thus each of the *iddhipādas* consists of these three aspects:

1. One of the four qualities.
2. The meditative immersion that results.
3. The effort required.

At SN 5.1.20 we find the most detailed explanation of how these are applied in practice. This sutta brings in a number of practices familiar from elsewhere in the suttas, such as the contemplation of the 31 parts of the body. While most of these are straightforward, there is a somewhat obscure Pali idiom that begs a little clarification. That is the phrase “as before, so after; as after, so before” (*yathā pure tathā pacchā, yathā pacchā tathā pure*), called the “perception of continuity” (*pacchāpuresaññā*). Similar phrases are found in several places in the context of meditation (Thag 6.4, SN 47.10, AN 7.61, AN 3.90). In the Vinaya, the same phrase is used to emphasize that the status of a mendicant remains unchanged. In meditation, it points to the need for constant and consistent effort in maintaining one’s focus. As part of a series of related idioms— as above, so below; as by day, so by night; as this is, so is that—it indicates how the process of meditation moves from diversity and differentiation towards unity and oneness.

When first encountering the bases for psychic power, students are often puzzled by an apparent paradox. Desire, so we’re told,

is the cause of suffering, yet here we are supposed to develop it. This problem is addressed directly in SN 51.15, where Ānanda explains to the brahmin Uṇṇābha that the spiritual path is lived to give up desire, which is accomplished by developing the four bases of psychic power. But Uṇṇābha protests, for desire is itself one of the four bases, and desire cannot be given up by means of desire. Ānanda resolves the contradiction with the simile of a man walking to a park. Before setting out, one has the desire, the energy, the idea, or the curiosity to reach the park. But when you get there, those things vanish. In the same way, the desire or enthusiasm to reach the goal of spiritual practice carries you to the goal, but once there it is no longer needed.

## A Brief Textual History

The Saṃyutta Nikāya was edited by M. Léon Feer on the basis of manuscripts in Sinhalese and Burmese scripts, and published in Latin script by the Pali Text Society from 1884 to 1898. The first translation followed in 1917–30 by Mrs C.A.F. Rhys Davids (vols. 1–2) and F.L. Woodward (vols. 3–5) under the title *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*. In 1999 the PTS issued a new edition of the Pali text of vol. 1 *Sagāthāvagga*, edited by G.A. Somaratne.

While several partial translations were subsequently made, there was no complete new translation in English until 2002, when Bhikkhu Bodhi published his *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. As with his translation of the *The Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha*, this constituted a major leap forward, essentially rendering the earlier translations obsolete. Unlike the *Middle-Length Discourses*, this was an entirely new translation. In an extensive introduction, Bhikkhu Bodhi spelled out his evolving approach to translation and presented a detailed thematic and structural analysis of the text.



Where the Pali was unclear I frequently referred to the earlier work of Bodhi, and rarely to Woodward/Rhys Davids and various translations of specific texts.

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LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH DEITIES

# The Chapter on a Reed

SN 1.1

## Crossing the Flood

*Oghataraṇasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Monastery.
- 1.3 Then, late at night, a glorious deity, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, “Good sir, how did you cross the flood?”
- 1.5 “Neither standing nor swimming, sir, I crossed the flood.”
- 1.6 “But in what way did you cross the flood neither standing nor swimming?”
- 1.7 “When I stood still, I went under. And when I swam, I was swept away. That’s how I crossed the flood neither standing nor swimming.”
- 2.1 “After a long time I see  
a brahmin extinguished.  
Neither standing nor swimming,  
he’s crossed over clinging to the world.”
- 3.1 This is what that deity said, and the teacher approved. Then that deity, knowing that the teacher approved, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before vanishing right there.

SN 1.2

## Liberation

*Nimokkhasutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

Then, late at night, a glorious deity, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, "Good sir, do you understand liberation, emancipation, and seclusion for sentient beings?" 1.2

"I do, sir." 3.1

"But how is it that you understand liberation, emancipation, and seclusion for sentient beings?" 4.1

"With the ending of relish for rebirth,  
the finishing of perception and consciousness,  
and the cessation and stilling of feelings:  
that, sir, is how I understand liberation,  
emancipation, and seclusion for sentient beings." 5.1

SN 1.3

## Led On

*Upanīyasutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha's presence: 1.2

"This life, so very short, is led onward;  
one led on to old age has no shelter.  
Seeing this peril in death,  
do good deeds that bring you to joy." 2.1

"This life, so very short, is led onward;  
one led on to old age has no shelter. 3.1

Seeing this peril in death,  
a seeker of peace would drop the world's bait."

SN 1.4

## Time Flies

*Accentisutta*

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:

2.1 "Time flies, nights pass by,  
the stages of life leave us one by one.  
Seeing this peril in death,  
do good deeds that bring you to joy."

3.1 "Time flies, nights pass by,  
the stages of life leave us one by one.  
Seeing this peril in death,  
a seeker of peace would drop the world's bait."

SN 1.5

## Cut How Many?

*Katichindasutta*

1.1 At Sāvattthī.

1.2 Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:

2.1 "Cut how many? Drop how many?  
How many more should be developed?  
How many chains must a mendicant escape  
before you call them a flood-crosser?"

3.1 "Five to cut, five to drop,

and five more to develop.  
A mendicant must escape five chains  
before you call them a flood-crosser.”

SN 1.6

## Awake

*Jāgarasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1  
Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s 1.2  
presence:

“How many sleep while others wake? 2.1  
How many wake among the sleeping?  
By how many do you gather dust?  
By how many are you cleansed?”

“Five sleep while others wake. 3.1  
Five wake among the sleeping.  
By five you gather dust.  
By five you’re cleansed.”

SN 1.7

## Not Comprehending

*Appativeditasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1  
Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s 1.2  
presence:

“Those who don’t comprehend the teachings, 2.1  
who may be led astray by the doctrines of others;  
asleep, they have not woken up:  
it is time for them to wake!”

- 3.1 “Those who clearly comprehend the teachings,  
who won’t be led astray by the doctrines of others;  
they’ve woken up, they rightly know,  
they live smoothly in the rough.”

SN 1.8

## Very Confused

*Susammutṭhasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.  
1.2 Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:
- 2.1 “Those who are very confused about the teachings,  
who may be led astray by the doctrines of others;  
asleep, they have not woken up:  
it is time for them to wake!”
- 3.1 “Those who are unconfused about the teachings,  
who won’t be led astray by the doctrines of others;  
they’ve woken up, they rightly know,  
they live smoothly in the rough.”

SN 1.9

## Fond of Conceit

*Mānakāmasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.  
1.2 Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:
- 2.1 “Someone who’s fond of conceit can’t be tamed,  
and someone without immersion can’t be a sage.  
Living negligent alone in the wilderness,



they can't pass beyond Death's domain."

"Having given up conceit, serene within oneself, 3.1  
with a healthy heart, everywhere free;  
living diligent alone in the wilderness,  
they pass beyond Death's domain."

SN 1.10

## Wilderness

*Araññasutta*

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

Standing to one side, that deity addressed the Buddha in verse: 1.2

"Living in the wilderness, 2.1  
peaceful spiritual practitioners  
eat just one meal a day:  
so why is their complexion so clear?"

"They don't grieve for the past, 3.1  
nor do they long for the future;  
they feed on whatever comes that day,  
that's why their complexion's so clear.

Because they long for the future, 4.1  
and grieve for the past,  
fools wither away,  
like a green reed mowed down."

# The Chapter on the Garden of Delight

SN 1.11

## The Garden of Delight

*Nandanasutta*

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!”

1.5 “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 “Once upon a time, mendicants, a certain deity of the company of the Thirty-Three was amusing themselves in the Garden of Delight, escorted by a band of nymphs, and supplied and provided with the five kinds of heavenly sensual stimulation. On that occasion they recited this verse:

3.1       ‘They don’t know pleasure  
          who don’t see the Garden of Delight!  
          It’s the abode of lordly gods,  
          the glorious host of Thirty!’

4.1       When they had spoken, another deity replied with this verse:

5.1       ‘Fool, don’t you understand  
          the saying of the perfected ones:  
          All conditions are impermanent,

their nature is to rise and fall;  
having arisen, they cease;  
their stilling is true bliss.”

SN 1.12

## Delight

*Nandatisutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1  
Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s 1.2  
presence:

“Your children bring you delight! 2.1  
Your cattle also bring you delight!  
For attachments are a man’s delight;  
without attachments there’s no delight.”

“Your children bring you sorrow. 3.1  
Your cattle also bring you sorrow.  
For attachments are a man’s sorrow;  
without attachments there are no sorrows.”

SN 1.13

## There’s Nothing Like a Child

*Natthiputtasamasutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1  
Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s 1.2  
presence:

“There’s no love like that for a child, 2.1  
no wealth equal to cattle,  
no light like that of the sun,  
and of waters the ocean is paramount.”

- 3.1 “There’s no love like that for oneself,  
no wealth equal to grain,  
no light like that of wisdom,  
and of waters the rain is paramount.”

SN 1.14

## Aristocrats

*Khattiyasutta*

- 1.1 “An aristocrat is the best of bipeds,  
an ox is the best of quadrupeds,  
a maiden is the best of wives,  
and a first-born the best of sons.”
- 2.1 “A Buddha is the best of bipeds,  
a thoroughbred, the best of quadrupeds,  
a good listener is the best of wives,  
and the best of sons is loyal.”

SN 1.15

## Whispering

*Saṇamānasutta*

- 1.1 “In the still of high noon,  
when the birds have settled down,  
the formidable jungle whispers to itself:  
that seems so scary to me!”
- 2.1 “In the still of high noon,  
when the birds have settled down,  
the formidable jungle whispers to itself:  
that seems so delightful to me!”

SN 1.16

## Sleepiness and Sloth

*Niddātandīsutta*

“Sleepiness, sloth, and yawning, 1.1  
discontent, and grogginess after eating:  
because of this the noble path  
doesn’t shine for creatures here.”

“Sleepiness, sloth, and yawning, 2.1  
discontent, and grogginess after eating:  
when this is energetically fended off,  
the noble path is purified.”

SN 1.17

## Hard to Do

*Dukkarasutta*

“Hard to do, hard to endure, 1.1  
is the ascetic life for the inept,  
for it has many narrow passes  
where the fool founders.”

“How many days could an ascetic live 2.1  
without controlling the mind?  
They’d founder with each step,  
under the sway of thoughts.

A mendicant should collect their thoughts 3.1  
as a tortoise draws its limbs into its shell.  
Independent, not disturbing others,  
quenched: they wouldn’t blame anyone.”

SN 1.18

## Conscience

*Hirīsutta*

- 1.1 “Can a person constrained by conscience  
be found in the world?  
Who shies away from blame,  
like a fine horse from the whip?”
- 2.1 “Few are those constrained by conscience,  
who live always mindful.  
Having reached the end of suffering,  
they live smoothly in the rough.”

SN 1.19

## Little Hut

*Kuṭṭikāsutta*

- 1.1 “Don’t you have a little hut?  
Don’t you have a little nest?  
Don’t you have any networks?  
Aren’t you free of shackles?”
- 2.1 “Indeed I have no little hut.  
Indeed I have no little nest.  
Indeed I have no networks.  
Indeed I’m free from shackles.”
- 3.1 “What do you think I call a little hut?  
What do I call a little nest?  
What do you think I call a network?  
And what do I call a shackle?”
- 4.1 “You call a mother a little hut;

and a wife a little nest.  
 You call children a network,  
 and you tell me craving's a shackle."

"It's good you have no little hut! 5.1  
 It's good you have no little nest!  
 It's good you have no networks!  
 And good that you're free from shackles."

SN 1.20

## With Samiddhi

*Samiddhisutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
 Rājagaha in the Hot Springs Monastery.

Then Venerable Samiddhi rose at the crack of dawn and went to 1.3  
 the hot springs to bathe. When he had bathed and emerged from  
 the water he stood in one robe drying himself.

Then, late at night, a glorious deity, lighting up the entire hot 1.5  
 springs, went up to Samiddhi, and, standing in the air, addressed  
 him in verse:

"Mendicant, you seek alms before you eat; 2.1  
 you wouldn't seek alms after eating.  
 But you should eat first, then seek alms:  
 don't let the time pass you by."

"I actually don't know the time; 3.1  
 it's hidden and unseen.  
 That's why I seek alms before eating,  
 so that the time may not pass me by!"

Then that deity landed on the ground and said to Samiddhi, 4.1  
 "You've gone forth while young, mendicant. You're black-haired,  
 blessed with youth, in the prime of life, and you've never flirted

with sensual pleasures. Enjoy human sensual pleasures! Don't give up what is visible in the present to chase after what takes effect over time."

5.1 "I'm not, good sir; I'm giving up what takes effect over time to chase after what is visible in the present. For the Buddha has said that sensual pleasures take effect over time, with much suffering and distress, and they're all the more full of drawbacks. But this teaching is visible in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves."

6.1 "But in what way, mendicant, has the Buddha said that sensual pleasures take effect over time, with much suffering and distress, and they're all the more full of drawbacks? And how is this teaching visible in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves?"

7.1 "I'm junior, good sir, recently gone forth, newly come to this teaching and training. I'm not able to explain this in detail. But the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha is staying near Rājagaha in the Hot Springs Monastery. You should go to him and ask about this matter. And you should remember it in line with the Buddha's answer."

8.1 "It's not easy for us to approach the Buddha, as he is surrounded by other illustrious deities. If you go to the Buddha and ask him about this matter, we'll come along and listen to the teaching."

8.3 "Yes, good sir," Venerable Samiddhi replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. Then he added:

17.1 "Sir, if that deity spoke the truth, he'll be close by."

18.1 When he had spoken, that deity said to Samiddhi, "Ask, mendicant, ask! For I have arrived."

19.1 Then the Buddha addressed the deity in verse:

20.1 "Sentient beings who perceive the communicable,  
become established in the communicable.  
Not understanding the communicable,



they fall under the yoke of Death.

But having fully understood the communicable, 21.1  
they don't identify as a communicator,  
for they have nothing  
by which they might be described.  
Tell me if you understand, spirit."

"I don't understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief 22.1  
statement. Please teach me this matter so I can understand the  
detailed meaning."

"If you think that 'I'm equal, 23.1  
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'.  
Tell me if you understand, spirit."

"I don't understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief 24.1  
statement. Please teach me this matter so I can understand the  
detailed meaning."

"Judging is given up, conceit rejected; 25.1  
craving for name and form is cut off right here.  
They've cut the ties, untroubled, with no need for  
hope.  
Though gods and humans search for them  
in this world and the world beyond, they never find  
them,  
not in heaven nor in any abode.

Tell me if you understand, spirit." 26.1

"This is how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's 27.1  
brief statement:

You should never do anything bad 28.1

by speech or mind or body in all the world.  
Having given up sensual pleasures, mindful and  
aware,  
you shouldn't keep doing what's painful and point-  
less."

# The Chapter on a Sword

SN 1.2.1

## A Sword

*Sattisutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1  
Standing to one side, that deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s 1.2  
presence:

“Like they’re struck by a sword, 2.1  
like their head was on fire,  
a mendicant, mindful, should go forth,  
to give up sensual desire.”

“Like they’re struck by a sword, 3.1  
like their head was on fire,  
a mendicant, mindful, should go forth,  
to give up identity view.”

SN 1.2.2

## Impact

*Phusatisutta*

“It doesn’t impact a person who doesn’t impact others. 1.1  
It impacts a person because they impact others.  
That’s why it impacts one who impacts,

who wrongs one who's done no wrong."

- 2.1 "Whoever wrongs a man who's done no wrong,  
a pure man who has not a blemish,  
the evil backfires on the fool,  
like fine dust thrown upwind."

SN 1.23

## A Tangle

*Jaṭāsutta*

- 1.1 "Tangled within, tangled without:  
these people are tangled in tangles.  
I ask you this, Gotama:  
who can untangle this tangle?"
- 2.1 "A wise person grounded in ethics,  
developing the mind and wisdom,  
a keen and alert mendicant—  
they can untangle this tangle.
- 3.1 Those in whom greed, hate, and ignorance  
have faded away;  
the perfected ones with defilements ended—  
they have untangled the tangle.
- 4.1 And where name and form  
cease with nothing left over;  
as well as impingement and perception of form:  
it's there that the tangle is cut."

SN 1.24

## Shielding the Mind

*Manonivāraṇasutta*

“Whatever you’ve shielded the mind from  
can’t cause you suffering. 1.1  
So you should shield the mind from everything,  
then you’re freed from all suffering.”

“You needn’t shield the mind from everything. 2.1  
When the mind is under control,  
you need only shield the mind  
from where the bad things come.”

SN 1.25

## A Perfected One

*Arahantasutta*

“When a mendicant is perfected, proficient, 1.1  
with defilements ended, bearing the final body:  
would they say, ‘I speak’,  
or even ‘they speak to me’?”

“When a mendicant is perfected, proficient, 2.1  
with defilements ended, bearing the final body:  
they would say, ‘I speak’,  
and also ‘they speak to me’.  
Skillful, understanding the world’s conventions,  
they’d use these terms as no more than expressions.”

“When a mendicant is perfected, proficient, 3.1  
with defilements ended, bearing the final body:  
is such a mendicant drawing close to conceit  
if they’d say, ‘I speak’,

or even ‘they speak to me’?”

- 4.1 “Someone who has given up conceit has no ties,  
the ties of conceit are all dissipated.  
Though that clever person has transcended identity,  
they’d still say, ‘I speak’,
- 5.1 and also ‘they speak to me’.  
Skillful, understanding the world’s conventions,  
they’d use these terms as no more than expressions.”

SN 1.26

## Lamps

*Pajjotasutta*

- 1.1 “How many lamps are there  
that light up the world?  
We’ve come to ask the Buddha;  
how are we to understand this?”
- 2.1 “There are four lamps in the world,  
a fifth is not found.  
The sun blazes by day,  
the moon glows at night,
- 3.1 while a fire lights up both  
by day and by night.  
But a Buddha is the best of lights:  
this is the supreme radiance.”

SN 1.27

## Streams

*Sarasutta*

“From where do streams turn back? 1.1  
Where does the cycle spin no more?  
Where do name and form  
cease with nothing left over?”

“Where water and earth, 2.1  
fire and air find no footing.  
From here the streams turn back;  
here the cycle spins no more;  
and here it is that name and form  
cease with nothing left over.”

SN 1.28

## Affluent

*Mahaddhanasutta*

“The affluent and the wealthy, 1.1  
even the aristocrats who rule the land,  
are jealous of each other,  
insatiable in sensual pleasures.

Among those of such an avid nature, 2.1  
flowing along the stream of lives,  
who here has given up craving?  
Who in the world is not avid?”

“Having given up their home, their child, their cattle, 3.1  
and all that they love, they went forth.  
Having given up desire and hate,  
having dispelled ignorance,

the perfected ones with defilements ended—  
they in the world are not avid.”

SN 1.29

## Four Wheels

*Catucakkasutta*

- 1.1 “Four are its wheels, and nine its doors;  
it’s stuffed full, bound with greed,  
and born from a bog.  
Great hero, how am I supposed to live like this?”
- 2.1 “Having cut the strap and harness—  
the wicked desire and greed—  
and having plucked out craving, root and all:  
that’s how you’re supposed to live like this.”

SN 1.30

## Antelope Calves

*Enijaṅghasutta*

- 1.1 “O hero so lean, with antelope calves,  
not greedy, eating little,  
an elephant, wandering alone like a lion,  
you’re not concerned for sensual pleasures.  
We’ve come to ask a question:  
How is one released from all suffering?”
- 2.1 “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.”



# The Chapter on the Satullapa Group

SN 1.3.1

Virtuous

*Sabbhisutta*

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, several glorious deities of the Satullapa 1.3  
Group, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side. Standing to one side, one deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“Associate only with the virtuous! 2.1  
Try to get close to the virtuous!  
Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
things get better, not worse.”

Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence: 3.1

“Associate only with the virtuous! 4.1  
Try to get close to the virtuous!  
Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
wisdom is gained—but not from anyone else.”

Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence: 5.1

6.1 “Associate only with the virtuous!  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 you grieve not among the grieving.”

7.1 Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

8.1 “Associate only with the virtuous!  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 you shine among your relatives.”

9.1 Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

10.1 “Associate only with the virtuous!  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 sentient beings go to a good place.”

11.1 Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

12.1 “Associate only with the virtuous!  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 sentient beings live happily.”

13.1 Then another deity said to the Buddha, “Sir, who has spoken well?”

14.1 “You’ve all spoken well in your own way. However, listen to me also:

15.1 Associate only with the virtuous!  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 you’re released from all suffering.”

16.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then those deities, knowing that the teacher approved, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right, before vanishing right there.

SN 1.32

## Stinginess

*Maccharisutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, 1.1  
Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then, late at night, several glorious deities of the Satullapa 1.2  
Group, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side. Standing to one side, one deity recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:

“Because of stinginess and negligence 2.1  
a gift is not given.  
Wanting merit,  
a smart person would give.”

Then another deity recited these verses in the Buddha's presence: 3.1

“When a miser fails to give because of fear, 4.1  
the very thing they're afraid of comes to pass.  
The hunger and thirst  
that a miser fears  
hurt the fool  
in this world and the next.

So you should dispel stinginess, 5.1  
overcoming that stain, and give a gift.  
The good deeds of sentient beings  
support them in the next world.”

Then another deity recited these verses in the Buddha's presence: 6.1

“Among the dead they do not die, 7.1  
those who, like fellow travelers on the road,

are happy to provide, though they have but little.  
This is an eternal truth.

- 8.1        Some who have little are happy to provide,  
             while some who have much don't wish to give.  
             An offering given from little  
             is multiplied a thousand times."

- 9.1        Then another deity recited these verses in the Buddha's presence:

- 10.1       "Giving what's hard to give,  
             doing what's hard to do;  
             the wicked don't act like this,  
             for the teaching of the good is hard to follow.

- 11.1       That's why the virtuous and the wicked  
             have different destinations after leaving this place.  
             The wicked go to hell,  
             while the virtuous are bound for heaven."

- 12.1       Then another deity said to the Buddha, "Sir, who has spoken well?"

- 13.1       "You've all spoken well in your own way. However, listen to me also:

- 14.1       A hundred thousand people making a thousand sacrifices  
             isn't worth a fraction  
             of one who lives rightly, wandering for gleanings,  
             or one who supports their partner from what little  
             they have."

- 15.1       Then another deity addressed the Buddha in verse:

- 16.1       "Why doesn't that sacrifice of theirs, so abundant and  
             magnificent,

equal the value of a moral person's gift?  
 How is it that a hundred thousand people making a  
 thousand sacrifices  
 isn't worth a fraction of what's offered by such a per-  
 son?"

"Some give based on immorality—17.1  
 after injuring, killing, and tormenting.  
 Such an offering—tearful, violent—  
 in no way equals the value of a moral person's gift.

That's how it is that a hundred thousand people mak-18.1  
 ing a thousand sacrifices  
 isn't worth a fraction of what's offered by such a per-  
 son."

SN 1.33

## Good

*Sādhussutta*

At Sāvattḥī.1.1

Then, late at night, several glorious deities of the Satullapa1.2  
 Group, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Bud-  
 dha, bowed, and stood to one side. Standing to one side, one deity  
 expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence:

"Good, sir, is giving!2.1  
 Because of stinginess and negligence  
 a gift is not given.  
 Wanting merit,  
 a smart person would give."

Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the3.1  
 Buddha's presence:

4.1 “Good, sir, is giving!  
Even when one has little, giving is good.

5.1 Some who have little are happy to provide,  
while some who have much don’t wish to give.  
An offering given from little  
is multiplied a thousand times.”

6.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the  
Buddha’s presence:

7.1 “Good, sir, is giving!  
Even when one has little, giving is good.  
And it’s also good to give out of faith.  
Giving and warfare are similar, they say,  
for even a few of the good may conquer the many.  
If a faithful person gives even a little,  
it still brings them happiness in the hereafter.”

8.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the  
Buddha’s presence:

9.1 “Good, sir, is giving!  
Even when one has little, giving is good.  
And it’s also good to give out of faith.  
And it’s also good to give legitimate wealth.

10.1 A man who gives legitimate wealth,  
earned by his efforts and initiative,  
has passed over Yama’s Vetaraṇi River;  
that mortal arrives at celestial fields.”

11.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the  
Buddha’s presence:

12.1 “Good, sir, is giving!

Even when one has little, giving is good.  
 And it's also good to give out of faith.  
 And it's also good to give legitimate wealth.  
 And it's also good to give intelligently.

The Holy One praises giving intelligently 13.1  
 to those worthy of offerings here in the world of the  
 living.  
 What's given to these is very fruitful,  
 like seeds sown in a fertile field."

Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the 14.1  
 Buddha's presence:

"Good, sir, is giving! 15.1  
 Even when one has little, giving is good.  
 And it's also good to give out of faith.  
 And it's also good to give legitimate wealth.  
 And it's also good to give intelligently.  
 And it's also good to be restrained when it comes to  
 living creatures.

One who lives without harming any living being 16.1  
 never does bad because of others' blame;  
 for in that case they praise the coward, not the brave;  
 and the virtuous never do bad out of fear."

Then another deity said to the Buddha, "Sir, who has spoken 17.1  
 well?"

"You've all spoken well in your own way. However, listen to me 18.1  
 also:

It's true that giving is praised in many ways 19.1  
 but the path of the teaching is better than giving,  
 for in days old and older still,  
 the wise and virtuous even attained extinction."

SN 1.34

## There Are None

*Nasantisutta*

1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Monastery.

1.2 Then, late at night, several glorious deities of the Satullapa Group, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side. Standing to one side, one deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

2.1 “Among humans there are no sensual pleasures that  
are permanent.  
Here there are sensuous things, bound to which,  
drunk on which, there’s no coming back.  
That person doesn’t return here from Death’s do-  
main.”

3.1 “Misery is born of desire; suffering is born of desire;  
when desire is removed, misery is removed;  
when misery is removed, suffering is removed.”

4.1 “The world’s pretty things aren’t sensual pleasures.  
Greedy intention is a person’s sensual pleasure.  
The world’s pretty things stay just as they are,  
but a wise one removes desire for them.

5.1 Give up anger, get rid of conceit,  
and get past all the fetters.  
Sufferings don’t torment the one who has nothing,  
not clinging to name and form.

6.1 Judging’s given up, conceit rejected;  
craving for name and form is cut off right here.  
They’ve cut the ties, untroubled, with no need for  
hope.



Though gods and humans search for them  
 in this world and the world beyond, they never find  
 them,  
 not in heaven nor in any abode.”

“If neither gods nor humans see one freed in this way,” 7.1  
*said Venerable Mogharājā,*  
 “in this world or the world beyond,  
 are those who revere that supreme person,  
 who lives for the good of mankind, also worthy of  
 praise?”

“The mendicants who revere one freed in this way,” 8.1  
*said the Buddha,*  
 “are also worthy of praise, Mogharājā.  
 But having understood the teaching and given up  
 doubt,  
 those mendicants can escape their chains.”

SN 1.35

## Disdain

*Ujjhānasaññisutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, 1.1  
 Anāthapiṇḍika’s Monastery.

Then, late at night, several glorious deities of the Disdainful 1.2  
 Group, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha,  
 and stood in the air. Standing in the air, one deity recited this verse  
 in the Buddha’s presence:

“Someone who pretends 2.1  
 to be other than they really are,  
 is like a cheating gambler  
 who enjoys what was gained by theft.

- 3.1 You should only say what you would do;  
you shouldn't say what you wouldn't do.  
The wise will recognize  
one who talks without doing."
- 4.1 "Not just by speaking,  
nor solely by listening,  
are you able to progress  
on this hard path,  
by which wise ones practicing absorption  
are released from Māra's bonds.
- 5.1 The wise certainly don't act like that,  
for they understand the way of the world.  
The wise are extinguished by understanding,  
they've crossed over clinging to the world."
- 6.1 Then those deities landed on the ground, bowed with their heads  
at the Buddha's feet and said, "We have made a mistake, sir. It was  
foolish, stupid, and unskillful of us to imagine we could attack the  
Buddha! Please, sir, accept our mistake for what it is, so we will  
restrain ourselves in future."
- 6.4 At that, the Buddha smiled.
- 6.5 Then those deities, becoming even more disdainful, flew up in  
the air. One deity recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:
- 7.1 "If you don't give your pardon  
when a mistake is confessed,  
with hidden anger and heavy hate,  
you're stuck in your enmity."
- 8.1 "If no mistake is found,  
if no-one's gone astray,  
and enmities are settled,  
then who could have been unskillful?"
- 9.1 "Who makes no mistakes?

Who doesn't go astray?  
 Who doesn't fall into confusion?  
 Who is the wise one that's ever mindful?"

"The Realized One, the Buddha, 10.1  
 compassionate for all beings:  
 that's who makes no mistakes,  
 and that's who doesn't go astray.  
 He doesn't fall into confusion,  
 for he's the wise one, ever mindful.

If you don't give your pardon 11.1  
 when a mistake is confessed,  
 with hidden anger and heavy hate,  
 you're stuck in your enmity.  
 I don't approve of such enmity,  
 and so I pardon your mistake."

SN 1.36

## Faith

*Saddhāsutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, 1.1  
 Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then, late at night, several glorious deities of the Satullapa 1.2  
 Group, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Bud-  
 dha, bowed, and stood to one side. Standing to one side, one deity  
 recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:

"Faith is a person's partner. 2.1  
 If faithlessness doesn't linger,  
 fame and renown are theirs,  
 and when they discard this corpse they go to heaven."

Then another deity recited these verses in the Buddha's pres- 3.1  
 ence:

- 4.1 “Give up anger, get rid of conceit,  
and get past all the fetters.  
Chains don’t torment one who has nothing,  
not clinging to name and form.”
- 5.1 “Fools and half-wits  
devote themselves to negligence.  
But the wise protect diligence  
as their best treasure.
- 6.1 Don’t devote yourself to negligence,  
or delight in sexual intimacy.  
For if you’re diligent and practice absorption,  
you’ll attain ultimate happiness.”

SN 1.37

## The Congregation

*Samayasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Great Wood, together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants, all of whom were perfected ones. And most of the deities from ten solar systems had gathered to see the Buddha and the Saṅgha of mendicants.
- 1.4 Then four deities of the Pure Abodes, aware of what was happening, thought: “Why don’t we go to the Buddha and each recite a verse in his presence?”
- 2.1 Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, they vanished from the Pure Abodes and reappeared in front of the Buddha. They bowed to the Buddha and stood to one side. Standing to one side, one deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:
- 3.1 “There’s a great congregation in the woods,  
a host of gods have assembled.

We've come to this righteous congregation  
to see the invincible Saṅgha!"

Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha's presence: 4.1

"The mendicants there have immersion, 5.1  
they've straightened out their own minds.  
Like a charioteer who has taken the reins,  
the astute ones protect their senses."

Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha's presence: 6.1

"Having cut the stake and cut the bar, 7.1  
they're unstirred, with boundary post uprooted.  
They live pure and immaculate,  
the young dragons tamed by the seer."

Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha's presence: 8.1

"Anyone who has gone to the Buddha for refuge 9.1  
won't go to a plane of loss.  
After giving up this human body,  
they swell the hosts of gods."

SN 1.38

## A Splinter

*Sakalikasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Rājagaha in the Maddakucchi deer park.

Now at that time the Buddha's foot had been cut by a splinter. 1.3  
The Buddha was stricken by harrowing pains; physical feelings  
that were painful, sharp, severe, acute, unpleasant, and disagree-  
able. But he endured unbothered, with mindfulness and situational  
awareness. And then he spread out his outer robe folded in four

and laid down in the lion's posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware.

- 2.1 Then, late at night, seven hundred glorious deities of the Satul-lapa Group, lighting up the entire Maddakucchi, went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side.
- 2.2 Standing to one side, one deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such an elephant, sir! And as an elephant, he endures painful physical feelings that have come up—sharp, severe, acute, unpleasant, and disagreeable—unbothered, with mindfulness and situational awareness."
- 3.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such a lion, sir! And as a lion, he endures painful physical feelings ... unbothered."
- 4.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such a thoroughbred, sir! And as a thoroughbred, he endures painful physical feelings ... unbothered."
- 5.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such a chief bull, sir! And as a chief bull, he endures painful physical feelings ... unbothered."
- 6.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is such a behemoth, sir! And as a behemoth, he endures painful physical feelings ... unbothered."
- 7.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "The ascetic Gotama is truly tamed, sir! And as someone tamed, he endures painful physical feelings ... unbothered."
- 8.1 Then another deity expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "See, his immersion is so well developed, and his mind is so well freed—not leaning forward or pulling back, and not held in place by forceful suppression. If anyone imagines that they can overcome such an elephant of a man, a lion of a man, a

thoroughbred of a man, a chief bull of a man, a behemoth of a man,  
a tamed man—what is that but a failure to see?”

“Learned in the five Vedas, brahmins practice 9.1  
mortification for a full century.

But their minds are not properly freed,  
for those of base character don't cross to the far shore.

Seized by craving, attached to precepts and obser- 10.1  
vances,

they practice rough mortification for a hundred years.  
But their minds are not properly freed,  
for those of base character don't cross to the far shore.

Someone who's fond of conceit can't be tamed, 11.1  
and someone without immersion can't be a sage.  
Living negligent alone in the wilderness,  
they can't pass beyond Death's domain.”

“Having given up conceit, serene within oneself, 12.1  
with a healthy heart, everywhere free;  
living diligent alone in the wilderness,  
they pass beyond Death's domain.”

SN 1.39

## With Pajjunna's Daughter (1st)

*Paṭhamapajjunnadhītusutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

Then, late at night, the beautiful Kokanadā, Pajjunna's daughter, 1.3  
lighting up the entire Great Wood, went up to the Buddha, bowed,  
stood to one side, and recited these verses in the Buddha's presence:

“Staying in the woods of Vesālī 2.1

is the Buddha, best of beings.  
 Kokanadā am I who worships him,  
 Kokanadā, Pajjuna's daughter.

- 3.1 Previously I had only heard  
 the teaching realized by the seer.  
 But now I know it as a witness  
 while the sage, the Holy One teaches.
- 4.1 There are unintelligent people who go about  
 denouncing the teaching of the noble ones.  
 They fall into the terrible Hell of Screams  
 where they suffer long.
- 5.1 There are those who have found acceptance and  
 peace  
 in the teaching of the noble ones.  
 After giving up this human body,  
 they swell the hosts of gods."

SN 1.40

## With Pajjunna's Daughter (2nd)

*Dutiyapajjunnadhītusuttam*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near  
 Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.
- 1.3 Then, late at night, the beautiful Kokanadā the Younger, Pa-  
 jjunna's daughter, lighting up the entire Great Wood, went up to  
 the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and recited these verses in  
 the Buddha's presence:
- 2.1 "Kokanadā, Pajjunna's daughter, came here,  
 beautiful as a flash of lightning.  
 Revering the Buddha and the teaching,  
 she spoke these verses full of meaning.



The teaching is such that 3.1  
I could analyze it in many different ways.  
However, I will state the meaning in brief  
as far as I have learned it by heart.

You should never do anything bad 4.1  
by speech or mind or body in all the world.  
Having given up sensual pleasures, mindful and  
aware,  
you shouldn't keep doing what's painful and point-  
less."

# The Chapter on Fire

SN 1.41

## On Fire

*Ādittasutta*

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery.

1.3 Then, late at night, a glorious deity, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and recited these verses in the Buddha's presence:

2.1        "When your house is on fire,  
              you rescue the pot  
              that's useful,  
              not the one that's burnt.

3.1        And as the world is on fire  
              with old age and death,  
              you should rescue by giving,  
              for what's given is rescued.

4.1        What's given has happiness as its fruit,  
              but not what isn't given.  
              Bandits take it, or rulers,  
              it's consumed by fire, or lost.

5.1        Then in the end this corpse is cast off,

along with all your possessions.  
Knowing this, a clever person  
would enjoy what they have and also give it away.  
After giving and using according to their means,  
blameless, they go to a heavenly place.”

SN 1.42

## Giving What?

*Kindadasutta*

“Giving what do you give strength? 1.1  
Giving what do you give beauty?  
Giving what do you give happiness?  
Giving what do you give vision?  
And who is the giver of all?  
Please answer my question.”

“Giving food you give strength. 2.1  
Giving clothes you give beauty.  
Giving a vehicle you give happiness.  
Giving a lamp you give vision.

And the giver of all 3.1  
is the one who gives a residence.  
But a person who teaches the Dhamma  
gives the gift of the Deathless.”

SN 1.43

## Food

*Annasutta*

“Both gods and humans 1.1  
enjoy their food.  
So what’s the name of the spirit

who doesn't like food?"

- 2.1 "Those who give with faith  
and a clear and confident heart,  
partake of food  
in this world and the next.
- 3.1 So you should dispel stinginess,  
overcoming that stain, and give a gift.  
The good deeds of sentient beings  
support them in the next world."

SN 1.44

## One Root

*Ekamūlasutta*

- 1.1 "One is the root, two are the whirlpools,  
three are the stains, five the spreads,  
twelve the ocean's whirlpools:  
such is the abyss crossed over by the hermit."

SN 1.45

## Peerless

*Anomasutta*

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

SN 1.46

## Nymphs

*Accharāsutta*

“It’s resounding with a group of nymphs, 1.1  
but haunted by a gang of goblins!  
This grove is called ‘Delusion’.  
How am I supposed to live like this?”

“That path is called ‘the straight way’, 2.1  
and it’s headed for the place called ‘fearless’.  
The chariot is called ‘unswerving’,  
fitted with wheels of skillful thoughts.

Conscience is its bench-back, 3.1  
mindfulness its upholstery.  
I say the teaching is the driver,  
with right view running out in front.

Any woman or man 4.1  
who has such a vehicle,  
by means of this vehicle  
has drawn near to extinguishment.”

SN 1.47

## Planters

*Vanaropasutta*

“Whose merit always grows 1.1  
by day and by night?  
Firm in principle, accomplished in conduct,  
who is going to heaven?”

“Planters of parks or groves, 2.1

those who build a bridge,  
a drinking place and well,  
and those who give a residence.

- 3.1 Their merit always grows  
by day and by night.  
Firm in principle, accomplished in conduct,  
they are going to heaven.”

SN 1.48

## Jeta's Grove

*Jetavanasutta*

- 1.1 “This is indeed that Jeta's Grove,  
frequented by the Saṅgha of hermits,  
where the King of Dhamma stayed:  
it brings me joy!
- 2.1 Deeds, knowledge, and principle;  
ethical conduct, an excellent livelihood;  
by these are mortals purified,  
not by clan or wealth.
- 3.1 That's why an astute person,  
seeing what's good for themselves,  
would examine the teaching properly,  
and thus be purified in it.
- 4.1 Sāriputta has true wisdom,  
ethics, and also peace.  
Any mendicant who has crossed over  
can at best equal him.”

SN 1.49

# Stingy

*Maccharisutta*

“Those folk in the world who are stingy, 1.1  
miserly and abusive,  
setting up obstacles  
for others who give.

What kind of result do they reap? 2.1  
What kind of future life?  
We’ve come to ask the Buddha;  
how are we to understand this?”

“Those folk in the world who are stingy, 3.1  
miserly and abusive,  
setting up obstacles  
for others who give:

they’re reborn in hell, 4.1  
the animal realm, or Yama’s world.  
If they return to the human state,  
they’re born in a poor family,

where clothes, food, pleasure, and play 5.1  
are hard to find.  
They don’t even get  
what they expect from others.  
This is the result in the present life,  
and in the next, a bad destination.”

“We get what you’re saying, 6.1  
and ask another question, Gotama.  
What about those who’ve gained the human state,  
who are bountiful and rid of stinginess,

- 7.1        confident in the Buddha and the teaching,  
              with keen respect for the Saṅgha?  
              What kind of result do they reap?  
              What kind of future life?  
              We’ve come to ask the Buddha;  
              how are we to understand this?”
- 8.1        “Those who’ve gained the human state  
              who are bountiful and rid of stinginess,  
              confident in the Buddha and the teaching,  
              with keen respect for the Saṅgha:  
              they illuminate the heavens  
              wherever they’re reborn.
- 9.1        If they return to the human state,  
              they’re reborn in a rich family,  
              where clothes, food, pleasure, and play  
              are easy to find.
- 10.1       They rejoice like those  
              who control the possessions of others.  
              This is the result in the present life,  
              and in the next, a good destination.”

SN 1.50

## With Ghaṭikāra

*Ghaṭikārasutta*

- 1.1        “Seven mendicants reborn in Aviha  
              have been freed.  
              With the complete ending of greed and hate,  
              they’ve crossed over clinging to the world.”
- 2.1        “Who are those who’ve crossed the bog,  
              Death’s domain so hard to pass?



Who, after leaving behind the human body,  
have risen above celestial yokes?”

“Upaka and Palagaṇḍa, 3.1  
and Pukkusāti, these three;  
Bhaddiya and Bhaddadeva,  
and Bāhudantī and Piṅgiya.  
They, after leaving behind the human body,  
have risen above celestial yokes.”

“You speak well of them, 4.1  
who have let go the snares of Māra.  
Whose teaching did they understand  
to cut the bonds of rebirth?”

“None other than the Blessed One! 5.1  
None other than your instruction!  
It was your teaching that they understood  
to cut the bonds of rebirth.

Where name and form 6.1  
cease with nothing left over;  
understanding this teaching,  
they cut the bonds of rebirth.”

“The words you say are deep, 7.1  
hard to understand, so very hard to wake up to.  
Whose teaching did you understand  
that you can say such things?”

“In the past I was a potter 8.1  
in Vebhaliṅga called Ghaṭṭikāra.  
I took care of my parents  
as a lay follower of Buddha Kassapa.

I refrained from sexual intercourse, 9.1

I was celibate, spiritual.  
We lived in the same village;  
in the past I was your friend.

10.1 I am the one who understands  
that these seven mendicants have been freed.  
With the complete ending of greed and hate,  
they’ve crossed over clinging to the world.”

11.1 “That’s exactly how it was,  
just as you say, Bhaggava.  
In the past you were a potter  
in Vebhalinga called Ghaṭikāra.  
You took care of your parents  
as a lay follower of Buddha Kassapa.

12.1 You refrained from sexual intercourse,  
you were celibate, spiritual.  
We lived in the same village;  
in the past you were my friend.”

13.1 “That’s how it was  
when those friends of old met again.  
Both of them are evolved,  
and bear their final body.”

# The Chapter on Old Age

SN 1.5.1

## Old Age

*Jarāsutta*

“What’s still good in old age? 1.1  
What’s good when grounded?  
What is people’s treasure?  
What’s hard for thieves to take?”

“Ethics are still good in old age. 2.1  
Faith is good when grounded.  
Wisdom is people’s treasure.  
Merit’s hard for thieves to take.”

SN 1.5.2

## Getting Old

*Ajarasāsutta*

“What’s good because it never gets old? 1.1  
What’s good when committed?  
What is people’s treasure?  
What can thieves never take?”

“Ethics are good because they never grow old. 2.1  
Faith is good when committed.

Wisdom is people's treasure.  
Merit's what thieves can never take."

SN 1.53

## A Friend

*Mittasutta*

- 1.1 "Who's your friend abroad?  
Who's your friend at home?  
Who's your friend in need?  
Who's your friend in the next life?"
- 2.1 "A caravan is your friend abroad.  
Mother is your friend at home.  
A comrade in a time of need  
is a friend time and again.  
But the good deeds you've done yourself—  
that's your friend in the next life."

SN 1.54

## Grounds

*Vatthusutta*

- 1.1 "What is the ground of human beings?  
What is the best companion here?  
By what do the creatures who live off the earth  
sustain their life?"
- 2.1 "Children are the ground of human beings.  
A wife is the best companion.  
The creatures who live off the earth  
sustain their life by rain."

SN 1.55

## Gives Birth (1st)

*Paṭhamajanasutta*

“What gives birth to a person? 1.1  
What do they have that runs about?  
What enters transmigration?  
What’s their greatest fear?”

“Craving gives birth to a person. 2.1  
Their mind is what runs about.  
A sentient being enters transmigration.  
Suffering is their greatest fear.”

SN 1.56

## Gives Birth (2nd)

*Dutiyajanasutta*

“What gives birth to a person? 1.1  
What do they have that runs about?  
What enters transmigration?  
From what are they not free?”

“Craving gives birth to a person. 2.1  
Their mind is what runs about.  
A sentient being enters transmigration.  
From suffering they are not free.”

SN 1.57

## Gives Birth (3rd)

*Tatiyajanasutta*

“What gives birth to a person? 1.1

What do they have that runs about?  
 What enters transmigration?  
 What is their destiny?”

- 2.1 “Craving gives birth to a person.  
 Their mind is what runs about.  
 A sentient being enters transmigration.  
 Deeds are their destiny.”

SN 1.58

## Deviation

*Uppathasutta*

- 1.1 “What’s declared to be a deviation?  
 What is ending day and night?  
 What’s the stain of celibacy?  
 What’s the waterless bath?”
- 2.1 “Lust is declared to be a deviation.  
 Youth is ending day and night.  
 Women are the stain of celibacy,  
 to which this generation clings.  
 Austerity and celibacy  
 are the waterless bath.”

SN 1.59

## A Partner

*Dutiyasutta*

- 1.1 “What is a person’s partner?  
 What instructs them?  
 Enjoying what is a mortal  
 released from all suffering?”

“Faith is a person’s partner. 2.1  
Wisdom instructs them.  
Delighting in extinguishment a mortal  
is released from all suffering.”

SN 1.60

## A Poet

*Kavisutta*

“What’s the basis of verses? 1.1  
What’s their detailed expression?  
What do verses depend upon?  
What underlies verses?”

“Metre is the basis of verses. 2.1  
Syllables are their detailed expression.  
Verses depend on names.  
A poet underlies verses.”

# The Chapter on Oppressed

SN 1.61

Name

*Nāmasutta*

- 1.1 “What oppresses everything?  
What is nothing bigger than?  
What is the one thing  
that has everything under its sway?”
- 2.1 “Name oppresses everything.  
Nothing’s bigger than name.  
Name is the one thing  
that has everything under its sway.”

SN 1.62

Mind

*Cittasutta*

- 1.1 “What leads the world on?  
What drags it around?  
What is the one thing  
that has everything under its sway?”
- 2.1 “The mind leads the world on.  
The mind drags it around.



Mind is the one thing  
that has everything under its sway.”

SN 1.63

## Craving

*Taṇhāsutta*

“What leads the world on? 1.1  
What drags it around?  
What is the one thing  
that has everything under its sway?”

“Craving leads the world on. 2.1  
Craving drags it around.  
Craving is the one thing  
that has everything under its sway.”

SN 1.64

## Fetter

*Saṃyojanasutta*

“What fetters the world? 1.1  
How does it travel about?  
With the giving up of what  
is extinguishment spoken of?”

“Delight fetters the world. 2.1  
It travels about by means of thought.  
With the giving up of craving  
extinguishment is spoken of.”

SN 1.65

## Bonds

*Bandhanasutta*

- 1.1 “What binds the world?  
How does it travel about?  
With the giving up of what  
are all bonds severed?”
- 2.1 “Delight binds the world.  
It travels about by means of thought.  
With the giving up of craving  
all bonds are severed.”

SN 1.66

## Beaten Down

*Attahatasutta*

- 1.1 “By what is the world beaten down?  
By what is it surrounded?  
What dart has laid it low?  
With what is it always fuming?”
- 2.1 “The world is beaten down by death.  
It’s surrounded by old age.  
The dart of craving has struck it down.  
It’s always fuming with desire.”

SN 1.67

## Trapped

*Uḍḍitasutta*

- 1.1 “What has trapped the world?

By what is it surrounded?  
 What has the world fastened shut?  
 On what is the world grounded?”

“Craving has trapped the world. 2.1  
 It’s surrounded by old age.  
 Mortality has the world fastened shut.  
 The world is grounded on suffering.”

SN 1.68

## Fastened Shut

*Pihitasutta*

“What has the world fastened shut? 1.1  
 On what is the world grounded?  
 What has trapped the world?  
 By what is it surrounded?”

“Mortality has the world fastened shut. 2.1  
 The world is grounded on suffering.  
 Craving has trapped the world.  
 It’s surrounded by old age.”

SN 1.69

## Desire

*Ichhāsutta*

“What is it that binds the world? 1.1  
 By removing what is it freed?  
 With the giving up of what  
 are all bonds severed?”

“Desire is what binds the world. 2.1  
 By the removing of desire it’s freed.

With the giving up of craving,  
all bonds are severed.”

SN 1.70

## The World

*Lokasutta*

- 1.1 “What has the world arisen in?  
What does it get close to?  
By grasping what  
is the world troubled in what?”
- 2.1 “The world’s arisen in six.  
It gets close to six.  
By grasping at these six,  
the world’s troubled in six.”

# The Chapter on Incinerated

SN 1.71

## Incinerated

*Chetvāsutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Standing to one side, that deity addressed the Buddha in verse: 1.2

“When what is incinerated do you sleep at ease? 2.1

When what is incinerated is there no sorrow?

What’s the one thing, Gotama,  
whose killing you approve?”

“When anger’s incinerated you sleep at ease. 3.1

When anger’s incinerated there is no sorrow.

O deity, anger has a poisonous root  
and a honey tip.

The noble ones praise its killing,  
for when it’s incinerated there is no sorrow.”

SN 1.72

## A Chariot

*Rathasutta*

“What’s the mark of a chariot? 1.1

What’s the mark of fire?

What's the mark of a nation?  
What's the mark of a woman?"

- 2.1 "A banner is the mark of a chariot.  
Smoke is the mark of fire.  
A ruler is a nation's mark.  
And a husband is the mark of a woman."

SN 1.73

## Wealth

*Vittasutta*

- 1.1 "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?"
- 2.1 "Faith here is a person's best wealth.  
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 wisdom."

SN 1.74

## Rain

*Vuṭṭhisutta*

- 1.1 "What's the best of things that rise?  
And what's the finest of things that fall?  
And what of the things that go forth?  
And who's the finest speaker?"
- 2.1 "A seed's the best of things that rise.

Rain's the finest thing that falls.  
Cattle, of things that go forth.  
And a child is the finest speaker."

"Knowledge is best of things that rise. 3.1  
Ignorance the finest thing that falls.  
The Saṅgha, of things that go forth.  
And the Buddha is the finest speaker."

SN 1.75

## Afraid

*Bhītāsutta*

"Why are so many people here afraid, 1.1  
when the path has been taught with so many dimensions?

I ask you, Gotama, whose wisdom is vast:  
Standing on what need one not fear the next world?"

"When speech and mind are directed right, 2.1  
and you don't do anything bad with the body  
while dwelling at home with plenty of food and drink.  
Faithful, gentle, charitable, and bountiful:  
standing on these four principles,  
standing on the teaching one need not fear the next  
world."

SN 1.76

## Getting Old

*Najīratissutta*

"What gets old, what doesn't grow old? 1.1  
What's called a deviation?  
What's a roadblock for skillful qualities?

What is ending day and night?  
 What's the stain of celibacy?  
 What's the waterless bath?

- 2.1      How many holes are there in the world,  
           where one's wealth leaks out?  
           We've come to ask the Buddha;  
           how are we to understand this?"
- 3.1      "The physical form of mortals gets old,  
           but their name and clan don't.  
           Lust is called a deviation,
- 4.1      and greed obstructs skillful qualities.  
           Youth is ending day and night.  
           Women are the stain of celibacy,  
           to which this generation clings.  
           Austerity and celibacy  
           are the waterless bath.
- 5.1      There are six holes in the world,  
           where one's wealth leaks out:  
           laziness and negligence,  
           lack of initiative and lack of restraint,  
           sleepiness and sloth.  
           You should completely get rid of these holes!"

SN 1.77

## Authority

*Issariyasutta*

- 1.1      "What is authority in the world?  
           What's the best of valuables?  
           What in the world is a rusty sword?  
           Who is a plague on the world?"



Who gets arrested when they take things away? 2.1  
 And who is loved when they take things away?  
 And who is approved by the astute  
 when they come again and again?"

"Power is authority in the world. 3.1  
 A woman is the best of valuables.  
 Anger in the world is a rusty sword.  
 A bandit is a plague on the world.

A bandit gets arrested when they take things away. 4.1  
 And an ascetic is loved when they take things away.  
 An ascetic is approved by the astute  
 when they come again and again."

SN 1.78

## Desire

*Kāmasutta*

"What should one who desires the good not give 1.1  
 away?  
 What should a mortal not reject?  
 What should be let out when it's good,  
 but not when it's bad?"

"A man shouldn't give away himself. 2.1  
 He shouldn't reject himself.  
 Speech should be let out when it's good,  
 but not when it's bad."

SN 1.79

## Provisions

*Pātheyyasutta*

- 1.1 “How should provisions be tied up?  
What’s the lair of wealth?  
What drags a person around?  
What in the world is hard to give up?  
What are many beings tied up with,  
like birds in a snare?”
- 2.1 “Provisions should be tied up with faith.  
Glory is the lair of wealth.  
Desire drags a person around.  
Desire in the world is hard to give up.  
Many beings are tied up with desire,  
like birds in a snare.”

SN 1.80

## Lamp

*Pajjotasutta*

- 1.1 “What’s the lamp for the world?  
What in the world is wakeful?  
Who are one’s work colleagues?  
What is one’s walk of life?”
- 2.1 What nurtures the idle and the tireless,  
like a mother her child?  
By what do the creatures who live off the earth  
sustain their life?”
- 3.1 “Wisdom is the lamp for the world.  
Mindfulness in the world is wakeful.

Cattle are one's work colleagues,  
and the furrow is one's walk of life.

Rain nurtures the idle and the tireless, 4.1  
like a mother her child.  
The creatures who live on the earth  
sustain their life by rain."

SN 1.81

## Without Conflict

*Araṇasutta*

"Who in the world has no conflict? 1.1  
Whose life is not lost?  
Who here completely understands desire?  
Who always lives as their own master?

To whom do mother, father, and brothers 2.1  
bow when they're established?  
Who here, though of low birth,  
is bowed to even by aristocrats?"

"Ascetics have no conflict in the world. 3.1  
The life of ascetics is not lost.  
Ascetics completely understand desire.  
Ascetics always live as their own master.

Mother, father, and brothers 4.1  
bow to ascetics when they're established.  
Even though an ascetic is of low birth,  
they're bowed to even by aristocrats."

*The Linked Discourses on Deities are complete.*

# LINKED DISCOURSES ON GODS

# Chapter One

SN 2.1

## With Kassapa (1st)

*Paṭhamakassapasutta*

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, the glorious god Kassapa, lighting up the 1.3  
entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one  
side, and said to him, “The Buddha has revealed the mendicant,  
but not his instructions to a mendicant.”

“Well then, Kassapa, clarify this matter yourself.” 1.5

“They should train in following good advice, 2.1  
in attending closely to ascetics,  
in sitting alone in hidden places,  
and in calming the mind.”

That’s what the god Kassapa said, and the teacher approved. 3.1  
Then Kassapa, knowing that the teacher approved, bowed and  
respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before  
vanishing right there.

SN 2.2

## With Kassapa (2nd)

*Dutiyakassapasutta*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Standing to one side, the god Kassapa recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:

2.1 “Suppose a mendicant is a meditator, freed in mind.  
If they want to reach the heart's peace,  
having known the arising and passing of the world,  
healthy-minded, independent, that is their reward.”

SN 2.3

## With Māgha

*Māghasutta*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Then, late at night, the glorious god Māgha, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and addressed the Buddha in verse:

2.1 “When what is incinerated do you sleep at ease?  
When what is incinerated is there no sorrow?  
What is the one thing  
whose killing you approve?”

3.1 “When anger's incinerated you sleep at ease.  
When anger's incinerated there is no sorrow.  
Vatrabhū, anger has a poisonous root,  
and a honey tip.  
The noble ones praise the slaying of anger,  
for when it's incinerated there is no sorrow.”

SN 2.4

## With Māghadha

*Māgadhasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1  
 Standing to one side, the god Māghadha addressed the Buddha 1.2  
 in verse:

“How many lamps are there 2.1  
 that light up the world?  
 We’ve come to ask the Buddha;  
 how are we to understand this?”

“There are four lamps in the world, 3.1  
 a fifth is not found.  
 The sun blazes by day,  
 the moon glows at night,

while a fire lights up both 4.1  
 by day and by night.  
 But a Buddha is the best of lights:  
 this is the supreme radiance.”

SN 2.5

## With Dāmali

*Dāmalisutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1  
 Then, late at night, the glorious god Dāmali, lighting up the 1.2  
 entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one  
 side, and recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“This is what should be done by a brahmin: 2.1  
 unrelenting striving.  
 Then, with the giving up of sensual pleasures,

they won't hope to be reborn.”

- 3.1 “The brahmin has nothing left to do,” *said the Buddha to Dāmali,*  
 “for they’ve completed their task.  
 So long as a person fails to gain a footing in the river,  
 they strive with every limb.  
 But someone who has gained a footing and stands  
 on dry land  
 need not strive, for they have reached the far shore.
- 4.1 Dāmali, this is a simile for the brahmin,  
 alert, a meditator who has ended defilements.  
 Since they’ve reached the end of rebirth and death,  
 they need not strive, for they have reached the far  
 shore.”

## SN 2.6

### With Kāmada

#### *Kāmadāsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 Standing to one side, the god Kāmada said to the Buddha, “It’s too hard, Blessed One! It’s just too hard!”
- 2.1 “They do it even though it’s hard,”  
*said the Buddha to Kāmada,*  
 “the stable trainees with ethics, and immersion.  
 For one who has entered the homeless life,  
 contentment brings happiness.”
- 3.1 “Such contentment, Blessed One, is hard to find.”
- 4.1 “They find it even though it’s hard,”  
*said the Buddha to Kāmada,*



“those who love peace of mind;  
whose minds love to meditate  
day and night.”

“But it’s hard, Blessed One, to immerse this mind in samādhi.” 5.1

“They become immersed in samādhi even though it’s  
hard,” 6.1

*said the Buddha to Kāmada,*

“those who love calming the faculties.  
Having cut through the net of Death,  
the noble ones, Kāmada, go on their way.”

“But this path, Blessed One, is rough and hard to travel.” 7.1

“Though it’s rough, hard to travel,  
the noble ones, Kāmada, go on their way. 8.1

The ignoble fall headfirst  
on a rough path.

But the path of the noble ones is smooth,  
for the noble ones are smooth amid the rough.”

SN 2.7

## With Pañcālacaṇḍa

*Pañcālacaṇḍasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Standing to one side, the god Pañcālacaṇḍa recited this verse in  
the Buddha’s presence: 1.2

“The opening amid confinement 2.1  
was discovered by the Buddha of vast intelligence,  
who woke up to absorption,  
the sage, the solitary bull.”

- 3.1 “Even amid confinement they discover,” *said the*  
*Buddha to Pañcālacaṇḍa,*  
 “the principle for attaining extinguishment.  
 Those who have acquired mindfulness  
 are perfectly serene in samādhi.”

SN 2.8

## With Tāyana

*Tāyanasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 Then, late at night, the glorious god Tāyana, formerly a religious founder, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and recited these verses in the Buddha’s presence:
- 2.1 “Strive and cut the stream!  
 Dispel sensual pleasures, brahmin.  
 A sage who doesn’t give up sensual pleasures  
 is not reborn in a unified state.
- 3.1 If one is to do what should be done,  
 one should staunchly strive.  
 For the life gone forth when laxly led  
 just stirs up dust all the more.
- 4.1 A bad deed is better left undone,  
 for it will plague you later on.  
 A good deed is better done,  
 one that does not plague you.
- 5.1 When kusa grass is wrongly grasped  
 it only cuts the hand.  
 So too, the ascetic life, when wrongly taken,  
 drags you to hell.

Any lax act, 6.1  
 any corrupt observance,  
 or suspicious spiritual life,  
 is not very fruitful.”

That’s what the god Tāyana said. Then he bowed and respectfully 7.1  
 circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right side, before vanishing  
 right there.

Then, when the night had passed, the Buddha told the mendi- 8.1  
 cants all that had happened.

“Mendicants, tonight, the glorious god Tāyana, formerly a re- 8.2  
 ligious founder, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, came to me,  
 bowed, stood to one side, and recited these verses in my presence.”  
 The Buddha repeated the verses in full, adding:

“That’s what the god Tāyana said. Then he bowed and respect- 14.1  
 fully circled me, keeping me on his right side, before vanishing  
 right there. Mendicants, learn the verses of Tāyana! Memorize the  
 verses of Tāyana! Remember the verses of Tāyana! These verses  
 are beneficial and relate to the fundamentals of the spiritual life.”

SN 2.9

## The Moon

*Candimasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Now at that time the Moon God had been seized by Rāhu, lord 1.2  
 of demons. Then the Moon God, recollecting the Buddha, at that  
 time recited this verse:

“Homage to you, Buddha, hero! 2.1  
 You’re free in every way.  
 I’ve wandered into confinement:  
 be my refuge!”

Then the Buddha addressed Rāhu in verse concerning the Moon 3.1  
 God:

- 4.1 “The Moon God has gone for refuge  
to the Realized One, the perfected one.  
The Buddhas have compassion for the world—  
so Rāhu, release the Moon!”
- 5.1 Then Rāhu, having released the Moon, rushed to see Vepacitti,  
lord of demons and stood to one side, shocked and awestruck.  
Vepacitti addressed him in verse:
- 6.1 “Why the rush?  
Rāhu, you released the Moon  
and came here looking like you’re in shock:  
why do you stand there so scared?”
- 7.1 “My head would have exploded in seven pieces,  
I would have found no happiness in life,  
if, when enchanted by the Buddha’s spell,  
I had not released the Moon.”

SN 2.10

## The Sun

*Sūriyasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 Now at that time the Sun God had been seized by Rāhu, lord of  
demons. Then the Sun God, recollecting the Buddha, at that time  
recited this verse:
- 2.1 “Homage to you, Buddha, hero!  
You’re everywhere free.  
I’ve wandered into confinement:  
be my refuge!”
- 3.1 Then the Buddha addressed Rāhu in verse concerning the Sun  
God:

“The Sun God has gone for refuge  
to the Realized One, the perfected one.  
The Buddhas have compassion for the world—  
so Rāhu, release the Sun! 4.1

He is a beacon in the darkness,  
the blazing sun, circle of magnificent flame. 5.1  
Rāhu, do not swallow him as he traverses the sky.  
Rāhu, release my offspring, the Sun!”

Then Rāhu, having released the Sun, rushed to see Vepacitti, 6.1  
lord of demons and stood to one side, shocked and awestruck.  
Vepacitti addressed him in verse:

“Why the rush?  
Rāhu, you released the Sun  
and came here looking like you’re in shock:  
why do you stand there so scared?” 7.1

“My head would have exploded in seven pieces,  
I would have found no joy in life,  
if, when enchanted by the Buddha’s spell,  
I had not released the Sun.” 8.1

# The Chapter with Anāthapiṇḍika

SN 2.11

With Candimasa

*Candimasaṣutta*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Then, late at night, the glorious god Candimasa, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:

2.1 “Like deer in a mosquito-free marsh,  
they will reach a safe place  
having entered the absorptions,  
unified, alert, and mindful.”

3.1 “Like fish when the net is cut,  
they will reach the far shore  
having entered the absorptions,  
diligent, with vices discarded.”

SN 2.12

## With Vishnu

*Veṇḍusutta*

Standing to one side, the god Vishnu recited this verse in the Buddha's presence: 1.1

“Happy are the children of Manu 2.1  
 who pay homage to the Holy One!  
 They apply themselves to Gotama's instructions,  
 diligently training.”

“Those who practice absorption in accord with the 3.1  
 training”, *said the Buddha to Vishnu*,  
 “in the way of teaching I've proclaimed,  
 they're in time to be diligent;  
 they won't fall under the sway of Death.”

SN 2.13

## With Dīghalaṭṭhi

*Dīghalaṭṭhisutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
 Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

Then, late at night, the glorious god Dīghalaṭṭhi, lighting up the 1.3  
 entire Bamboo Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to  
 one side, and recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:

“Suppose a mendicant is a meditator, freed in mind. 2.1  
 If they want to reach the heart's peace,  
 having known the arising and passing of the world,  
 healthy-minded, independent, that is their reward.”

SN 2.14

## With Nandana

*Nandanasutta*

1.1 Standing to one side, the god Nandana addressed the Buddha in verse:

2.1 “I ask you, Gotama, whose wisdom is vast,  
the Blessed One of unhindered knowledge and vi-  
sion.

What kind of person do they call ethical?

What kind of person do they call wise?

What kind of person lives on after transcending suf-  
fering?

What kind of person is worshipped by the deities?”

3.1 “A person who is ethical, wise, evolved,  
becomes serene, loving absorption, mindful,  
who’s gotten rid of and given up all sorrows,  
with defilements ended, they bear their final body.

4.1 That’s the kind of person they call ethical.  
That’s the kind of person they call wise.  
That kind of person lives on after transcending suffer-  
ing.  
That kind of person is worshipped by the deities.”

SN 2.15

## With Candana

*Candanasutta*

1.1 Standing to one side, the god Candana addressed the Buddha in verse:

2.1 “Who here crosses the flood,



tireless all day and night?  
Who, not standing and unsupported,  
does not sink in the deep?”

“Someone who is always endowed with ethics, 3.1  
wise and serene,  
energetic and resolute,  
crosses the flood so hard to cross.

Someone who desists from sensual perception, 4.1  
has moved past the fetter of form,  
and has finished with relishing and greed  
does not sink in the deep.”

SN 2.16

## With Vāsudatta

*Vāsudattasutta*

Standing to one side, the god Vāsudatta recited this verse in the 1.1  
Buddha’s presence:

“Like they’re struck by a sword, 2.1  
like their head was on fire,  
a mendicant should wander mindful,  
to give up sensual desire.”

“Like they’re struck by a sword, 3.1  
like their head was on fire,  
a mendicant should wander mindful,  
to give up identity view.”

SN 2.17

## With Subrahmā

*Subrahmasutta*

- 1.1 Standing to one side, the god Subrahmā addressed the Buddha in verse:
- 2.1        “This mind is always anxious,  
              this mind is always stressed  
              about stresses that haven’t arisen  
              and those that have.  
              If there is a state free of anxiety,  
              please answer my question.”
- 3.1        “Not without understanding and austerity,  
              not without restraining the sense faculties,  
              not without letting go of everything,  
              do I see safety for living creatures.”
- 4.1        That is what the Buddha said. . . . The god vanished right there.

SN 2.18

## With Kakudha

*Kakudhasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāketa in the deer park at the Añjana Wood.
- 1.3        Then, late at night, the glorious god Kakudha, lighting up the entire Añjana Wood, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, “Do you delight, ascetic?”
- 1.5        “What have I gained, sir?”
- 1.6        “Well then, ascetic, do you sorrow?”
- 1.7        “What have I lost, sir?”
- 1.8        “Well then, ascetic, do you neither delight nor sorrow?”
- 1.9        “Yes, sir.”

“I hope you’re untroubled, mendicant, 2.1  
 I hope that delight isn’t found in you.  
 I hope that discontent doesn’t  
 overwhelm you as you sit alone.”

“I’m genuinely untroubled, spirit, 3.1  
 and no delight is found in me.  
 And also discontent doesn’t  
 overwhelm me as I sit alone.”

“How are you untroubled, mendicant? 4.1  
 How is delight not found in you?  
 How does discontent not  
 overwhelm you as you sit alone?”

“Delight is born from misery, 5.1  
 misery is born from delight;  
 sir, you should know me as  
 a mendicant free of delight and misery.”

“After a long time I see 6.1  
 a brahmin extinguished.  
 A mendicant free of delight and misery,  
 he has crossed over clinging to the world.”

SN 2.19

## With Uttara

*Uttarasutta*

At Rājagaha. Standing to one side, the god Uttara recited this verse 1.1  
 in the Buddha’s presence:

“This life, so very short, is led onward. 2.1  
 There’s no shelter for one led on by old age.  
 Seeing this peril in death,

do good deeds that bring happiness.”

- 3.1 “This life, so very short, is led onward.  
There’s no shelter for one led on by old age.  
Seeing this peril in death,  
a seeker of peace would drop the world’s bait.”

SN 2.20

## With Anāthapiṇḍika

*Anāthapiṇḍikasutta*

- 1.1 Standing to one side, the god Anāthapiṇḍika recited these verses  
in the Buddha’s presence:
- 2.1 “This is indeed that Jeta’s Grove,  
frequented by the Saṅgha of hermits,  
where the King of Dhamma stayed:  
it brings me joy!
- 3.1 Deeds, knowledge, and principle;  
ethical conduct, an excellent livelihood;  
by these are mortals purified,  
not by clan or wealth.
- 4.1 That’s why an astute person,  
seeing what’s good for themselves,  
would examine the teaching rationally,  
and thus be purified in it.
- 5.1 Sāriputta has true wisdom,  
ethics, and also peace.  
Any mendicant who has gone beyond  
can at best equal him.”

This is what the god Anāthapiṇḍika said. Then he bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right side, before vanishing right there. 6.1

Then, when the night had passed, the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, tonight, a certain glorious god, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, came to me, bowed, stood to one side, and recited these verses in my presence.” The Buddha then repeated the verses in full. 7.1

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, “Sir, that god must surely have been Anāthapiṇḍika. For the householder Anāthapiṇḍika was devoted to Venerable Sāriputta.” 13.1

“Good, good, Ānanda. You’ve reached the logical conclusion, as far as logic goes. For that was indeed the god Anāthapiṇḍika.” 13.4

# The Chapter on Various Sectarrians

SN 2.2.1

With Shiva

*Sivasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.3 Then, late at night, the glorious god Shiva, lighting up the entire Jeta’s Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and recited these verses in the Buddha’s presence:
- 2.1 “Associate only with the virtuous!  
Try to get close to the virtuous!  
Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
things get better, not worse.
- 3.1 Associate only with the virtuous!  
Try to get close to the virtuous!  
Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
wisdom is gained—but not from anyone else.
- 4.1 Associate only with the virtuous!  
Try to get close to the virtuous!  
Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
you grieve not among the grieving.

Associate only with the virtuous! 5.1  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 you shine among your relatives.

Associate only with the virtuous! 6.1  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 sentient beings go to a good place.

Associate only with the virtuous! 7.1  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 sentient beings live happily.”

Then the Buddha replied to Shiva in verse: 8.1

“Associate only with the virtuous! 9.1  
 Try to get close to the virtuous!  
 Understanding the true teaching of the good,  
 you’re released from all suffering.”

## SN 2.22

# With Khema

## *Khemasutta*

Standing to one side, the god Khema recited these verses in the 1.1  
 Buddha’s presence:

“Witless fools behave 2.1  
 like their own worst enemies,  
 doing wicked deeds  
 that ripen as bitter fruit.

It’s not good to do a deed 3.1

that plagues you later on,  
for which you weep and wail,  
as its effect stays with you.

- 4.1 It is good to do a deed  
that doesn't plague you later on,  
that gladdens and cheers,  
as its effect stays with you."
- 5.1 "As a precaution, you should do  
what you know is for your own welfare.  
A thinker, a wise one would not proceed  
thinking like the cart driver.
- 6.1 Suppose a cart driver leaves the highway,  
so even and well compacted.  
They enter upon a rough road,  
and fret when their axle breaks.
- 7.1 So too, an idiot departs the good  
to follow what's against the good.  
Fallen in the jaws of death,  
they fret like their axle's broken."

SN 2.23

## With Serī

*Serīsutta*

- 1.1 Standing to one side, the god Serī addressed the Buddha in verse:
- 2.1 "Both gods and humans  
enjoy their food.  
So what's the name of the spirit  
who doesn't like food?"
- 3.1 "Those who give with faith



and a clear and confident heart,  
partake of food  
in this world and the next.

So you should dispel stinginess, 4.1  
overcoming that stain, and give a gift.  
The good deeds of sentient beings  
support them in the next world.”

“It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how well said this was by Master 5.1  
Gotama.” He repeated the Buddha’s verses, and said:

“Once upon a time, sir, I was a king named Serī, a giver, a donor, 8.1  
who praised giving. I gave gifts at the four gates to ascetics and  
brahmins, to paupers, vagrants, travelers, and beggars. Then the  
ladies of my harem approached me and said, ‘Your Majesty gives  
gifts, but we don’t. Your Majesty, please support us to give gifts  
and make merit.’ Then it occurred to me, ‘I’m a giver, a donor, who  
praises giving. When they say, “We would give gifts”, what am I to  
say?’ And so I gave the first gate to the ladies of my harem. There  
they gave gifts, while my own giving dwindled.

Then my aristocrat vassals approached me and said, ‘Your 9.1  
Majesty gives gifts, the ladies of your harem give gifts, but we don’t.  
Your Majesty, please support us to give gifts and make merit.’ Then  
it occurred to me, ‘I’m a giver, a donor, who praises giving. When  
they say, “We would give gifts”, what am I to say?’ And so I gave the  
second gate to my aristocrat vassals. There they gave gifts, while  
my own giving dwindled.

Then my troops approached me and said, ‘Your Majesty gives 10.1  
gifts, the ladies of your harem give gifts, your aristocrat vassals give  
gifts, but we don’t. Your Majesty, please support us to give gifts  
and make merit.’ Then it occurred to me, ‘I’m a giver, a donor, who  
praises giving. When they say, “We would give gifts”, what am I to  
say?’ And so I gave the third gate to my troops. There they gave  
gifts, while my own giving dwindled.

- 11.1 Then my brahmins and householders approached me and said, ‘Your Majesty gives gifts, the ladies of your harem give gifts, your aristocrat vassals give gifts, your troops give gifts, but we don’t. Your Majesty, please support us to give gifts and make merit.’ Then it occurred to me, ‘I’m a giver, a donor, who praises giving. When they say, “We would give gifts”, what am I to say?’ And so I gave the fourth gate to my brahmins and householders. There they gave gifts, while my own giving dwindled.
- 12.1 Then my men approached me and said, ‘Now Your Majesty is not giving gifts at all!’ When they said this, I said to those men, ‘So then, my men, send half of the revenue from the outer districts to the royal compound. Then give half right there to ascetics and brahmins, to paupers, vagrants, travelers, and beggars.’ Sir, for a long time I made so much merit and did so many skillful deeds. I never reached any limit so as to say ‘there’s this much merit’ or ‘there’s this much result of merit’ or ‘for so long I’ll remain in heaven.’ It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how well said this was by Master Gotama:
- 13.1 “Those who give with faith  
and a clear and confident heart,  
partake of food  
in this world and the next.
- 14.1 So you should dispel stinginess,  
overcoming that stain, and give a gift.  
The good deeds of sentient beings  
support them in the next world.”

SN 2.24

## With Ghaṭikāra

*Ghaṭikārasutta*

- 1.1 Standing to one side, the god Ghaṭikāra recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

- “Seven mendicants reborn in Aviha  
have been freed.  
With the complete ending of greed and hate,  
they’ve crossed over clinging to the world.” 2.1
- “Who are those who’ve crossed the bog,  
Death’s domain so hard to pass?  
Who, after leaving behind the human body,  
have risen above celestial yokes?” 3.1
- “Upaka and Palagaṇḍa,  
and Pukkusāti, these three;  
Bhaddiya and Bhaddadeva,  
and Bāhudantī and Piṅgiya.  
They, after leaving behind the human body,  
have risen above celestial yokes.” 4.1
- “You speak well of them,  
who have let go the snares of Māra.  
Whose teaching did they understand  
to cut the bonds of rebirth?” 5.1
- “None other than the Blessed One!  
None other than your instruction!  
It was your teaching that they understood  
to cut the bonds of rebirth. 6.1
- Where name and form  
cease with nothing left over;  
understanding this teaching,  
they cut the bonds of rebirth.” 7.1
- “The words you say are deep,  
hard to understand, so very hard to wake up to.  
Whose teaching did you understand  
to be able to say such things?” 8.1

- 9.1 “In the past I was a potter  
in Vebhaliṅga called Ghaṭṭikāra.  
I took care of my parents  
as a lay follower of Buddha Kassapa.
- 10.1 I refrained from sexual intercourse,  
I was celibate, spiritual.  
We lived in the same village;  
in the past I was your friend.
- 11.1 I am the one who understands  
that these seven mendicants have been freed.  
With the complete ending of greed and hate,  
they’ve crossed over clinging to the world.”
- 12.1 “That’s exactly how it was,  
just as you say, Bhaggava.  
In the past you were a potter  
in Vebhaliṅga called Ghaṭṭikāra.
- 13.1 You took care of your parents  
as a lay follower of Buddha Kassapa.  
You refrained from sexual intercourse,  
you were celibate, spiritual.  
We lived in the same village;  
in the past you were my friend.”
- 14.1 “That’s how it was  
when those friends of old met again.  
Both of them are evolved,  
and bear their final body.”

SN 2.25

# With Jantu

*Jantusutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. 1.1

At one time several mendicants were staying in the Kosalan lands, in a wilderness hut on the slopes of the Himalayas. They were restless, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, loose-tongued, unmindful, lacking situational awareness and immersion, with straying minds and undisciplined faculties. 1.2

Then on the fifteenth day sabbath the god Jantu went up to those mendicants and addressed them in verse: 2.1

“The mendicants used to live happily,  
as disciples of Gotama. 3.1

Desireless they sought alms;  
desireless they used their lodgings.  
Knowing that the world was impermanent  
they made an end of suffering.

But now they’ve made themselves hard to look after,  
like chiefs in a village. 4.1

They eat and eat and then lie down,  
unconscious in the homes of others.

Having raised my joined palms to the Saṅgha,  
I speak here only about certain people. 5.1

They’re rejects, with no protector,  
just like those who have passed away.

I’m speaking about  
those who live negligently. 6.1

To those who live diligently  
I pay homage.”

SN 2.26

## With Rohitassa

*Rohitassasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 Standing to one side, the god Rohitassa said to the Buddha:
- 1.3 “Sir, is it possible to know or see or reach the end of the world by traveling to a place where there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn?”
- 1.4 “Reverend, I say it’s not possible to know or see or reach the end of the world by traveling to a place where there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn.”
- 2.1 “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how well said this was by Master Gotama.
- 3.1 Once upon a time, I was a hermit called Rohitassa, son of Bhoja. I was a sky-walker with psychic power. I was as fast as a light arrow easily shot across the shadow of a palm tree by a well-trained expert archer with a strong bow. My stride was such that it could span from the eastern ocean to the western ocean. This wish came to me: ‘I will reach the end of the world by traveling.’ Having such speed and stride, I traveled for my whole lifespan of a hundred years—pausing only to eat and drink, go to the toilet, and sleep to dispel weariness—and I passed away along the way, never reaching the end of the world.
- 4.1 It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how well said this was by Master Gotama: ‘Reverend, I say it’s not possible to know or see or reach the end of the world by traveling to a place where there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn.’”
- 5.1 “But Reverend, I also say there’s no making an end of suffering without reaching the end of the world. For it is in this fathom-long carcass with its perception and mind that I describe the world, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.
- 6.1 The end of the world can never  
be reached by traveling.

But without reaching the end of the world,  
there's no release from suffering.

So a clever person, understanding the world, 7.1  
has completed the spiritual journey, and gone to the  
end of the world.

A peaceful one, knowing the end of the world,  
does not long for this world or the next.”

SN 2.27

## With Nanda

*Nandasutta*

Standing to one side, the god Nanda recited this verse in the Buddha's presence: 1.1

“Time flies, nights pass by, 2.1  
the stages of life leave us one by one.  
Seeing this peril in death,  
you should do good deeds that bring happiness.”

“Time flies, nights pass by, 3.1  
the stages of life leave us one by one.  
Seeing this peril in death,  
one looking for peace would drop the world's bait.”

SN 2.28

## With Nandivīsāla

*Nandivīsālasutta*

Standing to one side, the god Nandivīsāla addressed the Buddha in verse: 1.1

“Four are its wheels, and nine its doors; 2.1

it's stuffed full, bound with greed,  
and born from a bog.  
Great hero, how am I supposed to live like this?"

- 3.1 "Having cut the strap and harness—  
wicked desire and greed—  
and having plucked out craving, root and all:  
that's how you're supposed to live like this."

SN 2.29

## With Susīma

*Susimasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Ānanda, do you like Sāriputta?"
- 2.1 "Sir, who on earth would not like Venerable Sāriputta unless they're a fool, a hater, delusional, or mentally deranged? Venerable Sāriputta is astute, he has great wisdom, widespread wisdom, laughing wisdom, swift wisdom, sharp wisdom, and penetrating wisdom. He has few wishes, he's content, secluded, aloof, and energetic. He gives advice and accepts advice; he accuses and criticizes wickedness. Who on earth would not like Venerable Sāriputta unless they're a fool, a hater, delusional, or mentally deranged?"
- 3.1 "That's so true, Ānanda! That's so true! Who on earth would not like Venerable Sāriputta unless they're a fool, a hater, delusional, or mentally deranged?" And the Buddha repeated all of Ānanda's terms of praise.
- 4.1 While this praise of Sāriputta was being spoken, the god Susīma approached the Buddha, escorted by a large assembly of gods. He bowed, stood to one side, and said to him:
- 5.1 "That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! Who on earth would not like Venerable Sāriputta unless they're a fool, a



hater, delusional, or mentally deranged?” And he too repeated all the terms of praise of Sāriputta, adding, “For I too, sir, whenever I go to an assembly of gods, frequently hear the same terms of praise.”

While this praise of Sāriputta was being spoken, the gods of 7.1  
Susīma’s assembly—uplifted and overjoyed, full of rapture and happiness—generated a rainbow of bright colors.

Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally beautiful, 8.1  
eight-faceted, well-worked. When placed on a cream rug it would shine and glow and radiate. In the same way, the gods of Susīma’s assembly generated a rainbow of bright colors.

Suppose there was a pendant of river gold, fashioned by an ex- 9.1  
pert smith, well wrought in the forge. When placed on a cream rug it would shine and glow and radiate. In the same way, the gods of Susīma’s assembly generated a rainbow of bright colors.

Suppose that after the rainy season the sky was clear and cloud- 10.1  
less. At the crack of dawn, the Morning Star shines and glows and radiates. In the same way, the gods of Susīma’s assembly generated a rainbow of bright colors.

Suppose that after the rainy season the sky was clear and cloud- 11.1  
less. As the sun rises, it would dispel all the darkness from the sky as it shines and glows and radiates. In the same way, the gods of Susīma’s assembly generated a rainbow of bright colors.

Then the god Susīma recited this verse about Venerable Sāriputta 12.1  
in the Buddha’s presence:

“He’s considered astute, 13.1  
Sāriputta, free of anger.  
Few in wishes, sweet, tamed,  
the hermit shines in the Teacher’s praise!”

Then the Buddha replied to Susīma with this verse about Vener- 14.1  
able Sāriputta:

“He’s considered astute, 15.1

Sāriputta, free of anger.  
 Few in wishes, sweet, tamed;  
 developed and well-tamed, he bides his time.”

SN 2.30

## The Disciples of Various Sectarrians

*Nānātitthiyasāvakasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground.
- 1.3 Then, late at night, several glorious gods lit up the entire Bamboo Grove. They were Asama, Sahali, Niṅka, Ākoṭaka, Vetambarī, and Mānavagāmiya, and all of them were disciples of various sectarian teachers. They went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side.
- 1.4 Standing to one side, the god Asama recited this verse about Pūraṇa Kassapa in the Buddha’s presence:
- 2.1 “In injuring and killing here,  
 in beating and extortion,  
 Kassapa saw no evil,  
 nor any merit for oneself.  
 What he taught should truly be trusted,  
 he’s worthy of esteem as Teacher.”
- 3.1 Then the god Sahali recited this verse about Makkhali Gosala in the Buddha’s presence:
- 4.1 “Through mortification in disgust of sin he became  
 well restrained.  
 He gave up arguing with people.  
 Refraining from false speech, he spoke the truth.  
 Surely such a man does no wrong!”
- 5.1 Then the god Niṅka recited this verse about Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta in the Buddha’s presence:

“Disgusted at sin, an alert mendicant, 6.1  
well restrained in the four controls;  
explaining what is seen and heard:  
surely he can be no sinner!”

Then the god Ākoṭaka recited this verse about various sectarian 7.1  
teachers in the Buddha’s presence:

“Pakudhaka, Kāṭiyāna, and Nigaṇṭha, 8.1  
as well as this Makkhali and Pūraṇa:  
Teachers of communities, attained ascetics,  
surely they weren’t far from truly good men!”

Then the god Vetambarī replied to the god Ākoṭaka in verse: 9.1

“Though the wretched jackal howls along, 10.1  
it never equals the lion.  
A naked liar with suspicious conduct,  
though they teach a community, is not like the good.”

Then Māra the Wicked took possession of the god Vetambarī 11.1  
and recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“Those dedicated to mortification in disgust of sin, 12.1  
safeguarding their seclusion,  
attached to form,  
they rejoice in the heavenly realm.  
Indeed, those mortals give correct instructions  
regarding the next world.”

Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, 13.1  
replied to him in verse:

“Whatever forms there are in this world or the world 14.1  
beyond,  
and those of shining beauty in the sky,  
all of these you praise, Namuci,  
like bait tossed out for catching fish.”

15.1 Then the god Māṇavagāmiya recited this verse about the Buddha in his presence:

16.1 “Of all the mountains of Rājagaha,  
Vipula’s said to be the best.  
Seta is the best of the Himalayan peaks,  
and the sun, of travelers in space.

17.1 The ocean is the best of seas,  
and the moon, of lights that shine at night.  
But in all the world with its gods,  
the Buddha is declared foremost.”

*The Linked Discourses on Gods are complete.*

LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH KING PASENADI OF  
KOSALA

# Chapter One

SN 3.1

Young

*Daharasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.3 Then King Pasenadi of Kosala 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 said to the Buddha, “Does Master Gotama claim to have awakened to the supreme perfect awakening?”
- 1.6 “If anyone should rightly be said to have awakened to the supreme perfect awakening, it’s me. For, great king, I have awakened to the supreme perfect awakening.”
- 2.1 “Well, there are those ascetics and brahmins who lead an order and a community, and teach a community. They’re 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. I also asked them whether they claimed to have awakened to the supreme perfect awakening, but they made no such claim. So why do you, given that you’re so young in age and newly gone forth?”
- 3.1 “Great king, these four things should not be looked down upon or disparaged because they are young. What four? An aristocrat, a

serpent, a fire, and a mendicant. These four things should not be looked down upon or disparaged because they are young.”

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

“A man should not despise 5.1  
an aristocrat of impeccable lineage,  
high-born and famous,  
just because they’re young.

For it’s possible that that lord of men, 6.1  
as aristocrat, will gain the throne.  
And in his anger he’ll execute a royal punishment,  
and have you violently beaten.  
Hence you should avoid him  
for the sake of your own life.

Whether in village or wilderness, 7.1  
wherever a serpent is seen,  
a man should not look down on it  
or despise it for its youth.

With its rainbow of colors, 8.1  
the serpent of fiery breath glides along.  
It lashes out and bites the fool,  
both men and women alike.  
Hence you should avoid it  
for the sake of your own life.

A fire devours a huge amount, 9.1  
a conflagration with a blackened trail.  
A man should not look down on it  
just because it’s young.

For once it gets fuel 10.1  
it’ll become a huge conflagration.

It'll lash out and burn the fool,  
both men and women alike.  
Hence you should avoid it  
for the sake of your own life.

11.1      When a forest is burned by fire,  
              a conflagration with a blackened trail,  
              the shoots will spring up there again,  
              with the passing of the days and nights.

12.1      But if a mendicant endowed with ethics  
              burns you with their power,  
              you'll have no sons or cattle,  
              nor will your heirs find wealth.  
              Childless and heirless you become,  
              like a palm-tree stump.

13.1      That's why an astute person,  
              seeing what's good for themselves,  
              would always treat these properly:  
              a snake, a conflagration,  
              a famous aristocrat,  
              and a mendicant endowed with ethics."

14.1      When this was said, King Pasenadi of Kosala said to the Buddha,  
              "Excellent, sir! 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, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go  
              for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant  
              Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a  
              lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."



## SN 3.2

## A Person

*Purisasutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha, bowed, 1.2  
sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha, “Sir, how many things  
arise inside a person for their harm, suffering, and discomfort?”

“Great king, three things arise inside a person for their harm, 2.1  
suffering, and discomfort. What three? Greed, hate, and delusion.  
These three things arise inside a person for their harm, suffering,  
and discomfort.”

That is what the Buddha said. ... 2.7

“When greed, hate, and delusion, 3.1  
have arisen inside oneself,  
they harm a person of wicked heart,  
as a reed is destroyed by its own fruit.”

## SN 3.3

## Old Age and Death

*Jarāmarāṇasutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, “Sir, for 1.2  
someone who has been reborn, is there any exemption from old  
age and death?”

“Great king, for someone who has been reborn, there’s no ex- 1.4  
emption from old age and death. Even for well-to-do aristocrats,  
brahmins, or householders—rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots  
of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, and lots of money  
and grain—when they’re born, there’s no exemption from old age  
and death. Even for mendicants who are perfected—who have  
ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what

had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their own goal, utterly ended the fetters of rebirth, and are rightly freed through enlightenment—their bodies are liable to break up and be laid to rest.”

1.9 That is what the Buddha said. ...

2.1 “The fancy chariots of kings wear out,  
and this body too gets old.  
But goodness never gets old:  
so the true and the good proclaim.”

SN 3.4

Loved

*Piyasutta*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, “Just now, sir, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind. ‘Who are those who love themselves? And who are those who don’t love themselves?’

1.5 Then it occurred to me: ‘Those who do bad things by way of body, speech, and mind don’t love themselves. Even though they may say: “I love myself”, they don’t really. Why is that? It’s because they treat themselves like an enemy. That’s why they don’t love themselves.

1.13 Those who do good things by way of body, speech, and mind do love themselves. Even though they may say: “I don’t love myself”, they do really. Why is that? It’s because they treat themselves like a loved one. That’s why they do love themselves.’”

2.1 “That’s so true, great king! That’s so true!” said the Buddha. And he repeated the king’s statement, adding:

3.1 “If you’d only love yourself,  
you’d not yoke yourself to wickedness.

For happiness is not easy to find  
by someone who does bad deeds.

When you're seized by the terminator 4.1  
as you give up your human life,  
what can you call your own?  
What do you take when you go?  
What goes with you,  
like a shadow that never leaves?

Both the good and the bad 5.1  
that a mortal does in this life  
is what they can call their own.  
That's what they take when they go.  
That's what goes with them,  
like a shadow that never leaves.

That's why you should do good, 6.1  
investing in the future life.  
The good deeds of sentient beings  
support them in the next world."

SN 3.5

## Self-Protected

*Attarakkhitasutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, "Just now, 1.2  
sir, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind. 'Who  
are those who protect themselves? And who are those who don't  
protect themselves?'

Then it occurred to me: 'Those who do bad things by way of 1.5  
body, speech, and mind don't protect themselves. Even if they're  
protected by a company of elephants, cavalry, chariots, or infantry,  
they still don't protect themselves. Why is that? Because such

protection is exterior, not interior. That's why they don't protect themselves.

- 1.13 Those who do good things by way of body, speech, and mind do protect themselves. Even if they're not protected by a company of elephants, cavalry, chariots, or infantry, they still protect themselves. Why is that? Because such protection is interior, not exterior. That's why they do protect themselves.”

- 2.1 “That's so true, great king! That's so true!” said the Buddha. And he repeated the king's statement, adding:

- 3.1 “Restraint of the body is good;  
restraint of speech is good;  
restraint of mind is good;  
everywhere, restraint is good.  
A sincere person, restrained everywhere,  
is said to be ‘protected.’”

### SN 3.6

## Few

### *Appakasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattṭhi.

- 1.2 Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, “Just now, sir, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind: ‘Few are the sentient beings in the world who, when they obtain luxury possessions, don't get indulgent and negligent, giving in to greed for sensual pleasures, and doing the wrong thing by others. There are many more who, when they obtain luxury possessions, do get indulgent and negligent, giving in to greed for sensual pleasures, and doing the wrong thing by others.’”

- 2.1 “That's so true, great king! That's so true!” said the Buddha. And he repeated the king's statement, adding:

- 3.1 “Full of desire for possessions and pleasures,

greedy, infatuated by sensual pleasures;  
 they don't notice that they've gone too far,  
 like deer falling into a trap set out.  
 It'll be bitter later on;  
 for the result will be bad for them."

SN 3.7

## Judgment

*Aḍḍakaraṇasutta*

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, "Sir, when I'm sitting in judgment I see well-to-do aristocrats, brahmins, and householders—rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, and lots of money and grain. But they tell deliberate lies for the sake of sensual pleasures. Then it occurred to me: 'Enough with passing judgment today. Now my dear son will be known by the judgments he makes.'" 1.2

"That's so true, great king! That's so true! Those who are well-to-do aristocrats, brahmins, and householders tell deliberate lies for the sake of sensual pleasures. That is for their lasting harm and suffering." 2.1

That is what the Buddha said. ...

2.4

"Full of desire for possessions and pleasures,  
 greedy, infatuated by sensual pleasures;  
 they don't notice that they've gone too far,  
 like fish entering a net set out.  
 It'll be bitter later on;  
 for the result will be bad for them."

3.1

SN 3.8

# With Queen Mallikā

## *Mallikāsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Now at that time King Pasenadi of Kosala was upstairs in the royal longhouse together with Queen Mallikā.
- 1.3 Then the king said to the queen, “Mallikā, is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?”
- 1.5 “No, great king, there isn’t. But is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?”
- 1.7 “For me also, Mallikā, there’s no-one.”
- 2.1 Then King Pasenadi of Kosala came downstairs from the stilt longhouse, went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.
- 3.1 Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha recited this verse:
- 4.1 “Having explored every quarter with the mind,  
one finds no-one dearer than oneself.  
Likewise for others, each holds themselves dear;  
so one who loves themselves would harm no other.”

SN 3.9

# Sacrifice

## *Yaññasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Now at that time a big sacrifice had been set up for King Pasenadi of Kosala. Five hundred chief bulls, five hundred bullocks, five hundred heifers, five hundred goats, and five hundred rams had been led to the pillar for the sacrifice. His bondservants, employees, and workers did their jobs under threat of punishment and danger, weeping with tearful faces.

Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking 2.1  
 their bowls and robes, entered Sāvattthī for alms. Then, after the  
 meal, when they returned from almsround, they went up to the  
 Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what was  
 happening.

Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha 3.1  
 recited these verses:

“Horse sacrifice, human sacrifice, 4.1  
 the sacrifices of the ‘stick-casting’,  
 the ‘royal soma drinking’, and the ‘unbarred’—  
 these huge violent sacrifices yield no great fruit.

The great sages of good conduct 5.1  
 don’t attend sacrifices  
 where goats, sheep, and cattle  
 and various creatures are killed.

But the great sages of good conduct 6.1  
 do attend non-violent sacrifices  
 of regular family tradition,  
 where goats, sheep, and cattle,  
 and various creatures aren’t killed.

A clever person should sacrifice like this, 7.1  
 for this sacrifice is very fruitful.  
 For a sponsor of sacrifices like this,  
 things get better, not worse.  
 Such a sacrifice is truly abundant,  
 and even the deities are pleased.”

SN 3.10

## Shackles

*Bandhanasutta*

- 1.1 Now at that time a large group of people had been put in shackles by King Pasenadi of Kosala—some in ropes, some in manacles, some in chains.
- 2.1 Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking their bowls and robes, entered Sāvattthī for alms. Then, after the meal, when they returned from almsround, they went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what was happening.
- 3.1 Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha recited these verses:
- 4.1 “The wise say that shackle is not strong  
that’s made of iron, wood, or knots.  
But obsession with jeweled earrings,  
concern for your partners and children:
- 5.1 this, say the wise, is a strong shackle  
dragging the indulgent down, hard to escape.  
Having cut this one too they go forth,  
unconcerned, having given up sensual pleasures.”



# Chapter Two

SN 3.11

## Seven Matted-Hair Ascetics

*Sattajaṭṭilasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in the Eastern 1.1  
Monastery, the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and 1.2  
sat outside the gate. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the  
Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side.

Now at that time seven matted-hair ascetics, seven Jain ascetics, 2.1  
seven naked ascetics, seven one-cloth ascetics, and seven wanderers  
passed by not far from the Buddha. Their armpits and bodies were  
hairy, and their nails were long; and they carried their stuff with  
shoulder-poles.

Then King Pasenadi got up from his seat, arranged his robe over 2.2  
one shoulder, knelt with his right knee on the ground, raised his  
joined palms toward those various ascetics, and pronounced his  
name three times: “Sirs, I am Pasenadi, king of Kosala! ... I am  
Pasenadi, king of Kosala!”

Then, soon after those ascetics had left, King Pasenadi went up 3.1  
to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir,  
are they among those in the world who are perfected ones or who  
are on the path to perfection?”

“Great king, as a layman enjoying sensual pleasures, living at 4.1  
home with your children, using sandalwood imported from Kāsi,

wearing garlands, perfumes, and makeup, and accepting gold and money, it's hard for you to know who is perfected or on the path to perfection.

- 5.1 You can get to know a person's ethics by living with them. But only after a long time, not casually; only when paying attention, not when inattentive; and only by the wise, not the witless. You can get to know a person's purity by dealing with them. ... You can get to know a person's resilience in times of trouble. ... You can get to know a person's wisdom by discussion. But only after a long time, not casually; only when paying attention, not when inattentive; and only by the wise, not the witless."

- 6.1 "It's incredible, sir, it's amazing, how well said this was by the Buddha. ...

- 7.1 Sir, these are my spies, my undercover agents returning after spying on the country. First they go undercover, then I have them report to me. And now—when they have washed off the dust and dirt, and are nicely bathed and anointed, with hair and beard dressed, and dressed in white—they will amuse themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation."

- 8.1 Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha recited these verses:

- 9.1 "It's not easy to know a man by his appearance.  
You shouldn't trust them at first sight.  
For undisciplined men live in this world  
disguised as the disciplined.

- 10.1 Like a fake earring made of clay,  
like a copper penny coated with gold,  
they live hidden in the world,  
corrupt inside but impressive outside."

SN 3.12

## Five Kings

*Pañcarājasutta*

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

Now at that time five kings headed by Pasenadi were amusing themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation, and this discussion came up among them: “What’s the best of sensual pleasures?” 1.2

Some of them said, “Sights are the best of sensual pleasures!” 1.4

Others said, “Sounds are best!” 1.6

Others said, “Smells are best!” 1.8

Others said, “Tastes are best!” 1.10

Others said, “Touches are best!” 1.12

Since those kings were unable to persuade each other, King Pasenadi said to them, “Come, good sirs, let’s go to the Buddha and ask him about this. As he answers, so we’ll remember it.” 1.14

“Yes, dear sir,” replied those kings. 2.4

Then those five kings headed by Pasenadi went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. King Pasenadi reported their conversation to the Buddha, and said, “Sir, what’s the best of sensual pleasures?” 3.1

“Great king, which kind of sensual stimulation is best is defined by which is most agreeable, I say. The very same sights that are agreeable to some are disagreeable to others. When you’re happy with certain sights, as you’ve got all you wished for, you don’t want any other sight that’s better or finer. For you, those sights are perfect and supreme. 4.1

The very same sounds ... smells ... tastes ... touches that are agreeable to some are disagreeable to others. When you’re happy with certain touches, as you’ve got all you wished for, you don’t want any other touch that’s better or finer. For you, those touches are perfect and supreme.” 5.1

- 9.1 Now at that time the lay follower Candanaṅgalika was sitting in that assembly. Then he 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!”
- 9.4 “Then speak as you feel inspired,” said the Buddha.
- 10.1 Then the lay follower Candanaṅgalika extolled the Buddha in his presence with an appropriate verse:
- 11.1 “Like a fragrant pink lotus  
that blooms in the morning, its fragrance unfaded—  
see Aṅgīrasa shine,  
bright as the sun in the sky!”
- 12.1 Then those five kings clothed Candanaṅgalika with five upper robes. And Candanaṅgalika in turn endowed the Buddha with those robes.

SN 3.13

## A Bucket of Rice

*Doṇapākasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 Now at that time King Pasenadi of Kosala used to eat rice by the bucket. Then after eating King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha, huffing and puffing. He bowed and sat down to one side.
- 2.1 Then, knowing that King Pasenadi was huffing and puffing after eating, on that occasion the Buddha recited this verse:
- 3.1 “When a man is always mindful,  
knowing moderation in eating,  
his discomfort fades,  
and he ages slowly, taking care of his life.”
- 4.1 Now at that time the brahmin student Sudassana was standing behind the king. Then King Pasenadi addressed him, “Please, dear

Sudassana, memorize this verse in the Buddha's presence and recite it to me whenever I am presented with a meal. I'll set up a regular daily allowance of a hundred dollars for you."

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Sudassana. He memorized that verse in the Buddha's presence, and then whenever the king was presented with a meal he would repeat it: 4.5

"When a man is always mindful, 5.1  
knowing moderation in eating,  
his discomfort fades,  
and he ages slowly, taking care of his life."

Then the king gradually got used to having no more than a pint 6.1  
of rice. After some time King Pasenadi's body slimmed right down.  
Stroking his limbs with his hands, at that time he expressed this  
heartfelt sentiment:

"In both ways the Buddha has compassion for me: in the good 6.3  
of the present life and the good of the next."

SN 3.14

## Battle (1st)

*Paṭhamasaṅgāmasutta*

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

Then King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha mobilized an 1.2  
army of four divisions and marched to Kāsi to attack King Pasenadi  
of Kosala. When King Pasenadi heard of this, he mobilized an  
army of four divisions and marched to Kāsi to defend it against  
Ajātasattu. Then the two kings met in battle. And in that battle  
Ajātasattu defeated Pasenadi, who withdrew to his own capital at  
Sāvattḥī.

Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking 2.1  
their bowls and robes, entered Sāvattḥī for alms. Then, after the  
meal, when they returned from almsround, they went up to the

Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. Then the Buddha said:

- 4.1 “Mendicants, King Ajātasattu has bad friends, companions, and associates. But King Pasenadi has good friends, companions, and associates. Yet on this day King Pasenadi will have a bad night’s sleep as one defeated.”
- 4.4 That is what the Buddha said. ...
- 5.1 “Victory breeds enmity;  
the defeated sleep badly.  
The peaceful sleep at ease,  
having left victory and defeat behind.”

SN 3.15

## Battle (2nd)

*Dutiyaṣaṅgāmasutta*

- 1.1 Then King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha mobilized an army of four divisions and marched to Kāsi to attack King Pasenadi of Kosala. When King Pasenadi heard of this, he mobilized an army of four divisions and marched to Kāsi to defend it against Ajātasattu. Then the two kings met in battle. And in that battle Pasenadi defeated Ajātasattu and captured him alive.
- 1.7 Then King Pasenadi thought, “Even though I’ve never betrayed this King Ajātasattu, he betrayed me. Still, he is my nephew. Now that I’ve vanquished all of Ajātasattu’s elephant troops, cavalry, chariots, and infantry, why don’t I let him loose with just his life?”
- 2.1 And that’s what he did.
- 3.1 Then several mendicants ... told the Buddha what had happened.
- 6.1 Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha recited these verses:
- 7.1 “A man goes on plundering

as long as it serves his ends.  
But as soon as others plunder him,  
the plunderer is plundered.

For the fool thinks they've got away with it 8.1  
so long as their wickedness has not ripened.  
But as soon as that wickedness ripens,  
they fall into suffering.

A killer creates a killer; 9.1  
a conqueror creates a conqueror;  
an abuser creates abuse,  
and a bully creates a bully.  
And so as deeds unfold  
the plunderer is plundered."

SN 3.16

## A Daughter

*Mallikāsutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha, bowed, 1.2  
and sat down to one side. Then a man went up to the king and whis-  
pered in his ear, "Your Majesty, Queen Mallikā has given birth to a  
daughter." When this was said, King Pasenadi was disappointed.

Then, knowing that King Pasenadi was disappointed, on that 2.1  
occasion the Buddha recited these verses:

"Well, some women are better than men, 3.1  
O ruler of the people.  
Wise and virtuous,  
a devoted wife who honors her mother in law.

And when she has a son, 4.1  
he becomes a hero, O lord of the land.

The son of such a blessed lady  
may even rule the realm.”

SN 3.17

## Diligence

*Appamādasutta*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, “Sir, is there one thing that secures benefits for both the present life and lives to come?”

2.1 “There is, great king.”

3.1 “So what is that one thing?”

4.1 “Diligence, great king, is one thing that secures benefits for both the present life and lives to come. The footprints of all creatures that walk can fit inside an elephant’s footprint. So an elephant’s footprint is said to be the biggest of them all. In the same way, diligence is one thing that secures benefits for both the present life and lives to come.”

4.6 That is what the Buddha said. ...

5.1 “For one who desires a continuous flow  
of exceptional delights—  
long life, beauty, and health,  
heaven, and birth in an eminent family—

6.1 the astute praise diligence  
in making merit.  
Being diligent, an astute person  
secures both benefits:

7.1 the benefit in this life,  
and in lives to come.  
A wise one, comprehending the meaning,  
is said to be astute.”



SN 3.18

## Good Friends

*Kalyāṇamittasutta*

At Sāvatthī.

1.1

Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, “Just now, sir, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind. ‘The teaching is well explained by the Buddha. But it’s for someone with good friends, companions, and associates, not for someone with bad friends, companions, and associates.’” 1.2

“That’s so true, great king! That’s so true!” said the Buddha. And he repeated the king’s statement, adding: 2.1

“Great king, this one time I was staying in the land of the Sakyans where they have a town named Townsville. Then the mendicant Ānanda came to me, bowed, sat down to one side, and said: ‘Sir, good friends, companions, and associates are half the spiritual life.’” 3.1

When he had spoken, I said to him: ‘Not so, Ānanda! Not so, Ānanda! Good friends, companions, and associates are the whole of the spiritual life. A mendicant with good friends, companions, and associates can expect to develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.’ 4.1

And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path? It’s when a mendicant develops right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. That’s how a mendicant with good friends develops and cultivates the noble eightfold path. And here’s another way to understand how good friends are the whole of the spiritual life. 5.1

For, by relying on me as a good friend, sentient beings who are liable to rebirth, old age, and death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress are freed from all these things. This is another way to understand how good friends are the whole of the spiritual life.’ 6.1

- 7.1 So, great king, you should train like this: ‘I will have good friends, companions, and associates.’ That’s how you should train.
- 8.1 When you have good friends, companions, and associates, you should live supported by one thing: diligence in skillful qualities.
- 9.1 When you’re diligent, supported by diligence, your ladies of the harem, aristocrat vassals, troops, and people of town and country will think: ‘The king lives diligently, supported by diligence. We’d better live diligently, supported by diligence!’
- 13.1 When you’re diligent, supported by diligence, then not only you yourself, but your ladies of the harem, and your treasury and storehouses will be guarded and protected.”
- 13.3 That is what the Buddha said. ...
- 14.1 “For one who desires a continuous flow  
of exceptional wealth,  
the astute praise diligence  
in making merit.  
Being diligent, an astute person  
secures both benefits:
- 15.1 the benefit in this life,  
and in lives to come.  
A wise one, comprehending the meaning,  
is said to be astute.”

SN 3.19

## Childless (1st)

*Paṭhamaaputtakasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥi.
- 1.2 Then King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha in the middle of the day, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, “So, great king, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?”

“Sir, here in Sāvattthī a financier householder has passed away. 2.1  
 Since he died childless, I have come after transferring his fortune  
 to the royal compound. There was eight million in gold, not to  
 mention the silver. And yet that financier ate meals of rough gruel  
 with pickles. He wore clothes consisting of three pieces of sunn  
 hemp. He traveled around in a vehicle that was a dilapidated little  
 cart, holding a leaf as sunshade.”

“That’s so true, great king! That’s so true! When a bad person 3.1  
 has acquired exceptional wealth they don’t make themselves happy  
 and pleased. Nor do they make their mother and father, partners  
 and children, bondservants, workers, and staff, and friends and  
 colleagues happy and pleased. And they don’t establish an uplifting  
 religious donation for ascetics and brahmins that’s conducive to  
 heaven, ripens in happiness, and leads to heaven. Because they  
 haven’t made proper use of that wealth, rulers or bandits take it, or  
 fire consumes it, or flood sweeps it away, or unloved heirs take it.  
 Since that wealth is not properly utilized, it’s wasted, not used.

Suppose there was a lotus pond in an uninhabited region with 4.1  
 clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. But  
 people don’t collect it or drink it or bathe in it or use it for any  
 purpose. Since that water is not properly utilized, it’s wasted, not  
 used.

In the same way, when a bad person has acquired exceptional 4.4  
 wealth ... it’s wasted, not used.

When a good person has acquired exceptional wealth they make 5.1  
 themselves happy and pleased. And they make their mother and  
 father, partners and children, bondservants, workers, and staff,  
 and friends and colleagues happy and pleased. And they establish  
 an uplifting religious donation for ascetics and brahmins that’s  
 conducive to heaven, ripens in happiness, and leads to heaven.  
 Because they make proper use of that wealth, rulers or bandits don’t  
 take it, fire doesn’t consume it, flood doesn’t sweep it away, and  
 unloved heirs don’t take it. Since that wealth is properly utilized,  
 it’s used, not wasted.

- 6.1 Suppose there was a lotus pond not far from a town or village with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. And people collected it and drank it and bathed in it and used it for their own purpose. Since that water is properly utilized, it's used, not wasted.
- 6.4 In the same way, when a good person has acquired exceptional wealth ... it's used, not wasted.
- 7.1 As cool water in an uninhabited region  
evaporates when not drunk;  
so too when a sinner acquires wealth,  
they neither use it themselves nor give it away.
- 8.1 But when a wise and sensible person gets hold of  
wealth,  
they use it and do their duty.  
That head, having supported the family unit,  
blameless, goes to a heavenly place."

SN 3.20

## Childless (2nd)

*Dutiyaaputtakasutta*

- 1.1 Then King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha in the middle of the day ... The Buddha said to him, "So, great king, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?"
- 2.1 "Sir, here in Sāvatthī a financier householder has passed away. Since he died childless, I have come after transferring his fortune to the royal compound. There was ten million in gold, not to mention the silver. And yet that financier ate meals of rough gruel with pickles. He wore clothes consisting of three pieces of sunn hemp. He traveled around in a vehicle that was a dilapidated little cart, holding a leaf as sunshade."
- 3.1 "That's so true, great king! That's so true! Once upon a time, great king, that financier householder provided almsfood on behalf

of a Buddha awakened for themselves named Tagarasikhī. He instructed: ‘Give alms to that ascetic,’ before getting up from his seat and leaving. But after giving he regretted it: ‘It would have been better to feed the bondservants or workers with that almsfood.’ What’s more, he murdered his brother’s only child for the sake of his fortune.

Because that financier provided Tagarasikhī with almsfood, as 4.1  
a result of that deed he was reborn seven times in a good place, a heavenly realm. And as a residual result of that same deed he held the position of financier seven times right here in Sāvathī. But because that financier regretted giving alms, as a result of that deed his mind didn’t tend to enjoy nice food, clothes, vehicles, or the five refined kinds of sensual stimulation. And because that financier murdered his brother’s only child for the sake of his fortune, as a result of that deed he burned in hell for many years, for many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of years. And as a residual result of that same deed, he is childless for the seventh time, his fortune ending up in the royal treasury. Now the old merit of that financier has been used up, and he hasn’t accumulated new merit. Today, great king, that financier burns in the Great Hell of Screams.”

“Really, sir, that financier has been reborn in the Great Hell of 4.9  
Screams?”

“Yes he has, great king.” 4.10

That is what the Buddha said. ... 4.11

“Grain, wealth, silver, and gold, 5.1  
or whatever other possessions there are;  
bondservants, workers, employees,  
and those dependent for their livelihood:

you must go on without taking these; 6.1  
all of them are left behind.  
But the deeds you do  
by body, speech, and mind—

7.1       that's what you can call your own.  
          That's what you take when you go.  
          That's what goes with you,  
          like a shadow that never leaves.

8.1       That's why you should do good,  
          investing in the future life.  
          The good deeds of sentient beings  
          support them in the next world."

# Chapter Three

SN 3.21

## Persons

*Puggalasutta*

At Sāvattthī.

1.1

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha, bowed, 1.2  
and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

“Great king, these four people are found in the world. What 1.3  
four?

1. The dark bound for darkness,
2. the dark bound for light,
3. the light bound for darkness,
4. and the light bound for light.

And how is a person dark and bound for darkness? It’s when 2.1  
some person is reborn in a low family—a family of outcastes,  
bamboo-workers, hunters, chariot-makers, or waste-collectors—  
poor, with little to eat or drink, where life is tough, and food and  
shelter are hard to find. And they’re ugly, unsightly, deformed,  
chronically ill—one-eyed, crippled, lame, or half-paralyzed. They  
don’t get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, per-  
fumes, and makeup; or bed, house, and lighting. And they do bad  
things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks  
up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the  
underworld, hell.

3.1 This person is like someone who goes from darkness to darkness, from blackness to blackness, from bloodstain to bloodstain. That's how a person is dark and bound for darkness.

4.1 And how is a person dark and bound for light? It's when some person is reborn in a low family—a family of outcastes, bamboo-workers, hunters, chariot-makers, or waste-collectors—poor, with little to eat or drink, where life is tough, and food and shelter are hard to find. And they're ugly, unsightly, deformed, chronically ill—one-eyed, crippled, lame, or half-paralyzed. They don't get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, perfumes, and makeup; or bed, house, and lighting. But they do good things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

5.1 This person is like someone who ascends from the ground to a couch; from a couch to horseback; from horseback to an elephant; and from an elephant to a stilt longhouse. That's how a person is dark and bound for light.

6.1 And how is a person light and bound for darkness? It's when some person is reborn in an eminent family—a well-to-do family of aristocrats, brahmins, or householders—rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, and lots of money and grain. And they're attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. They get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, perfumes, and makeup; and bed, house, and lighting. But they do bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

7.1 This person is like someone who descends from a stilt longhouse to an elephant; from an elephant to horseback; from horseback to a couch; and from a couch to the ground; and from the ground they enter darkness. That's how a person is light and bound for darkness.

8.1 And how is a person light and bound for light? It's when some person is reborn in an eminent family—a well-to-do family of aris-



tocrats, brahmins, or householders—rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, and lots of money and grain. And they're attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. They get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, perfumes, and makeup; and bed, house, and lighting. And they do good things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

This person is like someone who shifts from one couch to another; from the back of one horse to another; from one elephant to another; or from one stilt longhouse to another. That's how a person is light and bound for light. These are the four people found in the world.”

That is what the Buddha said. ... 9.5

“O king, some people are poor,  
faithless and stingy. 10.1

Miserly, with bad intentions,  
they lack regard, they have wrong view.

They abuse and insult 11.1  
ascetics and brahmins  
and other renunciates.  
They're nihilists and bullies,

who prevent others from giving 12.1  
food to beggars.

O king, ruler of the people:  
when such people die  
they fall into the terrible hell—  
from darkness they're bound for darkness.

O king, some people are poor, 13.1  
but faithful and not stingy.  
They give with best of intentions,  
that peaceful-hearted person.

- 14.1      They rise for and bow to  
ascetics and brahmins  
and other renunciates.  
Training in moral conduct,
- 15.1      they don't prevent others from giving  
food to beggars.  
O king, ruler of the people:  
when such people die  
they go to the heaven of the Three and Thirty—  
from darkness they're bound for light.
- 16.1      O king, some people are rich,  
but faithless and stingy.  
Miserly, with bad intentions,  
they lack regard, they have wrong view.
- 17.1      They abuse and insult  
ascetics and brahmins  
and other renunciates.  
They're nihilists and bullies,
- 18.1      who prevent others from giving  
food to beggars.  
O king, ruler of the people:  
when such people die  
they fall into the terrible hell—  
from light they're bound for darkness.
- 19.1      O king, some people are rich,  
faithful and not stingy.  
They give with best of intentions,  
that peaceful-hearted person.
- 20.1      They rise for and bow to  
ascetics and brahmins

and other renunciates.

Training in moral conduct,

they don't prevent others from giving  
food to beggars. 21.1

O king, ruler of the people:

when such people die

they go to the heaven of the Three and Thirty—  
from light they're bound for light."

SN 3.22

## Grandmother

*Ayyikāśutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

King Pasenadi of Kosala sat to one side, and the Buddha said to him, "So, great king, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?" 1.2

"Sir, my grandmother has passed away. She was old, elderly and senior. She was advanced in years and had reached the final stage of life; she was a hundred and twenty years old. But I loved my grandmother; she was dear to me. If by giving away the elephant-treasure I could get my grandmother back, I'd do it. If by giving away the horse-treasure I could get my grandmother back, I'd do it. If by giving away a prize village I could get my grandmother back, I'd do it. If by giving away the whole country I could get my grandmother back, I'd do it." 2.1

"Great king, all sentient beings are liable to die. Death is their end; they're not exempt from death." 2.11

"It's incredible, sir, it's amazing, how well said this was by the Buddha: 'All sentient beings are liable to die. Death is their end; they're not exempt from death.'" 2.12

"That's so true, great king! That's so true! All sentient beings are liable to die. Death is their end; they're not exempt from death. It's 3.1

like the vessels made by potters. Whatever kind they are, whether baked or unbaked, all of them are liable to break apart. Breaking is their end; they're not exempt from breakage. In the same way, all sentient beings are liable to die. Death is their end; they're not exempt from death."

3.5 That is what the Buddha said. ...

4.1 "All beings will die,  
for life ends with death.  
They pass on according to their deeds,  
reaping the fruits of good and bad.  
Those who do bad go to hell,  
and if you do good you go to heaven.

5.1 That's why you should do good,  
investing in the future life.  
The good deeds of sentient beings  
support them in the next world."

SN 3.23

## The World

*Lokasutta*

1.1 At Sāvatti.

1.2 Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, "Sir, how many things arise in the world for its harm, suffering, and discomfort?"

1.4 "Great king, three things arise in the world for its harm, suffering, and discomfort. What three? Greed, hate, and delusion. These three things arise in the world for its harm, suffering, and discomfort."

1.10 That is what the Buddha said. ...

2.1 "When greed, hate, and delusion,  
have arisen inside oneself,

they harm a person of wicked heart,  
as a reed is destroyed by its own fruit.”

SN 3.24

## Archery

*Issattasutta*

- At Sāvattthī. 1.1
- Seated to one side, King Pasenadi said to the Buddha, “Sir, where 1.2  
should a gift be given?”
- “Wherever your heart feels inspired, great king.” 1.4
- “But sir, where is a gift very fruitful?” 1.5
- “Where a gift should be given is one thing, great king, but where 1.6  
a gift is very fruitful is another. A gift is very fruitful when it’s given  
to an ethical person, not so much to an unethical person. Well then,  
great king, I’ll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as  
you like.
- What do you think, great king? Suppose you were at war, ready 1.9  
to fight a battle. Then along comes an aristocrat youth who is  
untrained, inexperienced, unfit, inexperienced. And he’s fearful, scared,  
nervous, quick to flee. Would you employ such a man? Would he  
be of any use to you?”
- “No, sir, I would have no use for such a man.” 1.13
- “What about a brahmin youth, a merchant youth, or a worker 1.14  
youth who was similar?”
- “No, sir, I would have no use for such a man.” 1.17
- “What do you think, great king? Suppose you were at war, ready 2.1  
to fight a battle. Then along comes an aristocrat youth who is  
trained, expert, fit, experienced. And he’s fearless, brave, bold,  
standing his ground. Would you employ such a man? Would he be  
of any use to you?”
- “Yes, sir, I would have a use for such a man.” 2.5

2.6 “What about a brahmin youth, a merchant youth, or a worker youth who was similar? Would you employ such a man? Would he be of any use to you?”

2.10 “Yes, sir, I would have a use for such a man.”

3.1 “In the same way, a gift to anyone who has given up five factors and possesses five factors is very fruitful, no matter what family they’ve gone forth from.

3.2 What are the five factors they’ve given up? Sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five factors they’ve given up.

3.5 What are the five factors they possess? The entire spectrum of an adept’s ethics, immersion, wisdom, freedom, and knowledge and vision of freedom. These are the five factors they possess.

3.8 I say that a gift to anyone who has given up these five factors and possesses these five factors is very fruitful.”

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

4.1 “Any youth skilled at archery,  
powerful and vigorous,  
would be employed by a king going to war—  
one is not a coward by reason of birth.

5.1 Just so, whoever is settled  
in the qualities of patience and gentleness,  
a clever person with noble conduct,  
should be venerated even if they’re low born.

6.1 You should build lovely hermitages  
and settle learned people in them.  
You should set up water supplies in barren regions  
and passages in places hard to travel.

7.1 Food, drink, edibles,  
clothes, and lodgings  
should be given to the upright ones,

with a clear and confident heart.

The thundering rain cloud, 8.1  
its hundred peaks wreathed in lightning,  
pours down over the rich earth,  
soaking the uplands and valleys.

So too an astute person, 9.1  
faithful and learned,  
should prepare a meal to satisfy  
renunciates with food and drink.

Rejoicing, they strew gifts about, 10.1  
crying ‘Give! give!’  
For that is their thunder,  
like the gods when it rains.  
That stream of merit so abundant  
showers down on the giver.”

SN 3.25

## The Simile of the Mountain

*Pabbatūpamasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

King Pasenadi of Kosala sat to one side, and the Buddha said to him, “So, great king, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?” 1.2

“Sir, there are anointed aristocratic kings who are infatuated with authority, and obsessed with greed for sensual pleasures. They have attained stability in the country, occupying a vast conquered territory. Today I have been busy fulfilling the duties of such kings.” 1.4

“What do you think, great king? Suppose a trustworthy and reliable man were to come from the east. He’d approach you and say: ‘Please sir, you should know this. I come from the east. There I saw a huge mountain that reached the clouds. And it was coming’ 2.1

this way, crushing all creatures. So then, great king, do what you must!’

2.7 Then a second trustworthy and reliable man were to come from the west ... a third from the north ... and a fourth from the south. He’d approach you and say: ‘Please sir, you should know this. I come from the south. There I saw a huge mountain that reached the clouds. And it was coming this way, crushing all creatures. So then, great king, do what you must!’

2.14 Should such a dire threat arise—a terrible loss of human life, when human birth is so rare—what would you do?”

3.1 “Sir, what could I do but practice the teachings, practice morality, doing skillful and good actions?”

4.1 “I tell you, great king, I announce to you: old age and death are advancing upon you. Since old age and death are advancing upon you, what would you do?”

4.3 “Sir, what can I do but practice the teachings, practice morality, doing skillful and good actions?

4.4 Sir, there are anointed aristocratic kings who are infatuated with authority, and obsessed with greed for sensual pleasures. They have attained stability in the country, occupying a vast conquered territory. Such kings engage in battles of elephants, cavalry, chariots, or infantry. But there is no place, no scope for such battles when old age and death are advancing.

4.11 In this royal court there are ministers of wise counsel who are capable of dividing an approaching enemy by wise counsel. But there is no place, no scope for such diplomatic battles when old age and death are advancing.

4.13 In this royal court there is abundant gold coin and bullion stored in dungeons and towers. Using this wealth we can pay off an approaching enemy. But there is no place, no scope for such monetary battles when old age and death are advancing.

4.15 When old age and death are advancing, what can I do but practice the teachings, practice morality, doing skillful and good actions?”



“That’s so true, great king! That’s so true! When old age and 5.1  
 death are advancing, what can you do but practice the teachings,  
 practice morality, doing skillful and good actions?”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 5.3  
 went on to say:

“Suppose there were vast mountains 6.1  
 of solid rock touching the sky  
 drawing in from all sides  
 and crushing the four quarters.

So too old age and death 7.1  
 advance upon all living creatures—  
 aristocrats, brahmins, merchants,  
 workers, outcastes, and scavengers.  
 They spare nothing.  
 They crush all beneath them.

There’s nowhere for elephants to take a stand, 8.1  
 nor chariots nor infantry.  
 They can’t be defeated  
 by diplomatic battles or by wealth.

That’s why an astute person, 9.1  
 seeing what’s good for themselves,  
 being wise, would place faith  
 in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha.

Whoever lives by the teaching 10.1  
 in body, speech, and mind,  
 is praised in this life  
 and departs to rejoice in heaven.”

*The Linked Discourses with the Kosalan are completed.*

LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH MĀRA

# Chapter One

SN 4.1

## Mortification

*Tapokammasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time, when he was first awakened, 1.1  
the Buddha was staying near Uruvelā at the root of the goatherd's  
banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River.

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, 1.3  
“I am truly freed from that grueling work! Thank goodness I’m freed  
from that pointless grueling work. Thank goodness that, steadfast  
and mindful, I have attained awakening.”

And then Māra the Wicked, knowing what the Buddha was 2.1  
thinking, went up to him and addressed him in verse:

“You’ve departed from the practice of mortification 3.1  
by which humans purify themselves.  
You’re impure, but think yourself pure;  
you’ve strayed from the path of purity.”

Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, 4.1  
replied to him in verse:

“I realized that it’s pointless; 5.1  
all that mortification in search of immortality  
is as futile  
as oars and rudder on dry land.

- 6.1 Ethics, immersion, and wisdom:  
by developing this path to awakening  
I attained ultimate purity.  
You're beaten, terminator!"
- 7.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, "The Buddha knows me! The Holy One knows me!" miserable and sad, vanished right there.

## SN 4.2

## In the Form of an Elephant King

*Hatthirājavāṇṇasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time, when he was first awakened, the Buddha was staying near Uruvelā at the root of the goatherd's banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River.
- 1.3 Now at that time the Buddha was meditating in the open during the dark of night, while a gentle rain drizzled down.
- 1.4 Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the Buddha feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, manifested in the form of a huge elephant king and approached him. Its head was like a huge block of soapstone. Its tusks were like pure silver. Its trunk was like a long plough pole.
- 1.11 Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, addressed him in verse:
- 2.1 "Transmigrating for such a long time,  
you've made forms beautiful and ugly.  
Enough of this, Wicked One!  
You're beaten, terminator!"
- 3.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, "The Buddha knows me! The Holy One knows me!" miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.3

## Beautiful

*Subhasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time, when he was first awakened, 1.1  
the Buddha was staying near Uruvelā at the root of the goatherd's  
banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River.

Now at that time the Buddha was meditating in the open during 1.3  
the dark of night, while a gentle rain drizzled down.

Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the Buddha feel fear, 1.4  
terror, and goosebumps, approached him, and while not far away  
generated a rainbow of bright colors, both beautiful and ugly.

Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, 1.5  
replied to him in verse:

“Transmigrating for such a long time, 2.1  
you’ve made forms beautiful and ugly.  
Enough of this, Wicked One!  
You’re beaten, terminator.

Those who are well restrained 3.1  
in body, speech, and mind  
don’t fall under Māra’s sway,  
nor are they your lackies.”

Then Māra . . . vanished right there. 4.1

SN 4.4

## Māra’s Snares (1st)

*Paṭhamamārapāsasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Benares, in the deer park at Isipatana. There the Buddha addressed  
the mendicants, “Mendicants!”

- 1.5 “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 “Mendicants, I have attained and realized supreme freedom through proper attention and proper effort. You too should attain and realize supreme freedom through proper attention and proper effort.”
- 2.3 Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:
- 3.1 “You’re bound by Māra’s snares,  
both human and divine.  
You’re bound by Māra’s bonds:  
you won’t escape me, ascetic!”
- 4.1 “I’m freed from Māra’s snares,  
both human and divine.  
I’m freed from Māra’s bonds.  
You’re beaten, terminator!”
- 5.1 Then Māra ... vanished right there.

## SN 4.5

## Māra’s Snares (2nd)

*Dutiyamārapāsasutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Benares, in the deer park at Isipatana. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!”
- 1.4 “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 “Mendicants, I am freed from all snares, both human and divine. You are also freed from all snares, both human and divine.
- 2.3 Wander forth, mendicants, for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. Let not two go by one road.
- 2.5 Teach the Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And

reveal a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They're in decline because they haven't heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching!

I will travel to Uruvelā, the village of Senāni, in order to teach 2.8  
the Dhamma.”

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed 2.9  
him in verse:

“You're bound by all snares, 3.1  
both human and divine.  
You're bound by the great bond:  
you won't escape me, ascetic!”

“I'm freed from all snares, 4.1  
both human and divine.  
I'm freed from the great bonds;  
You're beaten, terminator!”

Then Māra ... vanished right there. 5.1

SN 4.6

## A Serpent

*Sappasutta*

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 Buddha was meditating in the open during 1.3  
the dark of night, while a gentle rain drizzled down.

Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the Buddha feel fear, 2.1  
terror, and goosebumps, manifested in the form of a huge serpent  
king and approached him. Its body was like a huge canoe carved  
from a single tree. Its hood was like a large brewer's sieve. Its eyes  
were like those big bronze dishes from Kosala. Its tongue flickered

from its mouth like lightning flashes in a thunderstorm. The sound of its breathing was like the puffing of a blacksmith's bellows.

3.1 Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to him in verse:

4.1 “A self-controlled sage frequents  
empty buildings for lodging.  
It's appropriate for such a person  
to live there after relinquishing.

5.1 Though there are lots of creepy crawlies,  
and lots of flies and snakes,  
they wouldn't stir a hair  
of a great sage in that empty hut.

6.1 Though the sky may split and the earth may quake,  
and all creatures be stricken with fear;  
and even if an arrow's aimed at their breast,  
the Buddhas take no shelter in attachments.”

7.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

## SN 4.7

# Sleeping

## *Supatisutta*

1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

1.2 He spent most of the night walking mindfully in the open. At the crack of dawn he washed his feet and entered his dwelling. He laid down in the lion's posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware, and focused on the time of getting up.

1.4 Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:



“What, you’re asleep? Really, you’re asleep? 2.1  
 You sleep like a loser—what’s up with that?  
 You sleep, thinking that the hut is empty.  
 You sleep when the sun has come up—what’s up with  
 that?”

“For them there is no craving— 3.1  
 the weaver, the clinger—to track them anywhere.  
 With the ending of all attachments the awakened  
 Buddha sleeps.  
 What’s that got to do with you, Māra?”

Then Māra ... vanished right there. 4.1

SN 4.8

## Delighting

*Nandatisutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
 Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and recited this 1.3  
 verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“Your children bring you delight! 2.1  
 Your cattle also bring you delight!  
 For attachments are a man’s delight;  
 without attachments there’s no delight.”

“Your children bring you sorrow. 3.1  
 Your cattle also bring you sorrow.  
 For attachments are a man’s sorrow;  
 without attachments there are no sorrows.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The 4.1  
 Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.9

## Life Span (1st)

*Paṭhamaāyusutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"
- 1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 "Mendicants, the life span of humans is short. You must go to the next life. So you should do what is skillful, you should practice the spiritual life. No-one born is immortal. A long life is a hundred years or a little more."
- 3.1 Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:
- 4.1 "The life of humans is long!  
A good person wouldn't scorn it.  
Live like a suckling babe,  
for Death has not come for you."
- 5.1 "The life of humans is short,  
and a good person scorns it.  
They should live as though their head was on fire,  
for Death comes for everyone."
- 6.1 Then Māra ... vanished right there.

SN 4.10

## Life Span (2nd)

*Dutiyaāyusutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. There the Buddha ... said:

“Mendicants, the life span of humans is short. You must go to 2.1  
the next life. So you should do what is skillful, you should practice  
the spiritual life. No-one born is immortal. A long life is a hundred  
years or a little more.”

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed 3.1  
him in verse:

“The days and nights don’t rush by, 4.1  
and life isn’t cut short.  
The life of mortals keeps rolling on,  
like a chariot’s rim around the hub.”

“The days and nights rush by, 5.1  
and then life is cut short.  
The life of mortals wastes away,  
like the water in tiny streams.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The 6.1  
Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

# Chapter Two

SN 4.11

## Boulders

*Pāsāṇasutta*

1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain. Now at that time the Buddha was meditating in the open during the dark of night, while a gentle rain drizzled down.

1.3 Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the Buddha feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, approached him, and crushed some large boulders close by him.

2.1 Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, addressed him in verse:

3.1 “Even if you shake  
this entire Vulture’s Peak,  
the rightly released,  
the awakened, are unshaken.”

4.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.12

## Lion

*Kinnusihasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, 1.1  
 Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Now, at that time the Buddha was  
 teaching Dhamma, surrounded by a large assembly.

Then Māra thought, "The ascetic Gotama is teaching Dhamma, 2.1  
 surrounded by a large assembly. Why don't I go and pull the wool  
 over their eyes?"

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed 2.4  
 him in verse:

"Why now do you roar like a lion? 3.1  
 You're so self-assured in the assembly!  
 For there is someone who'll wrestle with you,  
 so why do you imagine you're the victor?"

"The great heroes they roar, 4.1  
 self-assured in the assemblies.  
 The Realized One, attained to power,  
 has crossed over clinging to the world."

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, "The Buddha knows me! The 5.1  
 Holy One knows me!" miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.13

## A Splinter

*Sakalikasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
 Rājagaha in the Maddakucchi deer park.

Now at that time the Buddha's foot had been cut by a splinter. 1.3  
 The Buddha was stricken by harrowing pains; physical feelings

that were painful, sharp, severe, acute, unpleasant, and disagreeable. But he endured unbothered, with mindfulness and situational awareness. And then he spread out his outer robe folded in four and laid down in the lion's posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware.

1.7 Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:

2.1 “Are you feeble that you lie down? Or are you drunk  
on poetry?  
Don't you have all that you need?  
Alone in a secluded lodging,  
why this sleeping, sleepyhead?”

3.1 “I'm not feeble that I lie down, nor am I drunk on  
poetry.  
Having reached the goal, I'm rid of sorrow.  
Alone in a secluded lodging,  
I lie down full of compassion for all living creatures.

4.1 Even those with a dart stuck in the breast,  
piercing the heart again and again,  
are able to get some sleep.  
So why not I, whose dart is drawn out?

5.1 I don't lie awake tense, nor do I fear to sleep.  
The days and nights don't disturb me,  
as I see no decline for myself in the world.  
That's why I lie down full of compassion for all living  
creatures.”

6.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.14

## Appropriate

*Patirūpasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans 1.1  
near the brahmin village of Ekasālā.

Now, at that time the Buddha was teaching Dhamma, sur- 1.2  
rounded by a large assembly of laypeople.

Then Māra thought, “The ascetic Gotama is teaching Dhamma, 2.1  
surrounded by a large assembly of laypeople. Why don’t I go and  
pull the wool over their eyes?”

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed 2.4  
him in verse:

“It’s not appropriate for you 3.1  
to instruct others.

As you engage in this,  
don’t get caught up in favoring and opposing.”

“The Buddha instructs others 4.1  
out of compassion for their welfare.

The Realized One is liberated  
from favoring and opposing.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The 5.1  
Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.15

## A Mental Snare

*Mānasasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed 1.3  
him in verse:

- 2.1 “There’s a mental snare  
wandering the sky.  
I’ll bind you with it—  
you won’t escape me, ascetic!”
- 3.1 “Sights, sounds, tastes, smells,  
and touches so delightful:  
desire for these is gone from me.  
You’re beaten, terminator!”
- 4.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The  
Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.16

## The Alms Bowls

*Pattasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Now at that time the Buddha was educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk on the topic of the five grasping aggregates. And those mendicants were paying heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an ear.
- 2.1 Then Māra thought, “This ascetic Gotama is educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk on the topic of the five grasping aggregates. And the mendicants are paying heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an ear. Why don’t I go and pull the wool over their eyes?”
- 3.1 At that time several alms bowls were placed in the open air. Then Māra the Wicked manifested in the form of an ox and approached those bowls.
- 3.3 One of the mendicants said to another, “Mendicant, mendicant, that ox will break the bowls.”



When this was said, the Buddha said to that mendicant, “Men- 3.5  
dicant, that’s no ox. That’s Māra the Wicked come to pull the wool  
over your eyes!”

Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, ad- 3.8  
dressed him in verse:

“Sights, feeling, and perception, 4.1  
consciousness and what is chosen:  
‘I am not this’ and ‘this is not mine’;  
that’s how to be free of desire for them.

When you’re detached, secure, 5.1  
all fetters transcended,  
though Māra and his army chase everywhere  
they never find you.”

Then Māra ... vanished right there. 6.1

SN 4.17

## The Six Fields of Contact

*Chaphassāyatanasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, 1.1  
in the hall with the peaked roof.

Now at that time the Buddha was educating, encouraging, firing 1.2  
up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk on the topic  
of the six fields of contact. And those mendicants were paying  
heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an  
ear.

Then Māra thought, “This ascetic Gotama is educating, encour- 2.1  
aging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk  
on the topic of the six fields of contact. And those mendicants  
are paying heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and  
lending an ear. Why don’t I go and pull the wool over their eyes?”

- 2.5 Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and made a terrifyingly loud noise close by him. It seemed as if the earth were shattering, so that one of the mendicants said to another, “Mendicant, mendicant, it seems like the earth is shattering!”
- 2.7 When this was said, the Buddha said to that mendicant, “Mendicant, that’s not the earth shattering. That’s Māra the Wicked come to pull the wool over your eyes!”
- 2.10 Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, addressed him in verse:
- 3.1 “Sights, sounds, tastes, smells,  
touches, and thoughts, the lot of them—  
this is the dreadful bait  
that the world’s infatuated by.
- 4.1 But a mindful disciple of the Buddha  
has transcended all that.  
Having slipped free of Māra’s sway,  
they shine like the sun.”
- 5.1 Then Māra ... vanished right there.

SN 4.18

## Alms Food

*Piṇḍasutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Magadhans near the brahmin village of Pañcasālā.
- 1.2 Now at that time in Pañcasālā the young women were taking care of guests. Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Pañcasālā for alms.
- 1.4 Now at that time Māra had possessed the brahmins and householders of Pañcasālā, so that they thought, “Don’t let the ascetic Gotama get any alms!”

Then the Buddha left the village with his bowl as clean-washed 2.1  
as it was when he entered for alms.

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and said to him, 2.2  
“Well, ascetic, did you get any alms?”

“Wicked One, did you make sure I didn’t get any alms?” 2.4

“Well then, sir, let the Buddha enter Pañcasālā a second time for 2.5  
alms. I’ll make sure you get alms.”

“Māra’s made bad karma 3.1  
in attacking the Realized One.  
Wicked One, do you imagine that  
your wickedness won’t bear fruit?

Let us live so very happily, 4.1  
we who have nothing.  
We shall feed on rapture,  
like the gods of streaming radiance.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The 5.1  
Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.19

## A Farmer

*Kassakasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Now at that time the Buddha was educating, encouraging, fir- 1.2  
ing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk about  
extinguishment. And those mendicants were paying heed, paying  
attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an ear.

Then Māra thought, “The ascetic Gotama is giving a Dhamma 2.1  
talk about extinguishment ... and the mendicants are listening  
well. Why don’t I go and pull the wool over their eyes?”

Then Māra the Wicked manifested in the form of a farmer car- 2.4  
rying a large plough on his shoulder. He held a long goad, his hair

was messy, he was clad in sunn hemp, and his feet were muddy. He went up to the Buddha and said to him, “So, ascetic, did you happen to see any oxen?”

2.6 “But what have you to do with oxen, Wicked One?”

2.7 “Mine alone, ascetic, is the eye, mine are sights, mine is the field of eye contact consciousness. Where can you escape me, ascetic? Mine alone is the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind, mine are thoughts, mine is the field of mind contact consciousness. Where can you escape me, ascetic?”

3.1 “Yours alone, Wicked One, is the eye, yours are sights, yours is the field of eye contact consciousness. Where there is no eye, no sights, no eye contact consciousness—you have no place there, Wicked One! Yours alone is the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind, yours are thoughts, yours is the field of mind contact consciousness. Where there is no mind, no thoughts, no mind contact consciousness—you have no place there, Wicked One!”

4.1 “The things they call ‘mine’,  
and those who say ‘it’s mine’:  
if your mind remains there,  
you won’t escape me, ascetic!”

5.1 “The things they speak of aren’t mine;  
I’m not someone who speaks like that.  
So know this, Wicked One:  
you won’t even see the path I take.”

6.1 Then Māra ... vanished right there.

SN 4.20

## Ruling

*Rajjasutta*

1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans, in a wilderness hut on the slopes of the Himalayas.

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, 1.2  
 “I wonder if it’s possible to rule legitimately, without killing or hav-  
 ing someone kill for you; without conquering or having someone  
 conquer for you; without sorrowing or causing sorrow?”

And then Māra the Wicked, knowing what the Buddha was 2.1  
 thinking, went up to him and said, “Rule, Blessed One! Rule, Holy  
 One! Rule legitimately, without killing or having someone kill  
 for you; without conquering or having someone conquer for you;  
 without sorrowing or causing sorrow!”

“But what do you see, Wicked One, that you say this to me?” 2.3

“The Blessed One, sir, has developed and cultivated the four 2.5  
 bases for psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept  
 them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If  
 he wished, the Blessed One need only determine that the Himalaya,  
 king of mountains, was gold, and it would turn into gold.”

“Take a golden mountain, 3.1  
 made entirely of gold, and double it—  
 it’s still not enough for one!  
 Knowing this, live a moral life.

When a person has seen where suffering comes from 4.1  
 how could they incline towards sensual pleasures?  
 Realizing that attachment is a snare in the world,  
 a person would train to remove it.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The Buddha knows me! The 5.1  
 Holy One knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

# Chapter Three

SN 4.2.1

## Several

*Sambahulasutta*

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans near Silāvātī.

1.3 Now at that time several mendicants were meditating not far from the Buddha, diligent, keen, and resolute.

1.4 Then Māra the Wicked manifested in the form of a brahmin with a large matted dreadlock, wearing an antelope hide. He was old, bent double, wheezing, and held a staff made of cluster fig tree wood. He went up to those mendicants and said, “You’ve gone forth while young, reverends. You’re black-haired, blessed with youth, in the prime of life, and you’ve never flirted with sensual pleasures. Enjoy human sensual pleasures. Don’t give up what is visible in the present to chase after what takes effect over time.”

1.8 “Brahmin, that’s not what we’re doing. We’re giving up what takes effect over time to chase after what is visible in the present. For the Buddha says that sensual pleasures take effect over time; they give much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks. But this teaching is visible in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.”

When they had spoken, Māra the Wicked shook his head, wag- 1.12  
gled his tongue, raised his eyebrows until his brow puckered in  
three furrows, and departed leaning on his staff.

Then those mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down 2.1  
to one side, and told him what had happened. The Buddha said,  
“Mendicants, that was no brahmin. That was Māra the Wicked who  
came to pull the wool over your eyes!”

Then, understanding this matter, on that occasion the Buddha 3.3  
recited this verse:

“When a person has seen where suffering comes from 4.1  
how could they incline towards sensual pleasures?  
Realizing that attachment is a snare in the world,  
a person would train to remove it.”

SN 4.22

## With Samiddhi

*Samiddhisutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans near 1.1  
Silāvati.

Now at that time Venerable Samiddhi was meditating not far 1.2  
from the Buddha, diligent, keen, and resolute. Then as Venerable  
Samiddhi was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, “I’m  
so fortunate, so very fortunate, to have a teacher who is a perfected  
one, a fully awakened Buddha! I’m so fortunate, so very fortunate,  
to have gone forth in a teaching and training so well explained! I’m  
so fortunate, so very fortunate, to have spiritual companions who  
are ethical and of good character.”

And then Māra the Wicked, knowing what Samiddhi was think- 1.10  
ing, went up to him and made a terrifyingly loud noise close by  
him. It seemed as if the earth was shattering.

Then Samiddhi went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to 2.1  
one side, and told him what had happened. The Buddha said,

“Samiddhi, that’s not the earth shattering. That’s Māra the Wicked come to pull the wool over your eyes! Go back to that same place, Samiddhi, and meditate, diligent, keen, and resolute.”

3.4 “Yes, sir,” replied Samiddhi. He got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

3.5 And for a second time Samiddhi was meditating in that same place, diligent, ardent, and resolute. And for a second time he had the same thought ... and Māra made an earth-shattering noise.

3.9 Then Samiddhi addressed Māra the Wicked One in verse:

4.1 “I went forth out of faith  
from the lay life to homelessness.  
My mindfulness and wisdom are mature,  
my mind is serene in immersion.  
Make whatever illusions you want,  
it won’t bother me.”

5.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The mendicant Samiddhi knows me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 4.23

## With Godhika

*Godhikasutta*

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground.

1.3 Now at that time Venerable Godhika was staying on the slopes of Isigili at the Black Rock. Then Venerable Godhika, meditating diligent, keen, and resolute, experienced temporary freedom of heart. But then he fell away from that temporary freedom of heart. For a second ... third ... fourth ... fifth ... sixth time Godhika experienced temporary freedom of heart. But for a sixth time he fell away from it. For a seventh time Godhika, meditating diligent, keen, and resolute, experienced temporary freedom of heart.



Then he thought, “I’ve fallen away from this temporary freedom 2.1  
of heart no less than six times. Why don’t I slit my wrists?”

And then Māra the Wicked, knowing what Godhika was think- 2.4  
ing, went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:

“O great hero, O greatly wise! 3.1  
Shining with power and glory.  
You’ve gone beyond all threats and perils,  
I bow to your feet, O seer!

Great hero, master of death, 4.1  
your disciple longs for death,  
he’s planning for it.  
Stop him, O light-bringer!

For how, Blessed One, can a disciple of yours, 5.1  
one who loves your teaching,  
a trainee who hasn’t achieved their heart’s desire,  
take his own life, O renowned one?”

Now at that time Venerable Godhika had already slit his wrists. 6.1  
Then the Buddha, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, ad- 6.2  
dressed him in verse:

“This is how the wise act, 7.1  
for they don’t long for life.  
Having plucked out craving, root and all,  
Godhika is extinguished.”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, “Come, mendicants, 8.1  
let’s go to the Black Rock on the slopes of Isigili where Godhika,  
who came from a good family, slit his wrists.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. 8.3

Then the Buddha together with several mendicants went to the 9.1  
Black Rock on the slopes of Isigili. The Buddha saw Godhika off  
in the distance lying on his cot, having cast off the aggregates.

- 9.3      Now at that time a cloud of black smoke was moving east, west,  
north, south, above, below, and in-between.
- 10.1      Then the Buddha said to the mendicants,  
10.2      “Mendicants, do you see that cloud of black smoke moving east,  
west, north, south, above, below, and in-between?”
- 10.3      “Yes, sir.”
- 10.4      “That’s Māra the Wicked searching for Godhika’s consciousness,  
wondering: ‘Where is Godhika’s consciousness established?’  
But since his consciousness is not established, Godhika is extinguished.”
- 10.7      Then Māra, carrying his arched harp made from the pale timber  
of wood apple, went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:
- 11.1      “Above, below, all round,  
in the four quarters and in-between,  
I’ve been searching without success:  
where has that Godhika got to?”
- 12.1      “He was a wise and steadfast sage,  
a meditator who loved absorption.  
By day and by night he applied himself,  
without concern for his life.
- 13.1      He defeated the army of death,  
and won’t return for any future life.  
Having plucked out craving, root and all  
Godhika is extinguished.”
- 14.1      So stricken with sorrow  
that his harp dropped from his armpit,  
that spirit, downcast,  
vanished right there.

SN 4.24

## Seven Years of Following

*Sattavassānubandhasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Uruvelā at the goatherd's banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā  
River.

Now at that time Māra the Wicked had been following the Bud- 1.3  
dha for seven years hoping to find a vulnerability without success.

Then Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha and addressed 1.4  
him in verse:

“Are you swamped by sorrow that you meditate in the 2.1  
forest?

Have you lost a fortune, or do you long for one?

Or perhaps you've committed some crime in the vil-  
lage?

Why don't you get too close to people?

And why does no-one get close to you?”

“I've dug out the root of sorrow completely. 3.1

I practice absorption free of guilt or sorrow.

I've cut off all greed and prayer for future lives.

Undefined, I practice absorption, O kinsman of the  
negligent!”

“The things they call ‘mine’, 4.1

and those who say ‘it's mine’:

if your mind remains there,

you won't escape me, ascetic!”

“The things they speak of aren't mine; 5.1

I'm not someone who speaks like that.

So know this, Wicked One:

you won't even see the path I take.”

- 6.1 “If you’ve discovered the path  
that’s safe, and leads to the deathless,  
go and walk that path alone—  
why teach it to anyone else?”
- 7.1 “Those crossing to the far shore  
ask what’s beyond the domain of Death.  
When I’m asked, I explain to them  
the truth without attachments.”
- 8.1 “Sir, suppose there was a lotus pond not far from a town or  
village, and a crab lived there. Then several boys or girls would  
leave the town or village and go to the pond, where they’d pull out  
the crab and put it on dry land. Whenever that crab extended a  
claw, those boys or girls would snap, crack, and break it off with a  
stick or a stone. And when that crab’s claws had all been snapped,  
cracked, and broken off it wouldn’t be able to return down into  
that lotus pond.
- 8.6 In the same way, sir, the Buddha has snapped, cracked, and  
broken off all my tricks, dodges, and evasions. Now I’m not able to  
approach the Buddha again in hopes of finding a vulnerability.”
- 8.8 Then Māra the Wicked recited these verses of disappointment  
in the Buddha’s presence:
- 9.1 “A crow once circled a stone  
that looked like a lump of fat.  
‘Perhaps I’ll find something tender,’ it thought,  
‘perhaps there’s something tasty.’
- 10.1 But finding nothing tasty,  
the crow left that place.  
Like the crow that pecked the stone,  
I leave Gotama disappointed.”

SN 4.25

## Māra's Daughters

*Māradhītusutta*

And then Māra the Wicked, after reciting these verses of disillusion- 1.1  
ment in the Buddha's presence, left that place. He sat cross-legged  
on the ground not far from the Buddha, silent, embarrassed, shoul-  
ders drooping, downcast, depressed, with nothing to say, scratch-  
ing the ground with a stick.

Then Māra's daughters Craving, Delight, and Lust went up to 1.2  
Māra the Wicked, and addressed him in verse:

“Why so downhearted, dad? 2.1  
What man are you upset about?  
We'll catch him with the snare of lust,  
like an elephant in the wild.  
We'll tie him up and bring him back—  
he'll fall under your sway!”

“In this world he is the perfected one, the Holy One. 3.1  
He's not easily seduced by lust.  
He has slipped free of Māra's sway;  
that's why I'm so upset.”

Then Māra's daughters Craving, Delight, and Lust went up to 4.1  
the Buddha, and said to him, “We serve at your feet, ascetic.” But  
the Buddha ignored them, since he was freed with the supreme  
ending of attachments.

Then Craving, Delight, and Lust withdrew to one side to think 5.1  
up a plan. “Men have a diverse spectrum of tastes. Why don't we  
each manifest in the form of a hundred young maidens?”

So that's what they did. Then they went up to the Buddha and 5.4  
said to him, “We serve at your feet, ascetic.” But the Buddha still  
ignored them, since he was freed with the supreme ending of at-  
tachments.

6.1 Then Craving, Delight, and Lust withdrew to one side to think up a plan. “Men have a diverse spectrum of tastes. Why don’t we each manifest in the form of a hundred women who have never given birth?” So that’s what they did. Then they went up to the Buddha and said to him, “We serve at your feet, ascetic.” But the Buddha still ignored them, since he was freed with the supreme ending of attachments.

7.1 Then Craving, Delight, and Lust ... each manifested in the form of a hundred women who have given birth once ... women who have given birth twice ... middle-aged women ... old women ... But the Buddha still ignored them, since he was freed with the supreme ending of attachments.

9.6 Then Craving, Delight, and Lust withdrew to one side and said, “What our father said is true:

10.1        ‘In this world he is the perfected one, the Holy One.  
               He’s not easily seduced by lust.  
               He has slipped free of Māra’s sway;  
               that’s why I’m so upset.’

11.1 For if we had come on to any ascetic or brahmin like this who was not free of lust, his heart would explode, or he’d spew hot blood from his mouth, or he’d go mad and lose his mind. He’d dry up, wither away, and shrivel up like a green reed that was mowed down.”

12.1 Then Māra’s daughters Craving, Delight, and Lust went up to the Buddha, and stood to one side. Māra’s daughter Craving addressed the Buddha in verse:

13.1        “Are you swamped by sorrow that you meditate in the  
    forest?  
               Have you lost a fortune, or do you long for one?  
               Or perhaps you’ve committed some crime in the vil-  
    lage?  
               Why don’t you get too close to people?

And why does no-one get close to you?”

“I’ve reached the goal, peace of heart. 14.1  
 Having conquered the army of the likable and pleasant,  
 alone, practicing absorption, I awakened to bliss.  
 That’s why I don’t get too close to people,  
 and no-one gets too close to me.”

Then Māra’s daughter Delight addressed the Buddha in verse: 15.1

“How does a mendicant who has crossed five floods 16.1  
 usually meditate here while crossing the sixth?  
 How do they usually practice absorption so that sensual perceptions  
 are kept out and don’t get hold of them?”

“With tranquil body and mind well freed, 17.1  
 without making plans, mindful, homeless;  
 understanding the teaching, they practice absorption  
 without placing the mind;  
 they’re not shaking or drifting or rigid.

That’s how a mendicant who has crossed five floods 18.1  
 usually meditates here while crossing the sixth.  
 That’s how they usually practice absorption so that  
 sensual perceptions  
 are kept out and don’t get hold of them.”

Then Māra’s daughter Lust addressed the Buddha in verse: 19.1

“He lives with his community after cutting off craving, 20.1  
 and many of the faithful will cross over for sure.  
 Alas, this homeless one will snatch many men away,  
 and lead them past the King of Death!”

“The great heroes they lead 21.1

by means of the true teaching.  
 When the Realized Ones are leading by the teaching,  
 how could anyone who knows be jealous?”

22.1 Then Māra’s daughters Craving, Delight, and Lust went up to Māra the Wicked. Māra the Wicked saw them coming off in the distance, and addressed them in verse:

23.1 “Fools! You drill into a mountain  
 with lotus stalks!  
 You dig up a hill with your nails!  
 You chew iron with your teeth!

24.1 You seek a footing in the deeps, as it were,  
 while lifting a rock with your head!  
 After attacking a stump with your breast, as it were,  
 you leave Gotama disappointed.”

25.1 “They came in their splendor—  
 Craving, Delight, and Lust.  
 But the Teacher brushed them off right there,  
 like the breeze, a fallen tuft.”

*The Linked Discourses with Māra are complete.*



LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH NUNS

# The Chapter on Nuns

SN 5.1

With Āḷavikā

*Āḷavikāśutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.3 Then the nun Āḷavikā robed up in the morning and, taking her bowl and robe, entered Sāvathī for alms. She wandered for alms in Sāvathī. After the meal, on her return from almsround, she went to the Dark Forest seeking seclusion.
- 1.5 Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Āḷavikā feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make her fall away from seclusion, went up to her and addressed her in verse:
- 2.1 “There’s no escape in the world,  
so what will seclusion do for you?  
Enjoy the delights of sensual pleasure;  
don’t regret it later.”
- 3.1 Then the nun Āḷavikā thought, “Who’s speaking this verse, a human or a non-human?”
- 3.3 Then she thought, “This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away from seclusion!”
- 3.5 Then Āḷavikā, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to him in verse:

“There is an escape in the world, 4.1  
and I’ve personally experienced it with wisdom.  
O Wicked One, kinsman of the negligent,  
you don’t know that place.

Sensual pleasures are like swords and stakes; 5.1  
the aggregates are their chopping block.  
What you call sensual delight  
has become no delight for me.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Āḷavikā knows me!” 6.1  
miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 5.2

## With Somā

*Somāsutta*

At Sāvattḥī. 1.1

Then the nun Somā robed up in the morning and, taking her 1.2  
bowl and robe, entered Sāvattḥī for alms. She wandered for alms in  
Sāvattḥī. After the meal, on her return from almsround, she went  
to the Dark Forest, plunged deep into it, and sat at the root of a  
tree for the day’s meditation.

Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Somā feel 1.5  
fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make her fall away from  
immersion, went up to her and addressed her in verse:

“That state’s very challenging; 2.1  
it’s for the sages to attain.  
It’s not possible for a woman,  
with her two-fingered wisdom.”

Then the nun Somā thought, “Who’s speaking this verse, a hu- 3.1  
man or a non-human?”

- 3.3 Then she thought, “This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away from immersion!”
- 3.5 Then Somā, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to him in verse:
- 4.1 “What difference does womanhood make  
when the mind is serene,  
and knowledge is present  
as you rightly discern the Dhamma.
- 5.1 Surely someone who might think:  
‘I am woman’, or ‘I am man’,  
or ‘I am’ anything at all,  
is fit for Māra to address.”
- 6.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Somā knows me!”  
miserable and sad, vanished right there.

## SN 5.3

## With Kisāgotamī

*Kisāgotamīsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvathī.
- 1.2 Then the nun Kisāgotamī robed up in the morning and, taking her bowl and robe, entered Sāvathī for alms. She wandered for alms in Sāvathī. After the meal, on her return from almsround, she went to the Dark Forest, plunged deep into it, and sat at the root of a tree for the day’s meditation.
- 1.5 Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Kisāgotamī feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make her fall away from immersion, went up to her and addressed her in verse:
- 2.1 “Why do you sit alone and cry  
as if your children have died?

You've come to the woods all alone—  
you must be looking for a man!"

Then the nun Kisāgotamī thought, "Who's speaking this verse, 3.1  
a human or a non-human?"

Then she thought, "This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make 3.3  
me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away  
from immersion!"

Then Kisāgotamī, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, 4.1  
replied to him in verse:

"I've got over the death of children, 5.1  
and I'm finished with men.  
I don't grieve or lament,  
and I'm not afraid of you, sir!

Relishing is destroyed in every respect, 6.1  
and the mass of darkness is shattered.  
I've defeated the army of death,  
and live without defilements."

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, "The nun Kisāgotamī knows 7.1  
me!" miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 5.4

## With Vijayā

*Vijayāsutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then the nun Vijayā robed up in the morning ... and sat at the 1.2  
root of a tree for the day's meditation.

Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Vijayā feel 1.4  
fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make her fall away from  
immersion, went up to her and addressed her in verse:

- 2.1 “You’re so young and beautiful,  
and I’m a youth in my prime.  
Come, my lady, let us enjoy  
the music of a five-piece band.”
- 3.1 Then the nun Vijayā thought, “Who’s speaking this verse, a human or a non-human?”
- 3.3 Then she thought, “This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away from immersion!”
- 3.5 Then Vijayā, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to him in verse:
- 4.1 “Sights, sounds, tastes, smells,  
and touches so delightful.  
I hand them right back to you, Māra,  
for I have no use for them.
- 5.1 This body is foul,  
decaying and frail.  
I’m horrified and repelled by it,  
and I’ve eradicated sensual craving.
- 6.1 There are beings in the realm of luminous form,  
others established in the formless,  
and also those peaceful attainments:  
I’ve destroyed the darkness regarding all of them.”
- 7.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Vijayā knows me!”  
miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 5.5

## With Uppalavaṇṇā

*Uppalavaṇṇāsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.

Then the nun Uppalavaṇṇā robed up in the morning ... and 1.2  
stood at the root of a sal tree in full flower.

Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Uppalavaṇṇā 1.4  
feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make her fall away  
from immersion, went up to her and addressed her in verse:

“You’ve come to this sal tree all crowned with flowers, 2.1  
and stand at its root all alone, O nun.  
Your beauty is second to none;  
silly girl, aren’t you afraid of rascals?”

Then the nun Uppalavaṇṇā thought, “Who’s speaking this verse, 3.1  
a human or a non-human?”

Then she thought, “This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make 3.3  
me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away  
from immersion!”

Then Uppalavaṇṇā, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, 3.5  
replied to him in verse:

“Even if 100,000 rascals like you 4.1  
were to come here,  
I’d stir not a hair nor panic.  
I’m not scared of you, Māra, even alone.

I’ll vanish, 5.1  
or I’ll enter your belly;  
I could stand between your eyebrows  
and you still wouldn’t see me.

I’m the master of my own mind, 6.1  
I’ve developed the bases of psychic power well.  
I’m free from all bonds,  
and I’m not afraid of you, sir!”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Uppalavaṇṇā knows 7.1  
me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

## SN 5.6

## With Cālā

*Cālāsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 Then the nun Cālā robed up in the morning ... and sat at the root of a tree for the day's meditation.
- 1.4 Then Māra the Wicked went up to Cālā and said to her, "Nun, what don't you approve of?"
- 1.6 "I don't approve of rebirth, sir."
- 2.1 "Why don't you approve of rebirth?  
When you're born, you get to enjoy sensual pleasures.  
Who put this idea in your head:  
'Nun, don't approve of rebirth?'"
- 3.1 "Death comes to those who are born,  
when you're born you undergo sufferings—  
killing, caging, misery—  
that's why you shouldn't approve of rebirth.
- 4.1 The Buddha taught me the Dhamma  
for passing beyond rebirth,  
for giving up all suffering;  
he settled me in the truth.
- 5.1 There are beings in the realm of luminous form,  
and others established in the formless.  
Not understanding cessation,  
they return in future lives."
- 6.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, "The nun Cālā knows me!"  
miserable and sad, vanished right there.



SN 5.7

## With Upacālā

*Upacālāsutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then the nun Upacālā robed up in the morning ... and sat at 1.2  
the root of a tree for the day's meditation.

Then Māra the Wicked went up to Upacālā and said to her, "Nun, 1.4  
where do you want to be reborn?"

"I don't want to be reborn anywhere, sir." 1.6

"There are the Gods of the Thirty-Three, and those of 2.1

Yama;

also the Joyful Deities,

the Gods Who Love to Create,

and the Gods Who Control the Creations of Others.

Set your heart on such places,

and you'll undergo delight."

"The Gods of the Thirty-Three, and those of Yama; 3.1

also the Joyful Deities,

the Gods Who Love to Create,

and the Gods Who Control the Creations of Oth-

ers—

they're bound with the bonds of sensuality;

they fall under your sway again.

All the world is on fire, 4.1

all the world is smoldering,

all the world is ablaze,

all the world is rocking.

My mind adores that place 5.1

where Māra cannot go;

it's not shaking or burning,

and not frequented by ordinary people.”

- 6.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Upacālā knows me!”  
miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 5.8

## With Sīsūpacālā

*Sīsūpacālāsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.
- 1.2 Then the nun Sīsūpacālā robed up in the morning ... and sat at  
the root of a tree for the day’s meditation.
- 1.4 Then Māra the Wicked went up to Sīsūpacālā and said to her,  
“Nun, whose creed do you believe in?”
- 1.6 “I don’t believe in anyone’s creed, sir.”
- 2.1 “In whose name did you shave your head?  
You look like an ascetic,  
but you don’t believe in any creed.  
Why do you live as if lost?”
- 3.1 “Followers of other creeds  
are confident in their views.  
But I don’t believe in their teaching,  
for they’re no experts in the Dhamma.
- 4.1 But there is one born in the Sakyan clan,  
the unrivaled Buddha,  
champion, dispeller of Māra,  
everywhere undefeated,
- 5.1 everywhere freed, and unattached,  
the all-seeing seer.  
He has attained the end of all deeds,  
freed with the ending of attachments.

That Blessed One is my Teacher,  
and I believe in his instruction.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Sisupacālā knows 6.1  
me!” miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 5.9

## With Selā

*Selāsutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then the nun Selā robed up in the morning ... and sat at the 1.2  
root of a tree for the day’s meditation.

Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Selā feel fear, 1.4  
terror, and goosebumps ... addressed her in verse:

“Who created this puppet? 2.1  
Where is its maker?  
Where has the puppet arisen?  
And where does it cease?”

Then the nun Selā thought, “Who’s speaking this verse, a human 3.1  
or a non-human?”

Then she thought, “This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make 3.3  
me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away  
from immersion!”

Then Selā, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to 3.5  
him in verse:

“This puppet isn’t self-made, 4.1  
nor is this misery made by another.  
It comes to be because of a cause,  
and ceases when the cause breaks up.

It’s like a seed that’s sown 5.1

in a field; it grows  
relying on both the soil's nutrients  
as well as moisture.

- 6.1 In the same way the aggregates and elements  
and these six sense fields  
come to be because of a cause,  
and cease when the cause breaks up.”

- 7.1 Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Selā knows me!”  
miserable and sad, vanished right there.

SN 5.10

## With Vajirā

*Vajirāsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Then the nun Vajirā robed up in the morning and, taking her bowl and robe, entered Sāvattthī for alms. She wandered for alms in Sāvattthī. After the meal, on her return from almsround, she went to the Dark Forest, plunged deep into it, and sat at the root of a tree for the day's meditation.
- 1.5 Then Māra the Wicked, wanting to make the nun Vajirā feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make her fall away from immersion, went up to her and addressed her in verse:
- 2.1 “Who created this sentient being?  
Where is its maker?  
Where has the being arisen?  
And where does it cease?”
- 3.1 Then the nun Vajirā thought, “Who's speaking this verse, a human or a non-human?”
- 3.3 Then she thought, “This is Māra the Wicked, wanting to make me feel fear, terror, and goosebumps, wanting to make me fall away from immersion!”

Then Vajirā, knowing that this was Māra the Wicked, replied to him in verse: 3.5

“Why do you believe there’s such a thing as a ‘sentient being’? 4.1

Māra, is this your theory?  
This is just a pile of conditions,  
you won’t find a sentient being here.

When the parts are assembled 5.1  
we use the word ‘chariot’.  
So too, when the aggregates are present  
‘sentient being’ is the convention we use.

But it’s only suffering that comes to be, 6.1  
lasts a while, then disappears.  
Naught but suffering comes to be,  
naught but suffering ceases.”

Then Māra the Wicked, thinking, “The nun Vajirā knows me!” 7.1  
miserable and sad, vanished right there.

*The Linked Discourses on Nuns are completed.*

LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH BRAHMĀ GODS

# Chapter One

SN 6.1

## The Appeal of Brahmā

*Brahmāyācanasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time, when he was first awakened, 1.1  
the Buddha was staying near Uruvelā at the root of the goatherd's  
banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River.

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, 1.3  
“This principle I have discovered is deep, hard to see, hard to un-  
derstand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of logic, subtle,  
comprehensible to the astute. But people like attachment, they  
love it and enjoy it. It's hard for them to see this thing; that is,  
specific conditionality, dependent origination. It's also hard for  
them to see this thing; that is, the stilling of all activities, the letting  
go of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation,  
extinguishment. And if I were to teach this principle, others might  
not understand me, which would be wearying and troublesome  
for me.”

And then these verses, which were neither supernaturally in- 1.9  
spired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to the Buddha:

“I've struggled hard to realize this, 2.1  
enough with trying to explain it!  
This principle is not easily understood  
by those mired in greed and hate.

- 3.1 Those besotted by greed can't see  
what's subtle, going against the stream,  
deep, hard to see, and very fine,  
for they're veiled in a mass of darkness."
- 4.1 And as the Buddha reflected like this, his mind inclined to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.
- 5.1 Then Brahmā Sahampati, knowing what the Buddha was thinking, thought, "Oh my goodness! The world will be lost, the world will perish! For the mind of the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, inclines to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma."
- 5.3 Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in front of the Buddha. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, knelt with his right knee on the ground, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha, and said:
- 5.5 "Sir, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma! Let the Holy One teach the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They're in decline because they haven't heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching!"
- 5.8 This is what Brahmā Sahampati said. Then he went on to say:
- 6.1 "Among the Magadhans there appeared in the past  
an impure teaching thought up by those still stained.  
Fling open the door to the deathless!  
Let them hear the teaching the immaculate one discovered.
- 7.1 Standing high on a rocky mountain,  
you can see the people all around.  
In just the same way, all-seer, wise one,  
having ascended the Temple of Truth,  
rid of sorrow, look upon the people  
swamped with sorrow, oppressed by rebirth and old  
age.



Rise, hero! Victor in battle, leader of the caravan, 8.1  
 wander the world without obligation.  
 Let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!  
 There will be those who understand!”

Then the Buddha, understanding Brahmā’s invitation, surveyed 9.1  
 the world with the eye of a Buddha, because of his compassion for  
 sentient beings. And the Buddha saw sentient beings with little  
 dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes; with  
 keen faculties and with weak faculties, with good qualities and with  
 bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach. And some of them  
 lived seeing the danger in the fault to do with the next world, while  
 others did not.

It’s like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. 9.3  
 Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it,  
 thriving underwater. Some of them sprout and grow in the water  
 reaching the water’s surface. And some of them sprout and grow  
 in the water but rise up above the water and stand with no water  
 clinging to them.

In the same way, the Buddha saw sentient beings with little dust 9.4  
 in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes; with keen  
 faculties and with weak faculties, with good qualities and with bad  
 qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach. And some of them lived  
 seeing the danger in the fault to do with the next world, while  
 others did not.

When he had seen this he replied in verse to Brahmā Sahampati: 9.5

“Flung open are the doors to the deathless! 10.1  
 Let those with ears to hear commit to faith.  
 Thinking it would be troublesome, Brahmā, I did not  
 teach  
 the sophisticated, sublime Dhamma among humans.”

Then Brahmā Sahampati, knowing that his request for the Bud- 11.1  
 dha to teach the Dhamma had been granted, bowed and respect-

fully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before vanishing right there.

## SN 6.2

## Respect

*Gāravasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time, when he was first awakened, the Buddha was staying near Uruvelā at the root of the goatherd's banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River.
- 1.3 Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, "It's unpleasant to live without respect and reverence. What ascetic or brahmin should I honor and respect and rely on?"
- 2.1 Then it occurred to him:
- 2.2 "I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of ethics, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin in this world—with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who is more accomplished than myself in ethics, who I should honor and respect and rely on.
- 3.1 I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of immersion, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin ... who is more accomplished than myself in immersion ...
- 4.1 I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of wisdom, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin ... who is more accomplished than myself in wisdom ...
- 5.1 I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of freedom, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin ... who is more accomplished than myself in freedom ...
- 6.1 I'd honor and respect and rely on another ascetic or brahmin so as to complete the entire spectrum of the knowledge and vision of

freedom, if it were incomplete. But I don't see any other ascetic or brahmin in this world—with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who is more accomplished than myself in the knowledge and vision of freedom, who I should honor and respect and rely on. Why don't I honor and respect and rely on the same Dhamma to which I was awakened?"

Then Brahmā Sahampati knew what the Buddha was thinking. 7.1  
As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in front of the Buddha. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha, and said:

"That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! All the 7.3  
perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who lived in the past honored and respected and relied on this same teaching. All the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who will live in the future will honor and respect and rely on this same teaching. May the Blessed One, who is the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha at present, also honor and respect and rely on this same teaching."

This is what Brahmā Sahampati said. Then he went on to say: 7.7

"All Buddhas in the past, 8.1  
the Buddhas of the future,  
and the Buddha at present—  
destroyer of the sorrows of many—

respecting the true teaching 9.1  
they did live, they do live,  
and they also will live.  
This is the nature of the Buddhas.

Therefore someone who cares for their own welfare, 10.1  
and wants to become the very best they can be,  
should respect the true teaching,  
remembering the instructions of the Buddhas."

SN 6.3

## With Brahmadeva

*Brahmadevasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.3 Now at that time a certain brahmin lady had a son called Brahmadeva, who had gone forth from the lay life to homelessness in the presence of the Buddha.
- 2.1 Then Venerable Brahmadeva, 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.
- 2.2 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 Brahmadeva became one of the perfected.
- 3.1 Then Brahmadeva robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvattthī for alms. Wandering indiscriminately for almsfood in Sāvattthī, he approached his own mother’s home.
- 3.3 Now at that time Brahmadeva’s mother, the brahmin lady, was offering up a regular oblation to Brahmā.
- 3.4 Then Brahmā Sahampati thought, “This Venerable Brahmadeva’s mother, the brahmin lady, offers up a regular oblation to Brahmā. Why don’t I go and stir up a sense of urgency in her?”
- 3.7 Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in the home of Brahmadeva’s mother. Then Brahmā Sahampati, while standing in the air, addressed Brahmadeva’s mother in verse:
- 4.1 “Far from here is the Brahmā realm, madam,  
to which you offer a regular oblation.  
But Brahmā doesn’t eat that kind of food.  
Why pray, when you don’t know the path to Brahmā?

This Brahmadeva, madam, 5.1  
 free of attachments, has surpassed the gods.  
 Owning nothing, providing for no other, a mendicant  
 has entered your house for alms.

He's worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, a 6.1  
 knowledge master, evolved.  
 He's worthy of a religious donation from gods and  
 men.  
 Having banished all evils, he's unsullied.  
 Cool at heart, he wanders searching for food.

He has no before and after, 7.1  
 peaceful, unclouded, untroubled, with no need for  
 hope,  
 he has laid down the rod for all creatures firm and  
 frail.  
 So let him enjoy your offering of choice alms.

With peaceful mind, he has left the crowd, 8.1  
 he wanders like a tamed elephant, unperturbed.  
 He's a mendicant fair in ethics, with heart well freed.  
 So let him enjoy your offering of choice alms.

With unwavering confidence in him, 9.1  
 present your religious donation to one who is worthy  
 of it.  
 Now that you've seen the sage who has crossed over,  
 madam,  
 make merit for the sake of future happiness!"

With unwavering confidence in him, 10.1  
 she presented her religious donation to one who is  
 worthy of it.

After seeing the sage who had crossed over, the brah-  
min lady  
made merit for the sake of future happiness.

## SN 6.4

## With Baka the Brahmā

*Bakabrahmasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.3 Now at that time Baka the Brahmā had the following harmful misconception: “This is permanent, this is everlasting, this is eternal, this is whole, this is imperishable. For this is where there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn. And there’s no other escape beyond this.”
- 2.1 Then the Buddha knew what Baka the Brahmā was thinking. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from Jeta’s Grove and reappeared in that Brahmā realm.
- 2.2 Baka the Brahmā saw the Buddha coming off in the distance and said to him, “Come, good sir! Welcome, good sir! It’s been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. For this is permanent, this is everlasting, this is eternal, this is complete, this is imperishable. For this is where there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn. And there’s no other escape beyond this.”
- 3.1 When he had spoken, the Buddha said to him, “Alas, Baka the Brahmā is lost in ignorance! Alas, Baka the Brahmā is lost in ignorance! Because what is actually impermanent, not lasting, transient, incomplete, and perishable, he says is permanent, everlasting, eternal, complete, and imperishable. And where there is being born, growing old, dying, passing away, and being reborn, he says that there’s no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn. And although there is another escape beyond this, he says that there’s no other escape beyond this.”

- “Gotama, we seventy-two merit-makers are now  
wielders of power,  
having passed beyond rebirth and old age.  
This is our last rebirth as Brahmā, knowledge master.  
And now many people pray to us.” 4.1
- “But, Baka, the life span here is short, not long,  
though you think it’s long.  
I know that your life span  
is two quinquadecillion years, Brahmā.” 5.1
- “Blessed One, I am the one of infinite vision,  
who has gone beyond rebirth and old age and sorrow.  
What precepts and observances did I practice in the  
past?  
Explain to me so that I may understand.” 6.1
- “You gave drink to many people  
who were oppressed by thirst and heat.  
They’re the precepts and observances you practiced  
in the past.  
I recollect it like one who has wakened from sleep.” 7.1
- When people at Deer River Bank were seized,  
you released the captives as they were led away.  
That’s the precepts and observances you practiced in  
the past.  
I recollect it like one who has wakened from sleep.” 8.1
- When a boat on the Ganges River was seized  
by a fierce dragon desiring human flesh,  
you freed it wielding mighty force.  
That’s the precepts and observances you practiced in  
the past.  
I recollect it like one who has wakened from sleep.” 9.1

- 10.1 I used to be your servant named Kappa.  
 You thought he was intelligent and loyal.  
 That's the precepts and observances you practiced in  
 the past.  
 I recollect it like one who has wakened from sleep.”
- 11.1 “You certainly understand this life span of mine.  
 And others, too, you know; that's why you're the  
 Buddha.  
 And that's why your blazing glory  
 lights up even the Brahmā realm.”

## SN 6.5

## A Certain Brahmā

*Aññātarabrahmasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Now at that time a certain Brahmā had the following harmful misconception: “No ascetic or brahmin can come here!”
- 1.4 Then the Buddha knew what that Brahmā was thinking. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from Jeta's Grove and reappeared in that Brahmā realm. Then the Buddha sat cross-legged in the air above that Brahmā, having entered upon the fire element.
- 2.1 Then Venerable Mahāmoggallāna thought, “Where is the Buddha staying at present?” With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, he saw the Buddha seated cross-legged in the air above that Brahmā, having entered upon the fire element. Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from Jeta's Grove and reappeared in that Brahmā realm. Then Mahāmoggallāna—positioning himself in the east, below the Buddha—sat cross-legged in the air above that Brahmā, having entered upon the fire element.



Then Venerable Mahākassapa ... positioned himself in the south 3.1

...

Venerable Mahākappina ... positioned himself in the west ... 4.1

Venerable Anuruddha ... positioned himself in the north, below the Buddha, sitting cross-legged in the air above that Brahmā, having entered upon the fire element. 5.1

Then Mahāmoggallāna addressed that Brahmā in verse: 6.1

“Sir, do you still have the same view  
that you had in the past?  
Or do you see the radiance  
transcending the Brahmā realm?” 7.1

“Good sir, I don’t have that view  
that I had in the past.  
I see the radiance  
transcending the Brahmā realm.  
So how could I say today  
that I am permanent and eternal?” 8.1

Having inspired a sense of awe in the Brahmā, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, the Buddha vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in Jeta’s Grove. 9.1

Then that Brahmā addressed a member of his retinue, “Please, good sir, go up to Venerable Mahāmoggallāna and say to him: ‘Moggallāna my good sir, are there any other disciples of the Buddha who have power and might comparable to the masters Moggallāna, Kassapa, Kappina, and Anuruddha?’” 9.2

“Yes, good sir,” replied that retinue member. He went to Moggallāna and asked as instructed. 9.6

Then Mahāmoggallāna addressed that member of Brahmā’s retinue in verse: 9.9

“There are many disciples of the Buddha  
who have the three knowledges, 10.1

and have attained psychic power, expert in reading  
minds,  
they're perfected ones with defilements ended."

11.1 Then that member of Brahmā's retinue, having approved and agreed with what Mahāmoggallāna said, went to that Brahmā and said to him, "Good sir, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna said this:

12.1 "There are many disciples of the Buddha  
who have the three knowledges,  
and have attained psychic power, expert in reading  
minds,  
they're perfected ones with defilements ended.'"

13.1 That's what that member of Brahmā's retinue said. Satisfied, that Brahmā was happy with what the member of his retinue said.

## SN 6.6

### The Negligent Brahmā

*Brahmalokasutta*

1.1 At Sāvattṥi.

1.2 Now at that time the Buddha had gone into retreat for the day's meditation.

1.3 Then the independent brahmās Subrahmā and Suddhāvāsa went to the Buddha and stationed themselves one by each door-post. But Subrahmā said to Suddhāvāsa, "Good sir, it's the wrong time to pay homage to the Buddha. He has gone into retreat for the day's meditation. But such and such Brahmā realm is successful and prosperous, while the Brahmā living there is negligent. Come, let's go to that Brahmā realm and inspire awe in that Brahmā!"

1.8 "Yes, good sir," replied Suddhāvāsa.

2.1 Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, they vanished from in front of the Buddha and appeared in that Brahmā realm.

That Brahmā saw those Brahmās coming off in the distance and 2.2  
said to them, “Well now, good sirs, where have you come from?”

“Good sir, we’ve come from the presence of the Blessed One, 2.4  
the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. Shouldn’t you go  
to attend on that Blessed One?”

When they had spoken, that Brahmā refused to accept their ad- 3.1  
vice. He multiplied himself a thousand times and said to Subrahmā,  
“Good sir, can’t you see that I have such psychic power?”

“I see that, good sir.” 3.3

“Since I have such psychic power and might, what other ascetic 3.4  
or brahmin should I go to and attend upon?”

Then Subrahmā multiplied himself two thousand times and said 4.1  
to that Brahmā, “Good sir, can’t you see that I have such psychic  
power?”

“I see that, good sir.” 4.3

“That Buddha has even more psychic power and might than you 4.4  
or me. Shouldn’t you go to attend on that Blessed One?”

Then that Brahmā addressed Subrahmā in verse: 4.6

“There are three hundreds of phoenixes, four of swans, 5.1  
and five of eagles.

This palace belongs to him who practiced absorption.  
It shines, Brahmā,  
lighting up the northern quarter!”

“So what if your palace shines, 6.1  
lighting up the northern quarter?

A clever person who has seen the deficiency in form,  
its chronic trembling, takes no pleasure in it.”

Then after inspiring awe in that Brahmā, the independent bra- 7.1  
hmās Subrahmā and Suddhāvāsa vanished right there. And after  
some time that Brahmā went to attend on the Buddha.

## SN 6.7

## About Kokālika

*Kokālikasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 Now at that time the Buddha had gone into retreat for the day's meditation. Then the independent brahmās Subrahmā and Suddhāvāsa went to the Buddha and stationed themselves one by each door-post.
- 1.4 Then Subrahmā recited this verse about the mendicant Kokālika in the Buddha's presence:
- 2.1 "What wise person here would judge  
the immeasurable by measuring them?  
I think anyone who'd do such a thing  
must be an ordinary person, shrouded in darkness."

## SN 6.8

## About Katamorakatissaka

*Katamodakatissasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 Now at that time the Buddha had gone into retreat for the day's meditation. Then the independent brahmās Subrahmā and Suddhāvāsa went to the Buddha and stationed themselves one by each door-post.
- 1.4 Then Suddhāvāsa recited this verse about the mendicant Katamorakatissaka in the Buddha's presence:
- 2.1 "What wise person here would judge  
the immeasurable by measuring them?  
I think anyone who'd do such a thing  
must be a fool, shrouded in darkness."

SN 6.9

## With the Brahmā Tudu

*Turūbrahmasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Now at that time the mendicant Kokālika was sick, suffering, 1.2  
gravely ill.

Then, late at night, the beautiful independent brahmā Tudu, 1.3  
lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the mendicant Kokā-  
lika, and standing in the air he said to him, "Kokālika, have confi-  
dence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, they're good monks."

"Who are you, reverend?" 1.6

"I am Tudu the independent brahmā." 1.7

"Didn't the Buddha declare you a non-returner? So what exactly 1.8  
are you doing back here? See how far you have strayed!"

"A man is born 2.1

with an axe in his mouth.

A fool cuts themselves with it  
when they say bad words.

When you praise someone worthy of criticism, 3.1

or criticize someone worthy of praise,

you choose bad luck with your own mouth:  
you'll never find happiness that way.

Bad luck at dice is a trivial thing, 4.1

if all you lose is your money

and all you own, even yourself.

What's really terrible luck  
is to hate the holy ones.

For more than two quinquadecillion years, 5.1

and another five quattuordecillion years,

a slanderer of noble ones goes to hell,

having aimed bad words and thoughts at them.”

SN 6.10

## With Kokālika

*Kokālikasutta*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Then the mendicant 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.”

1.4 When this was said, the Buddha said to Kokālika, “Don’t say that, Kokālika! Don’t say that, Kokālika! Have confidence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, they’re good monks.”

1.7 For a second time Kokālika said to the Buddha, “Despite my faith and trust in the Buddha, Sāriputta and Moggallāna have wicked desires. They’ve fallen under the sway of wicked desires.”

1.9 For a second time, the Buddha said to Kokālika, “Don’t say that, Kokālika! Don’t say that, Kokālika! Have confidence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, they’re good monks.”

1.12 For a third time Kokālika said to the Buddha, “Despite my faith and trust in the Buddha, Sāriputta and Moggallāna have wicked desires. They’ve fallen under the sway of wicked desires.”

1.14 For a third time, the Buddha said to Kokālika, “Don’t say that, Kokālika! Don’t say that, Kokālika! Have confidence in Sāriputta and Moggallāna, they’re good monks.”

2.1 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 3.1  
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 re- 3.4  
spectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right side, before  
vanishing right there.

Then, when the night had passed, the Buddha told the mendi- 4.1  
cants all that had happened.

When he said this, one of the mendicants asked the Buddha, 5.1  
"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, 5.3  
how many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of thousands of  
years it lasts."

"But sir, is it possible to give a simile?" 5.6

"It's possible," said the Buddha. 5.7

"Suppose there was a Kosalan cartload of twenty bushels of 6.1  
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 6.3  
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 Aṭaṭa hell. Twenty lifetimes in the Aṭaṭa  
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.

6.12 The mendicant Kokālika has been reborn in the Pink Lotus hell because of his resentment for Sāriputta and Moggallāna.”

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

7.1 “A man is born  
with an axe in his mouth.  
A fool cuts themselves with it  
when they say bad words.

8.1 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.

9.1 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.

10.1 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.”



# Chapter Two

SN 6.11

## With Sanaṅkumāra

*Sanaṅkumārasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Rājagaha, on the bank of the Sappinī river.

Then, late at night, the beautiful Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, lighting 1.3  
up the entire Sappinī riverbank, went up to the Buddha, bowed,  
stood to one side, and recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“The aristocrat is first among people 2.1  
who take clan as the standard.  
But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
is first among gods and humans.”

That’s what Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra said, and the teacher ap- 3.1  
proved. Then Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, knowing that the teacher  
approved, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him  
on his right, before vanishing right there.

SN 6.12

## About Devadatta

*Devadattasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain, not long after Devadatta had left.
- 1.3 Then, late at night, the beautiful Brahmā Sahampati, lighting up the entire Vulture’s Peak, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:
- 2.1 “The banana tree is destroyed by its own fruit,  
as are the bamboo and the reed.  
Honor destroys a sinner,  
as pregnancy destroys a mule.”

SN 6.13

## At Andhakavinda

*Andhakavindasutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Magadhans at Andhakavinda.
- 1.2 Now at that time the Buddha was meditating in the open during the dark of night, while a gentle rain drizzled down.
- 1.3 Then, late at night, the beautiful Brahmā Sahampati, lighting up the entirety of Andhakavinda, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and recited these verses in the Buddha’s presence:
- 2.1 “One should frequent secluded lodgings,  
and practice to be released from fetters.  
If you don’t find enjoyment there,  
live in the Saṅgha, guarded and mindful.
- 3.1 Walking for alms from family to family,

with senses guarded, alert and mindful.  
One should frequent secluded lodgings,  
free of fear, freed in the fearless.

Where dreadful serpents slither, 4.1  
where the lightning flashes and the sky thunders  
in the dark of the night;  
there meditates a mendicant, free of goosebumps.

For this has in fact been seen by me, 5.1  
it isn't just what the testament says.  
Within a single spiritual dispensation  
a thousand are conquerors of Death.

And of trainees there are more than five hundred, 6.1  
and ten times ten tens;  
all are stream-enterers,  
freed from rebirth in the animal realm.

And as for other people 7.1  
who I think have shared in merit—  
I couldn't even number them,  
for fear of speaking falsely.”

SN 6.14

## About Aruṇavatī

*Aruṇavatīsutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Sāvathī. There he addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!”

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

“Once upon a time, mendicants, there was a king named Aru- 2.1  
ṇavā. He had a capital named Aruṇavatī. Sikhī the Blessed One,  
the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha lived supported by

Aruṇavatī. Sikhī had a fine pair of chief disciples named Abhibhū and Sambhava.

2.5 Then the Buddha Sikhī addressed the mendicant Abhibhū, ‘Come, brahmin, let’s go to one of the brahmā realms until it’s time for our meal.’

2.7 ‘Yes, sir,’ replied Abhibhū. Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, they vanished from Aruṇavatī and appeared in that Brahmā realm.

3.1 Then the Buddha Sikhī addressed the mendicant Abhibhū, ‘Brahmin, teach the Dhamma as you feel inspired for that Brahmā, his assembly, and the members of his retinue.’

3.3 ‘Yes, sir,’ replied Abhibhū. Then he educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk.

3.4 But the Brahmā, his assembly, and his retinue complained, grumbled, and objected, ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! How on earth can a disciple teach Dhamma in the presence of the Teacher?’

4.1 Then the Buddha Sikhī addressed the mendicant Abhibhū, ‘Brahmin, Brahmā, his assembly, and his retinue are complaining that a disciple teaches Dhamma in the presence of the Teacher. Well then, brahmin, stir them up even more!’

4.5 ‘Yes, sir,’ replied Abhibhū. Then he taught Dhamma with his body visible; with his body invisible; with the lower half visible and the upper half invisible; and with the upper half visible and the lower half invisible.

4.6 And the Brahmā, his assembly, and his retinue, their minds full of wonder and amazement, thought, ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! The ascetic has such psychic power and might!’

5.1 Then Abhibhū said to the Buddha Sikhī, ‘Sir, I recall having said this in the middle of the Saṅgha: “Standing in the Brahmā realm, I can make my voice heard throughout the galaxy.”’

5.4 ‘Now is the time, brahmin! Now is the time, brahmin! Standing in the Brahmā realm, make your voice heard throughout the galaxy.’

5.6 ‘Yes, sir,’ replied Abhibhū. Standing in the Brahmā realm, he recited this verse:

‘Rouse yourselves! Try harder! 6.1  
Devote yourselves to the teachings of the Buddha!  
Crush the army of Death,  
as an elephant a hut of reeds.

Whoever shall meditate diligently 7.1  
in this teaching and training,  
giving up transmigration through rebirths,  
will make an end of suffering.’

Having inspired that Brahmā, his assembly, and his retinue with 8.1  
a sense of awe, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract  
their arm, Sikhī and Abhibhū vanished from that Brahmā realm  
and appeared in Aruṇavatī.

Then the Buddha Sikhī addressed the mendicants, ‘Mendicants, 8.3  
did you hear the mendicant Abhibhū speaking a verse while stand-  
ing in a Brahmā realm?’

‘We did, sir.’ 8.5

‘But what exactly did you hear?’ 8.6

‘This is what we heard, sir: 8.7

“Rouse yourselves! Try harder! 9.1  
Devote yourselves to the teachings of the Buddha!  
Crush the army of Death,  
as an elephant a hut of reeds.

Whoever shall meditate diligently 10.1  
in this teaching and training,  
giving up transmigration through rebirths,  
will make an end of suffering.”

That’s what we heard, sir.’ 11.1

‘Good, good, mendicants! It’s good that you heard the men- 11.2  
dicant Abhibhū speaking this verse while standing in a Brahmā  
realm.’”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were 12.1  
happy with what the Buddha said.

SN 6.15

## Final Extinguishment

*Parinibbānasutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying between a pair of sal trees in the sal forest of the Mallas at Upavattana near Kusinārā at the time of his final extinguishment.
- 1.2 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: “Come now, mendicants, I say to you all: ‘Conditions fall apart. Persist with diligence.’”
- 1.5 These were the Realized One’s last words.
- 2.1 Then the Buddha entered the first absorption. Emerging from that, he entered the second absorption. Emerging from that, he successively entered into and emerged from the third absorption, the fourth absorption, the dimension of infinite space, the dimension of infinite consciousness, the dimension of nothingness, and the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Then he entered the cessation of perception and feeling.
- 3.1 Then he emerged from the cessation of perception and feeling and entered the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Emerging from that, he successively entered into and emerged from the dimension of nothingness, the dimension of infinite consciousness, the dimension of infinite space, the fourth absorption, the third absorption, the second absorption, and the first absorption. Emerging from that, he successively entered into and emerged from the second absorption and the third absorption. Then he entered the fourth absorption. Emerging from that the Buddha immediately became fully extinguished.
- 3.2 When the Buddha became fully extinguished, along with the full extinguishment, Brahmā Sahampati recited this verse:
- 4.1 “All creatures in this world  
must lay down this bag of bones.  
For even a Teacher such as this,  
unrivalled in the world,  
the Realized One, attained to power,

the Buddha became fully extinguished.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, Sakka, lord of 5.1  
gods, recited this verse:

“Oh! Conditions are impermanent, 6.1  
their nature is to rise and fall;  
having arisen, they cease;  
their stilling is true bliss.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, Venerable 7.1  
Ānanda recited this verse:

“Then there was terror! 8.1  
Then they had goosebumps!  
When the Buddha, endowed with all fine qualities,  
became fully extinguished.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, Venerable Anu- 9.1  
ruddha recited this verse:

“There was no more breathing 10.1  
for the poised one of steady heart.  
Imperturbable, committed to peace,  
the seer became fully extinguished.

He put up with painful feelings 11.1  
without flinching.  
The liberation of his heart  
was like the extinguishing of a lamp.”

*The Linked Discourses on Brahmā are complete.*

LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH BRAHMINS



# The Chapter on the Perfected Ones

SN 7.1

## With Dhanañjānī

*Dhanañjānīsutta*

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 a certain brahmin lady of the Bhāradvāja clan 1.3  
named Dhanañjānī was devoted to the Buddha, the teaching, and  
the Saṅgha. Once, while she was bringing her husband his meal  
she tripped and expressed this heartfelt sentiment three times:

“Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awak- 2.1  
ened Buddha!

Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awak- 3.1  
ened Buddha!

Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awak- 4.1  
ened Buddha!”

When she said this, the brahmin said to Dhanañjānī: 5.1

“That’d be right. For the slightest thing this lowlife woman 5.2  
spouts out praise for that bald ascetic. Right now, lowlife woman,  
I’m going to refute your teacher’s doctrine!”

“Brahmin, I don’t see anyone in this world—with its gods, Mā- 5.4  
ras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins,  
its gods and humans—who can refute the doctrine of the Blessed

One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. But anyway, you should go. When you've gone you'll understand."

- 6.1 Then the brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan, angry and upset, went 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:

- 7.1 "When what is incinerated do you sleep at ease?  
When what is incinerated is there no sorrow?  
What is the one thing  
whose killing you approve?"

- 8.1 "When anger's incinerated you sleep at ease.  
When anger's incinerated there is no sorrow.  
O brahmin, anger has a poisonous root  
and a honey tip.  
The noble ones praise its killing,  
for when it's incinerated there is no sorrow."

- 9.1 When he said this, the brahmin said to the Buddha, "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?"

- 10.1 And the brahmin 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.

- 10.3 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.

SN 7.2

## The Abuser

*Akkosasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. 1.1

The brahmin Bhāradvāja the Rude heard a rumor that a brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan had gone forth from the lay life to homelessness in the presence of the ascetic Gotama. Angry and displeased he went to the Buddha and abused and insulted him with rude, harsh words. When he had spoken, the Buddha said to him: 1.2

“What do you think, brahmin? Do friends and colleagues, relatives and family members, and guests still come to visit you?” 2.2

“Sometimes they do, Master Gotama.” 2.4

“Do you then serve them with a variety of foods and savories?” 2.5

“Sometimes I do.” 2.6

“But if they don’t accept it, brahmin, who does it belong to?” 2.7

“In that case it still belongs to me.” 2.8

“In the same way, brahmin, when you abuse, harass, and attack us who do not abuse, harass, and attack, we don’t accept it. It still belongs to you, brahmin, it still belongs to you! 2.9

Someone who, when abused, harassed, and attacked, abuses, harasses, and attacks in return is said to eat the food and have a reaction to it. But we neither eat your food nor do we have a reaction to it. It still belongs to you, brahmin, it still belongs to you!” 3.1

“The king and his retinue believe that Master Gotama is a perfected one. And yet he still gets angry.” 3.5

“For one free of anger, tamed, living in balance,  
freed by right knowledge, 4.1

a poised one who is at peace:  
where would anger come from?

- 5.1      When you get angry at an angry person  
            you just make things worse for yourself.  
            When you don't get angry at an angry person  
            you win a battle hard to win.
- 6.1      When you know that the other is angry,  
            you act for the good of both  
            yourself and the other  
            if you're mindful and stay calm.
- 7.1      People unfamiliar with the teaching  
            consider one who heals both  
            oneself and the other  
            to be a fool."
- 8.1      When he had spoken, Bhāradvāja the Rude said to the Buddha,  
            "Excellent, Master Gotama! ... 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?"
- 9.1      And the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Rude received the going forth,  
            the ordination in the Buddha's presence. Not long after his ordi-  
            nation, Venerable Bhāradvāja the Rude, 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.
- 9.3      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.

SN 7.3

## With Bhāradvāja the Fiend

*Asurindakasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. The brahmin Bhāradvāja the Fiend heard a rumor to the effect that a brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan had gone forth from the lay life to homelessness in the presence of the ascetic Gotama. Angry and displeased he went to the Buddha and abused and insulted him with rude, harsh words. 1.1

But when he said this, the Buddha kept silent. 1.4

Then Bhāradvāja the Fiend said to the Buddha, "You're beaten, ascetic, you're beaten!" 1.5

"Ha! I won!' thinks the fool,  
when speaking with harsh words.  
Patience is the true victory  
for those who understand. 2.1

When you get angry at an angry person  
you just make things worse for yourself. 3.1  
When you don't get angry at an angry person  
you win a battle hard to win.

When you know that the other is angry,  
you act for the good of both  
yourself and the other 4.1  
if you're mindful and stay calm.

People unskilled in Dhamma  
consider one who heals both  
oneself and the other 5.1  
to be a fool."

- 6.1 When he had spoken, Bhāradvāja the Fiend said to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama! ...” ... And Venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the perfected.

## SN 7.4

## With Bhāradvāja the Bitter

*Bilaṅgikasutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. The brahmin Bhāradvāja the Bitter heard a rumor that a brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan had gone forth from the lay life to homelessness in the presence of the ascetic Gotama. Angry and displeased he went to the Buddha and stood silently to one side.
- 1.4 Then the Buddha, knowing what Bhāradvāja the Bitter was thinking, addressed him in verse:
- 2.1 “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.”
- 3.1 When he said this, the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Bitter said to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama! ...” ... And Venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the perfected.

## SN 7.5

## Harmless

*Ahimsakasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattī.
- 1.2 Then the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Harmless went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat 1.3  
down to one side and said, “I am Harmless, Master Gotama, I am  
Harmless!”

“If you were really like your name, 2.1  
then you’d be Harmless.  
But a truly harmless person  
does no harm by way of  
body, speech, or mind;  
they don’t harm anyone else.”

When he had spoken, the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Harmless said 3.1  
to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama! ...” ... And Venerable  
Bhāradvāja the Harmless became one of the perfected.

SN 7.6

## With Bhāradvāja of the Matted Hair

*Jaṭāsutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then the brahmin Bhāradvāja of the Matted Hair went up to the 1.2  
Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat 1.3  
down to one side, and addressed the Buddha in verse:

“Tangled within, tangled without: 2.1  
these people are tangled in tangles.  
I ask you this, Gotama:  
who can untangle this tangle?”

“A wise person grounded in ethics, 3.1  
developing the mind and wisdom,  
a keen and alert mendicant—  
they can untangle this tangle.

Those in whom greed, hate, and ignorance 4.1

have faded away;  
the perfected ones with defilements ended—  
they have untangled the tangle.

- 5.1 Where name and form  
cease with nothing left over;  
as well as impingement and perception of form:  
it's there that the tangle is cut.”

- 6.1 When he had spoken, Bhāradvāja of the Matted Hair said to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama! ...” ... And Venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the perfected.

SN 7.7

## With Bhāradvāja the Pure

*Suddhikasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Then the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Pure went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.
- 1.3 When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and recited this verse in his presence:
- 2.1 “No brahmin in the world is ever purified  
even though he’s ethical and mortifies himself.  
But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
is purified, not these commoners.”
- 3.1 “Even one who mutters many prayers  
is no brahmin by birth  
if they’re filthy and corrupt within,  
supporting themselves by fraud.
- 4.1 Regardless of whether you’re an aristocrat,  
a brahmin, merchant, worker, or an outcaste or scav-  
enger—



if you're energetic and resolute,  
always staunchly vigorous,  
you'll attain ultimate purity.  
Know that for a fact, brahmin."

When he had spoken, the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Pure said 5.1  
to the Buddha, "Excellent, Master Gotama ..." ... And Venerable  
Bhāradvāja became one of the perfected.

SN 7.8

## With Bhāradvāja the Fire-Worshiper

*Aggikāsutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo 1.1  
Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

Now at that time ghee and milk-rice had been set out for the 1.2  
brahmin Bhāradvāja the Fire-Worshiper, who thought, "I will serve  
the sacred flame! I will perform the fire sacrifice!"

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl 2.1  
and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. Wandering indiscriminately  
for almsfood in Rājagaha, he approached Bhāradvāja the Fire-  
Worshiper's home and stood to one side.

Bhāradvāja the Fire-Worshiper saw him standing for alms and 2.3  
addressed him in verse:

"One who's accomplished in the three knowledges, 3.1  
of good lineage and ample learning,  
accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
may enjoy this milk-rice."

"Even one who mutters many prayers 4.1  
is no brahmin by birth  
if they're filthy and corrupt within,  
with a following gained by fraud.

- 5.1 But one who knows their past lives,  
and sees heaven and places of loss,  
and has attained the ending of rebirth,  
that sage has perfect insight.
- 6.1 Because of these three knowledges  
a brahmin is a master of the three knowledges.  
Accomplished in knowledge and conduct,  
they may enjoy this milk-rice.”
- 7.1 “Eat, Master Gotama! you are truly a brahmin.”
- 8.1 “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.
- 9.1 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.”
- 10.1 When he had spoken, the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Fire-  
Worshiper said to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama!  
...” ... And Venerable Bhāradvāja the Fire-Worshiper became one  
of the perfected.

SN 7.9

## With Sundarikabhāradvāja

*Sundarikasutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the Kosalan lands on the  
bank of the Sundarikā river.

Now at that time the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja was serving 1.2  
the sacred flame and performing the fire sacrifice on the bank of  
the Sundarikā.

Then he looked all around the four quarters, wondering, “Now 1.3  
who might eat the leftovers of this offering?”

He saw the Buddha meditating at the root of a certain tree with 1.5  
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 Bud-  
dha. When he heard Sundarikabhāradvāja’s footsteps the Buddha  
uncovered his head.

Sundarikabhāradvāja thought, “This man is shaven, he is shaven!” 1.8  
And he wanted to turn back.

But he thought, “Even some brahmins are shaven. Why don’t I 1.9  
go to him and ask about his birth?”

Then the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja went up to the Buddha, 2.1  
and said to him, “Sir, in what caste were you born?”

“Don’t ask about birth, ask about conduct; 3.1  
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, 4.1  
a complete knowledge master who has completed  
the spiritual journey—  
that’s who a sacrificer should introduce themselves  
to,  
and make a timely offering to one worthy of a re-  
ligious donation.”

“My sacrificial offering must have been well per- 5.1  
formed,  
since I have met such a knowledge master!  
It’s because I’d never met anyone like you  
that others ate the leftover offering.

- 6.1 Eat, Master Gotama, you are truly a brahmin.”
- 7.1 “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.
- 8.1 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.”
- 9.1 “Then, Master Gotama, to whom should I give the leftovers of  
this offering?”
- 9.2 “Brahmin, I don’t see anyone in this world—with its gods, Mā-  
ras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its  
gods and humans—who can properly digest these leftovers, except  
for the Realized One or one of his disciples. Well then, brahmin,  
throw out those leftovers where there is little that grows, or drop  
them into water that has no living creatures.”
- 10.1 So Sundarikabhāradvāja dropped the leftover offering in water  
that had no living creatures. And when those leftovers were placed  
in the water, they 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 those leftovers were placed in the water,  
they sizzled and hissed, steaming and fuming.
- 11.1 Then the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja, shocked and  
awestruck, went up to the Buddha, and stood to one side. The  
Buddha addressed him in verse:
- 12.1 “When you’re kindling the wood, brahmin,  
don’t imagine this is purity, for it’s just an external.  
For experts say this is no way to purity,  
when one seeks purity in externals.

I've given up kindling firewood, brahmin, 13.1  
 now I just light the inner flame.  
 Always blazing, always serene,  
 I am a perfected one leading the spiritual life.

Conceit, brahmin, is the burden of your possessions, 14.1  
 anger your smoke, and lies your ashes.  
 The tongue is the ladle and the heart the fire altar;  
 a well-tamed self is a person's light.

The teaching is a lake with shores of ethics, brahmin, 15.1  
 unclouded, praised by the fine to the good.  
 There the knowledge masters go to bathe,  
 and cross to the far shore without getting wet.

Truth, principle, restraint, the spiritual life; 16.1  
 the attainment of the supreme based on the middle,  
 brahmin.  
 Pay homage to the upright ones—  
 I declare that man to be one who follows the teach-  
 ing.”

When he had spoken, the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja said 17.1  
 to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama ...” ... And Venerable  
 Bhāradvāja became one of the perfected.

SN 7.10

## Many Daughters

*Bahudhītarasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans in 1.1  
 a certain forest grove.

Now at that time one of the brahmins of the Bhāradvāja clan had 1.2  
 lost fourteen oxen. While looking for them he went to that forest,  
 where he saw the Buddha sitting down cross-legged, with his body

straight, and mindfulness established right there. He went up to the Buddha, and recited these verses in the Buddha's presence:

- 2.1        “This ascetic mustn’t have  
              fourteen oxen  
              missing for the past six days:  
              that’s why this ascetic is happy.
- 3.1        This ascetic mustn’t have  
              a field of sesame ruined,  
              with just one or two leaves:  
              that’s why this ascetic is happy.
- 4.1        This ascetic mustn’t have  
              rats in a vacant barn  
              dancing merrily:  
              that’s why this ascetic is happy.
- 5.1        This ascetic mustn’t have  
              carpets that for seven months  
              have been infested with fleas:  
              that’s why this ascetic is happy.
- 6.1        This ascetic mustn’t have  
              seven widowed daughters  
              with one or two children each:  
              that’s why this ascetic is happy.
- 7.1        This ascetic mustn’t have  
              a wife with sallow, blotchy skin  
              to wake him with a kick:  
              that’s why this ascetic is happy.
- 8.1        This ascetic mustn’t have  
              creditors knocking at dawn,  
              warning, ‘Pay up! Pay up!’:  
              that’s why this ascetic is happy.”

“You’re right, brahmin, I don’t have 9.1  
fourteen oxen  
missing for the past six days:  
that’s why I’m happy, brahmin.

You’re right, brahmin, I don’t have 10.1  
a field of sesame ruined,  
with just one or two leaves:  
that’s why I’m happy, brahmin.

You’re right, brahmin, I don’t have 11.1  
rats in a vacant barn  
dancing merrily:  
that’s why I’m happy, brahmin.

You’re right, brahmin, I don’t have 12.1  
carpets that for seven months  
have been infested with fleas:  
that’s why I’m happy, brahmin.

You’re right, brahmin, I don’t have 13.1  
seven widowed daughters  
with one or two children each:  
that’s why I’m happy, brahmin.

You’re right, brahmin, I don’t have 14.1  
a wife with blotchy, pockmarked skin  
to wake me up with a kick:  
that’s why I’m happy, brahmin.

You’re right, brahmin, I don’t have 15.1  
creditors knocking at dawn,  
warning, ‘Pay up! Pay up!’:  
that’s why I’m happy, brahmin.”

When he had spoken, the brahmin said to the Buddha, “Excel- 16.1  
lent, 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?"

17.1 And the brahmin 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.

17.3 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.



# The Chapter on a Lay Follower

SN 7.11

## With Bhāradvāja the Farmer

*Kasibhāradvājasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land 1.1  
of the Magadhans in the Southern Hills near the brahmin village  
of Ekanāḷa.

Now at that time the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Farmer had har- 1.3  
nessed 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. 2.1  
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 2.3  
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.” 2.7

“I don’t see Master Gotama with a yoke or plow or plowshare 2.8  
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: 2.10

- 3.1 “You claim to be a farmer,  
but I don’t see you farming.  
Tell me how you’re a farmer when asked:  
how am I to recognize your farming?”
- 4.1 “Faith is my seed, austerity my rain,  
and wisdom is my yoke and plough.  
Conscience is my pole, mind my strap,  
mindfulness my plowshare and goad.
- 5.1 Guarded in body and speech,  
I restrict my intake of food.  
I use truth as my scythe,  
and gentleness is my release.
- 6.1 Energy is my beast of burden,  
transporting me to a place of sanctuary.  
It goes without turning back  
to where there is no sorrow.
- 7.1 That’s how to do the farming  
that has the Deathless as its fruit.  
When you finish this farming  
you’re released from all suffering.”
- 8.1 “Eat, Master Gotama, you are truly a farmer. For Master Gotama  
does the farming that has the Deathless as its fruit.”
- 9.1 “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.
- 10.1 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.”

When he had spoken, the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Farmer said 11.1  
to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama ... From this day forth,  
may Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone  
for refuge for life.”

SN 7.12

## With Udaya

*Udayasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl 1.2  
and robe, went to the home of the brahmin Udaya. Then Udaya  
filled the Buddha’s bowl with rice. The next day ... and the day  
after that ... Udaya filled the Buddha’s bowl with rice.

But when he had filled the Buddha’s bowl for a third time, he 1.5  
said to the Buddha, “This insatiable ascetic Gotama keeps coming  
back again and again!”

“Again and again, they sow the seed; 2.1  
again and again, the lord god sends rain;  
again and again, farmers plough the field;  
again and again, grain is produced for the nation.

Again and again, the beggars beg; 3.1  
again and again, the donors give.  
Again and again, when the donors have given,  
again and again, they take their place in heaven.

Again and again, dairy farmers milk; 4.1  
again and again, a calf cleaves to its mother;  
again and again, oppressing and intimidating;  
that idiot is reborn again and again.

Again and again, you’re reborn and die; 5.1

again and again, you get carried to a charnel ground.  
But when they've gained the path for no further re-  
birth,  
one of vast wisdom is not reborn again and again."

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

SN 7.13

## With Devahita

*Devahitasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattthī.
- 1.2 Now at that time the Buddha was afflicted by winds. Venerable  
Upavāṇa was his carer.
- 1.4 Then the Buddha said to Upavāṇa, "Please, Upavāṇa, find some  
hot water for me."
- 1.6 "Yes, sir," replied Upavāṇa. He robed up, and, taking his bowl  
and robe, went to the home of the brahmin Devahita, and stood  
silently to one side.
- 1.7 Devahita saw him standing there and addressed him in verse:
- 2.1 "Silent stands the Master,  
shaven, wrapped in his outer robe.  
What do you want? What are you looking for?  
What have you come here to ask for?"
- 3.1 "The perfected one, the Holy One in the world,  
the sage is afflicted by winds.  
If there's hot water,  
give it to the sage, brahmin.
- 4.1 I wish to bring it to the one

who is esteemed by the estimable,  
 honored by the honorable,  
 venerated by the venerable.”

Then Devahita had a man fetch a carrying-pole with hot water. 5.1  
 He also presented Upavāṇa with a jar of molasses.

Then Venerable Upavāṇa went up to the Buddha and bathed 5.2  
 him with the hot water. Then he stirred molasses into hot water  
 and presented it to the Buddha. Then the Buddha’s illness died  
 down.

Then the brahmin Devahita went up to the Buddha, and ex- 6.1  
 changed greetings with him. When the greetings and polite con-  
 versation were over, he sat down to one side, and addressed the  
 Buddha in verse:

“Where should you give an available gift? 7.1  
 Where is a gift very fruitful?  
 How does one who is donating  
 ensure the success of their religious donation?”

“One who knows their past lives, 8.1  
 and sees heaven and places of loss,  
 and has attained the ending of rebirth,  
 that sage has perfect insight.

Here you should give an available gift; 9.1  
 what’s given here is very fruitful.  
 That’s how a sponsor of sacrifices  
 ensures the success of their religious donation.”

When he had spoken, the brahmin Devahita said to the Buddha, 10.1  
 “Excellent, Master Gotama ... From this day forth, may Master  
 Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge  
 for life.”

SN 7.14

## A well-to-do brahmin

*Mahāsālasutta*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Then a certain well-to-do brahmin, shabby, wearing a shabby cloak, went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.

1.3 When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, “Brahmin, why are you so shabby, wearing a shabby cloak?”

1.5 “Master Gotama, I have four sons. At their wives’ bidding they expelled me from my house.”

1.7 “Well then, brahmin, memorize these verses and recite them to your sons when you are all seated in the council hall with a large crowd.

2.1 ‘I was overjoyed when they were born,  
and wished for them the very best.  
But at their wives’ bidding they chased me out,  
like hounds after hogs.

3.1 It turns out they’re wicked, those nasty men,  
though they called me their dear old Dad.  
They’re monsters in the shape of sons,  
throwing me out as I’ve grown old.

4.1 Like an old, useless horse  
led away from its fodder,  
the elderly father of those kids  
begs for alms at others’ homes.

5.1 Even my staff is better  
than those disobedient sons,  
for it wards off a wild bull,  
and even a wild dog.

It goes before me in the dark; 6.1  
 in deep waters it supports me.  
 By the wonderful power of this staff,  
 when I stumble, I stand firm again.”

Having memorized those verses in the Buddha’s presence, the 7.1  
 brahmin recited them to his sons when they were all seated in the  
 council hall with a large crowd. ...

Then the brahmin’s sons led him back home, bathed him, and 13.1  
 each clothed him with a fine pair of garments. Then the brahmin,  
 taking one pair of garments, went to 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:

“Master Gotama, we brahmins seek a fee for our teacher. May 13.4  
 Master Gotama please accept my teacher’s fee!” So the Buddha  
 accepted it out of compassion. Then the well-to-do brahmin said  
 to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama ... From this day forth,  
 may Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone  
 for refuge for life.”

SN 7.15

## Stuck-Up

*Mānattaddhasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Now at that time a brahmin named Stuck-Up was residing in 1.2  
 Sāvattthī. He didn’t bow to his mother or father, his teacher, or  
 his oldest brother. Now, at that time the Buddha was teaching  
 Dhamma, surrounded by a large assembly.

Then Stuck-Up thought, “The ascetic Gotama is teaching 1.5  
 Dhamma, surrounded by a large assembly. Why don’t I approach  
 him? If he speaks to me, I’ll speak to him. But if he doesn’t speak,  
 neither will I.”

- 1.10 Then the brahmin Stuck-Up went up to the Buddha, and stood silently to one side. But the Buddha didn't speak to him.
- 1.12 Then Stuck-Up thought, "This ascetic Gotama knows nothing!" And he wanted to go back from there right away.
- 1.14 Then the Buddha, knowing what Stuck-Up was thinking, addressed him in verse:
- 2.1 "It's not good to foster conceit  
if you want what's good for you, brahmin.  
You should foster the goal  
which brought you here."
- 3.1 Then Stuck-Up thought, "The ascetic Gotama knows my mind!" He bowed with his head at the Buddha's feet, caressing them and covering them with kisses, and pronounced his name: "Master Gotama, I am Stuck-Up! I am Stuck-Up!"
- 3.4 Then that assembly was stunned: "It's incredible, it's amazing! This brahmin Stuck-Up doesn't bow to his mother or father, his teacher, or his oldest brother. Yet he shows such utmost devotion to the ascetic Gotama!"
- 3.8 Then the Buddha said to the brahmin Stuck-Up, "Enough, brahmin. Get up, and take your own seat. For your mind has confidence in me."
- 3.11 Then Stuck-Up took his seat and said to the Buddha:
- 4.1 "Regarding whom should you not be conceited?  
Who should you respect?  
Who should you esteem?  
Who is it good to venerate properly?"
- 5.1 "Your mother and father,  
and also your oldest brother,  
with teacher as fourth.  
Regarding these you should not be conceited.  
They are who you should respect.  
They are who you should esteem.



And they're who it's good to venerate properly.

And when you've humbled conceit, and aren't stuck- 6.1  
up,  
show supreme reverence for  
the perfected ones, cooled,  
their task complete, free of defilements."

When he had spoken, the brahmin Stuck-Up said to the Buddha, 7.1  
"Excellent, Master Gotama ... From this day forth, may Master  
Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge  
for life."

SN 7.16

## The Contraphile

*Paccanīkasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Now at that time a brahmin named Contraphile, who loved 1.2  
contradiction, was residing in Sāvattthī.

Then Contraphile thought, "Why don't I go to the ascetic Go- 1.3  
tama and contradict everything he says?"

At that time the Buddha was walking mindfully in the open air. 1.6

Then the brahmin Contraphile went up to the Buddha, and said 1.7  
to him as he was walking, "Ascetic, preach the Dhamma."

"Fine words aren't easy to understand 2.1  
by a lover of contradiction,  
whose mind is tainted  
and full of aggression.

But when you've dispelled aggression, 3.1  
and your suspicious mind,  
and you've got rid of resentment,  
then you'll understand fine words."

- 4.1 When he had spoken, the brahmin Contraphile 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.”

SN 7.17

## The Builder

*Navakammikasutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans in a certain forest grove.
- 1.2 Now at that time the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Builder was doing some building work in that jungle thicket. He saw the Buddha sitting down cross-legged at the root of a certain sal tree, with his body straight, and mindfulness established right there.
- 1.4 Seeing this, it occurred to him, “I enjoy doing this building work here in the jungle. I wonder what the ascetic Gotama enjoys doing?”
- 1.7 Then Bhāradvāja the Builder went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse:
- 2.1 “What kind of work do you do  
as a mendicant in the sal jungle?  
How do you find enjoyment  
alone in the wilderness, Gotama?”
- 3.1 “There’s nothing I need to do in the jungle;  
my jungle’s cut down at the root, it’s withered away.  
With jungle cleared and free of thorns,  
I enjoy being alone in the jungle, having given up  
discontent.”
- 4.1 When he had spoken, the brahmin Bhāradvāja the Builder said to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama ... From this day forth,

may Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

SN 7.18

## Collecting Firewood

*Kaṭṭhahārasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans in 1.1  
a certain forest grove.

Then several youths, students of one of the Bhāradvāja brahmins, 1.2  
approached a forest grove while collecting firewood. They saw the  
Buddha sitting down cross-legged at the root of a certain sal tree,  
with his body straight, and mindfulness established right there.  
Seeing this, they went up to Bhāradvāja and said to him, “Please sir,  
you should know this. In such and such a forest grove the ascetic  
Gotama is sitting down cross-legged, with his body straight, and  
mindfulness established right there.”

Then Bhāradvāja together with those students went to that forest 1.5  
grove where he saw the Buddha sitting down cross-legged, with  
his body straight, and mindfulness established right there.

He went up to the Buddha and addressed him in verse: 1.7

“Deep in the jungle so full of terrors, 2.1  
you’ve plunged into the empty, desolate wilderness.  
Still, steady, and graceful:  
how beautifully you meditate, mendicant!

Where there is no song or music, 3.1  
a lonely sage resorts to the wilderness.  
This strikes me as an amazing thing,  
that you dwell so joyfully alone in the jungle.

I suppose you wish to be reborn in the company 4.1  
of the supreme sovereign of the heaven of the Three  
and Thirty.

Is that why you resort to the desolate wilderness,  
to practice austerities for attaining Brahmā?”

5.1 “Any wishes and hopes that are always attached  
to the many and various realms—  
the yearnings sprung from the root of unknowing—  
I’ve eliminated them all down to the root.

6.1 So I’m wishless, unattached, disengaged;  
amongst all things, my vision is clear.  
I’ve attained the state of grace, the supreme awaken-  
ing;  
I meditate alone, brahmin, and self-assured.”

7.1 When he had spoken, Bhāradvāja 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.”

SN 7.19

## The Brahmin Who Provided for His Mother

*Mātuposakasutta*

1.1 At Sāvatthī.

1.2 Then a brahmin who provided for his mother went up to the  
Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.

1.3 When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat  
down to one side and said to the Buddha, “Master Gotama, I seek  
alms by legitimate means, which I use to provide for my mother  
and father. In doing so, am I doing my duty?”

1.6 “Indeed, brahmin, in so doing you are doing your duty. Whoever  
seeks alms by legitimate means, and uses them to provide for their  
mother and father makes much merit.

2.1 A mortal provides for their mother

and father by legitimate means;  
 because they look after  
 their parents like this,  
 they're praised in this life by the astute,  
 and they depart to rejoice in heaven."

When he said this, the brahmin who provided for his mother 3.1  
 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."

SN 7.20

## A Beggar

*Bhikkhakasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

Then a begging brahmin went up to the Buddha, and exchanged 1.2  
 greetings with him.

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat 1.3  
 down to one side and said to the Buddha, "Master Gotama, both  
 you and I are beggars. What, then, is the difference between us?"

"You don't become a beggar 2.1  
 just by begging from others.  
 One who has undertaken domestic duties  
 has not yet become a mendicant.

But one living a spiritual life 3.1  
 who has banished both merit and evil,  
 and wanders having assessed the world,  
 is said to be a mendicant."

When he had spoken, the begging brahmin said to the Buddha, 4.1  
 "Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may  
 Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for  
 refuge for life."

SN 7.21

## With Saṅgārava

*Saṅgāravasutta*

1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

1.2 Now at that time there was a brahmin named Saṅgārava staying in Sāvattḥī. He practiced purification by water, believing in purification by water. He lived committed to the practice of immersing himself in water at dawn and dusk. Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvattḥī for alms.

1.4 He wandered for alms in Sāvattḥī. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, there is a brahmin named Saṅgārava staying in Sāvattḥī. He practices purification by water, believing in purification by water. He lives committed to the practice of immersing himself in water at dawn and dusk. Please visit him at his home out of compassion.” The Buddha consented in silence.

2.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of the brahmin Saṅgārava, and sat down on the seat spread out. Then the brahmin Saṅgārava went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.

2.3 When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, “Is it really true, brahmin, that you practice purification by water, believing in purification by water; that you live committed to the practice of immersing yourself in water at dawn and dusk?”

2.5 “Yes, Master Gotama.”

2.6 “But brahmin, for what reason do you practice purification by water?”

2.7 “It’s because, Master Gotama, whatever bad deeds I’ve done during the day I wash off by bathing at dusk; and whatever bad deeds I’ve done during the night, I wash off by bathing at dawn. That’s the reason why I practice purification by water.”

“The teaching is a lake with shores of ethics, brahmin, 3.1  
 unclouded, praised by the fine to the good.  
 There the knowledge masters go to bathe,  
 and cross to the far shore without getting wet.”

When he had spoken, Saṅgārava said to the Buddha, “Excellent, 4.1  
 Master Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may Master  
 Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge  
 for life.”

SN 7.22

## At Khomadussa

*Khomadussasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the 1.1  
 land of the Sakyans, where they have a town named Khomadussa.

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl 1.3  
 and robe, entered Khomadussa for alms. Now at that time the  
 brahmins and householders of Khomadussa were gathered in the  
 council hall for some business, while a gentle rain drizzled down.

Then the Buddha approached that council. The brahmins and 1.5  
 householders saw the Buddha coming off in the distance, and said,  
 “Who are these shavelings, these fake ascetics? Don’t they under-  
 stand the council rules?”

Then the Buddha addressed the brahmins and householders of 1.9  
 Khomadussa in verse:

“If good people are not present it is no true council; 2.1  
 and those whose speak against principle are not good  
 people.

Having given up greed, hate, and delusion,  
 speakers of principle are good people.”

When he had spoken, the brahmins and householders of 3.1  
 Khomadussa said to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama! Ex-  
 cellent! 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. We go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge for life."

*The Linked Discourses with Brahmins are complete.*



LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH VAṄGĪSA

# The Chapter with the Poet Vaṅgīsa

SN 8.1

## Renounced

*Nikkhantasutta*

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time Venerable Vaṅgīsa was staying near Ālavī, at the Aggālava Tree-shrine, together with his mentor, Venerable Nigrodhakappa.

1.3 Now at that time Vaṅgīsa was junior, recently gone forth. He had been left behind to look after the dwelling.

1.4 Then several women dressed in all their finery went to the monastery at Aggālava in order to inspect the dwelling. When Vaṅgīsa saw them he became dissatisfied, with lust infecting his mind.

1.6 Then he thought, “It’s my loss, my misfortune, that I’ve become dissatisfied, with lust infecting my mind. How is it possible for someone else to dispel my discontent and give rise to satisfaction? Why don’t I do it myself?”

1.10 Then, on the occasion of dispelling his own discontent and giving rise to satisfaction, he recited these verses:

2.1 “Now that I’ve renounced  
the home life for homelessness  
I’m overrun

by the rude thoughts of the Dark One.

Even if a thousand mighty princes and great archers, 3.1  
well trained, with strong bows,  
were to completely surround me;  
I would never flee.

And even if women come, 4.1  
many more than that,  
they won't scare me,  
for I stand firm in the teaching.

I heard this with my own ears 5.1  
from the Buddha, kinsman of the Sun,  
about the path going to extinguishment;  
that's what delights my mind.

Wicked One, if you come near me 6.1  
as I meditate like this,  
I'll make sure that you, Death,  
won't even see the path I take."

## SN 8.2

# Dissatisfaction

## *Aratīsutta*

At one time Venerable Vaṅgīsa was staying near Āḷavī, at the A- 1.1  
ggāḷava Tree-shrine, together with his mentor, Venerable Nigrod-  
hakappa.

Now at that time after Venerable Nigrodhakappa had finished 1.2  
his meal, on his return from almsround, he would enter his dwelling  
and not emerge for the rest of that day, or the next.

And at that time Venerable Vaṅgīsa became dissatisfied, as lust 1.3  
infected his mind.

- 1.4 Then he thought, “It’s my loss, my misfortune, that I’ve become dissatisfied, with lust infecting my mind. How is it possible for someone else to dispel my discontent and give rise to satisfaction? Why don’t I do it myself?”
- 1.8 Then, on the occasion of dispelling his own discontent and giving rise to satisfaction, he recited these verses:
- 2.1 “Giving up discontent and desire,  
along with all thoughts of the lay life,  
they wouldn’t get entangled in anything;  
unentangled, undesiring: that’s a real mendicant.
- 3.1 Whether on this earth or in the sky,  
whatever in the world is included in form  
wears out, it is all impermanent;  
the thoughtful live having comprehended this truth.
- 4.1 People are bound to their attachments,  
to what is seen, heard, felt, and thought.  
Unstirred, dispel desire for these things;  
for one called ‘a sage’ does not cling to them.
- 5.1 Attached to the sixty wrong views, and full of their  
own opinions,  
ordinary people are fixed in wrong principles.  
But that mendicant wouldn’t join a sectarian group,  
still less would they utter lewd speech.
- 6.1 Clever, long serene,  
free of deceit, alert, without envy,  
the sage has reached the state of peace;  
and because he’s extinguished, he bides his time.”

SN 8.3

## Good-Hearted

*Pesalasutta*

At one time Venerable Vaṅḡsa was staying near Āḷavī, at the A- 1.1  
ggāḷava Tree-shrine, together with his mentor, Venerable Nigrod-  
hakappa.

Now at that time Venerable Vaṅḡsa looked down upon other 1.2  
good-hearted mendicants because of his own poetic virtuosity.

Then he thought, “It’s my loss, my misfortune, that I look down 1.3  
on other good-hearted mendicants because of my own poetic vir-  
tuosity.”

Then, on the occasion of arousing remorse in himself, he recited 1.6  
these verses:

“Give up conceit, Gotama! 2.1

Completely abandon the different kinds of conceit!

Besotted with the different kinds of conceit,  
you’ve had regrets for a long time.

Smeared by smears and slain by conceit, 3.1  
people fall into hell.

When people slain by conceit are reborn in hell,  
they grieve for a long time.

But a mendicant who practices rightly, 4.1  
winner of the path, never grieves.

They enjoy happiness and a good reputation,  
and they rightly call him a ‘Seer of Truth’.

So don’t be hard-hearted, be energetic, 5.1  
with hindrances given up, be pure.

Then with conceit given up completely,  
use knowledge to make an end, and be at peace.”

SN 8.4

With Ānanda

*Ānandasutta*

- 1.1 At one time Venerable Ānanda was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.
- 1.2 Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvattthī for alms with Venerable Vaṅgīsa as his second monk.
- 1.3 And at that time Venerable Vaṅgīsa became dissatisfied, as lust infected his mind. Then he addressed Ānanda in verse:
  - 2.1 "I've got a burning desire for pleasure;  
My mind is on fire!  
Please, out of compassion, Gotama,  
tell me how to quench the flames."
  - 3.1 "Your mind is on fire  
because of a perversion of perception.  
Turn away from the feature of things  
that's attractive, provoking lust.
  - 4.1 See all conditioned phenomena as other,  
as suffering and not-self.  
Extinguish the great fire of lust,  
don't burn up again and again.
  - 5.1 With mind unified and serene,  
meditate on the ugly aspects of the body.  
With mindfulness immersed in the body,  
be full of disillusionment.
  - 6.1 Meditate on the signless,  
give up the underlying tendency to conceit;  
and when you comprehend conceit,  
you will live at peace."

SN 8.5

## Well-Spoken Words

*Subhāsitasutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!” 1.2

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.4

“Mendicants, speech that has four factors is well spoken, not 2.1  
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, 2.5  
went on to say:

“Good people say that well-spoken words are fore- 3.1  
most;

second, speak on the teaching, not against it;

third, speak pleasantly, not unpleasantly;

and fourth, speak truthfully, not falsely.”

Then Venerable Vaṅṣa got up from his seat, arranged his robe 4.1  
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. 4.3

Then Vaṅṣa extolled the Buddha in his presence with fitting 4.4  
verses:

“Speak only such words 5.1

as do not hurt yourself

nor harm others;

such speech is truly well spoken.

- 6.1 Speak only pleasing words,  
words gladly welcomed.  
Pleasing words are those  
that bring nothing bad to others.
- 7.1 Truth itself is the undying word:  
this is an eternal truth.  
Good people say that the teaching and its meaning  
are grounded in the truth.
- 8.1 The words spoken by the Buddha  
for realizing the sanctuary, extinguishment,  
for making an end of suffering:  
this really is the best kind of speech.”

## SN 8.6

## With Sāriputta

*Sāriputtasutta*

- 1.1 At one time Venerable Sāriputta was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.
- 1.2 Now at that time Venerable Sāriputta was educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants in the assembly hall with a Dhamma talk. His words were polished, clear, articulate, and expressed the meaning. And those mendicants were paying heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an ear.
- 1.4 Then Venerable Vaṅḡsa thought, “This Venerable Sāriputta is educating the mendicants. ... And those mendicants are paying heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an ear. Why don’t I extoll him in his presence with fitting verses?”
- 2.1 Then Venerable Vaṅḡsa got up from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward Sāriputta, and



said, “I feel inspired to speak, Reverend Sāriputta! I feel inspired to speak, Reverend Sāriputta!”

“Then speak as you feel inspired,” said Sāriputta. 2.3

Then Vaṅḡsa extolled Sāriputta in his presence with fitting verses: 2.4

“Deep in wisdom, intelligent, 3.1  
expert in the variety of paths;  
Sāriputta, so greatly wise,  
teaches Dhamma to the mendicants.

He teaches in brief, 4.1  
or he speaks at length.  
His call, like a myna bird,  
overflows with inspiration.

While he teaches 5.1  
the mendicants listen to his sweet voice,  
sounding attractive,  
clear and graceful.  
They listen joyfully,  
their hearts elated.”

SN 8.7

## The Invitation to Admonish

*Pavāraṇāsutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḡi in the Eastern 1.1  
Monastery, the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother, together with  
a large Saṅgha of around five hundred monks, all of whom were  
perfected ones. 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 for the invitation to  
admonish.

- 1.3 Then the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of monks, who were silent. He addressed them: “Come now, monks, I invite you all: Is there anything I’ve done by way of body or speech that you would criticize?”
- 2.1 When he had spoken, Venerable Sāriputta got up from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha, and said: “There is nothing, sir, that you’ve done by way of body or speech that we would criticize. For the Blessed One gave rise to the unarisen path, gave birth to the unborn path, and explained the unexplained path. He is the knower of the path, the discoverer of the path, the expert on the path. And now the disciples live following the path; they acquire it later. And sir, I invite the Blessed One. Is there anything I’ve done by way of body or speech that you would criticize?”
- 3.1 “There is nothing, Sāriputta, that you’ve done by way of body or speech that I would criticize. Sāriputta, you are astute. You have great wisdom, widespread wisdom, laughing wisdom, swift wisdom, sharp wisdom, penetrating wisdom. A wheel-turning monarch’s oldest son rightly keeps wielding the power set in motion by his father. In the same way, Sāriputta rightly keeps rolling the supreme Wheel of Dhamma that was rolled forth by me.”
- 4.1 “Since it seems I have done nothing worthy of the Blessed One’s criticism, is there anything these five hundred monks have done by way of body or speech that you would criticize?”
- 4.3 “There is nothing, Sāriputta, that these five hundred monks have done by way of body or speech that I would criticize. For of these five hundred monks, sixty have the three knowledges, sixty have the six direct knowledges, sixty are freed both ways, and the rest are freed by wisdom.”
- 5.1 Then Venerable Vaṅṣisa 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!”
- 5.3 “Then speak as you feel inspired,” said the Buddha.

Then Vaṅḡsa extolled the Buddha in his presence with fitting 5.4  
verses:

“Today, on the fifteenth day sabbath, 6.1  
five hundred monks have gathered together to purify  
their precepts.  
These untroubled sages have cut off their fetters and  
bonds,  
they will not be reborn again.

Just as a wheel-turning monarch 7.1  
surrounded by ministers  
travels all around this  
land that’s girt by sea.

So disciples with the three knowledges, 8.1  
conquerors of death,  
revere the winner of the battle,  
the unsurpassed caravan leader.

All are sons of the Blessed One— 9.1  
there is no rubbish here.  
I bow to the kinsman of the Sun,  
destroyer of the dart of craving.”

SN 8.8

## Over a Thousand

*Parosahassasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥi in Jeta’s Grove, 1.1  
Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery, together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250  
mendicants.

Now at that time the Buddha was educating, encouraging, fir- 1.2  
ing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk about

extinguishment. And those mendicants were paying heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an ear.

- 1.4 Then Venerable Vaṅḡsa thought, “The Buddha is educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk about extinguishment. And those mendicants are paying heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an ear. Why don’t I extoll him in his presence with fitting verses?”

- 2.1 Then Venerable Vaṅḡsa 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!”

- 2.3 “Then speak as you feel inspired,” said the Buddha.

- 2.4 Then Vaṅḡsa extolled the Buddha in his presence with fitting verses:

- 3.1 “Over a thousand mendicants  
revere the Holy One  
as he teaches the immaculate Dhamma,  
extinguishment, fearing nothing from any quarter.

- 4.1 They listen to the immaculate Dhamma  
taught by the fully awakened Buddha;  
the Buddha is so brilliant,  
at the fore of the mendicant Saṅgha,

- 5.1 Blessed One, your name is ‘Giant’,  
seventh of the sages.  
You are like a great cloud  
that rains on your disciples.

- 6.1 I’ve left my day’s meditation,  
out of desire to see the teacher.  
Great hero, your disciple Vaṅḡsa  
bows at your feet.”

- 7.1 “Vaṅḡsa, had you previously composed these verses, or did they spring to mind in the moment?”

“They sprang to mind in the moment, sir.” 7.2

“Well then, Vaṅgīsa, speak some more spontaneously inspired verses.” 7.3

“Yes, sir,” replied Vaṅgīsa. Then he extolled the Buddha with some more spontaneously inspired verses, not previously composed: 7.4

“Having overcome Māra’s devious path, 8.1  
you wander with hard-heartedness dissolved.  
See him, the liberator from bonds, unattached,  
analyzing the teaching.

You have explained in many ways 9.1  
the path to cross the flood.  
The Seers of Truth stand unfaltering  
in the deathless you’ve explained.

As the bringer of light who has pierced the truth, 10.1  
you’ve seen what lies beyond all realms.  
When you saw and realized this for yourself,  
you taught it first to the group of five.

When the Dhamma has been so well taught, 11.1  
how could those who know it be negligent?  
That’s why, being diligent, we should always train  
respectfully in the Buddha’s teaching.”

## SN 8.9

### With Koṇḍañña

#### *Koṇḍaññasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. 1.1

Then Venerable Koṇḍañña Who Understood approached the Buddha after a very long absence. He bowed with his head at 1.2

the Buddha's feet, caressing them and covering them with kisses, and pronounced his name: "I am Koṇḍañña, Blessed One! I am Koṇḍañña, Holy One!"

1.4 Then Venerable Vaṅḡsa thought, "This Venerable Koṇḍañña Who Understood has approached the Buddha after a very long absence. He bowed with his head at the Buddha's feet, caressing them and covering them with kisses, and pronounced his name: 'I am Koṇḍañña, Blessed One! I am Koṇḍañña, Holy One!' Why don't I extoll him in the Buddha's presence with fitting verses?"

2.1 Then Venerable Vaṅḡsa 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!"

2.3 "Then speak as you feel inspired," said the Buddha.

2.4 Then Vaṅḡsa extolled Koṇḍañña in the Buddha's presence with fitting verses:

3.1 "The senior monk who was awakened right after the  
Buddha,  
Koṇḍañña, is keenly energetic.  
He regularly gains blissful meditative states,  
and the three kinds of seclusion.

4.1 Whatever can be attained by a disciple  
who does the Teacher's bidding,  
he has attained it all,  
through diligently training himself.

5.1 With great power and the three knowledges,  
expert in comprehending the minds of others,  
Koṇḍañña, the heir to the Buddha,  
bows at the Teacher's feet."

SN 8.10

## With Moggallāna

*Moggallānasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying on the slopes of Isigili at the 1.1  
Black Rock, together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred  
mendicants, all of whom were perfected ones. Thereupon, with  
his mind, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna checked to see whose mind  
was liberated and free of attachments.

Then Venerable Vaṅgīsa thought, “The Buddha is staying on 1.3  
the slopes of Isigili ... with five hundred perfected ones. Mahā-  
moggallāna is checking to see whose mind is liberated and free of  
attachments. Why don’t I extoll him in the Buddha’s presence with  
fitting verses?”

Then Venerable Vaṅgīsa got up from his seat, arranged his robe 2.1  
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. 2.3

Then Vaṅgīsa extolled Mahāmoggallāna in his presence with 2.4  
fitting verses:

“As the sage, who has gone beyond suffering, 3.1  
sits upon the mountain slope,  
he is revered by disciples with the three knowledges,  
conquerors of death.

Moggallāna, of great psychic power, 4.1  
comprehends with his mind,  
scrutinizing their minds,  
liberated, free of attachments.

So they revere Gotama, 5.1  
the sage gone beyond suffering,  
who is endowed with all path factors,

and with a multitude of attributes.”

SN 8.11

## At Gaggarā

*Gaggarāsutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Campā on the banks of the Gaggarā Lotus Pond, together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants, seven hundred male and seven hundred female lay followers, and many thousands of deities. But the Buddha outshone them all in beauty and glory.
- 1.3 Then Venerable Vaṅgīsa thought, “The Buddha is staying near Campā on the banks of the Gaggarā Lotus Pond, together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants, seven hundred male and seven hundred female lay followers, and many thousands of deities. And he outshines them all in beauty and glory. Why don’t I extoll him in his presence with fitting verses?”
- 2.1 Then Venerable Vaṅgīsa 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!”
- 2.3 “Then speak as you feel inspired,” said the Buddha.
- 2.4 Then Vaṅgīsa extolled the Buddha in his presence with fitting verses:
  - 3.1 “Like the moon on a cloudless night,  
like the shining immaculate sun,  
so too Aṅgīrasa, O great sage,  
your glory outshines the entire world.”



SN 8.12

## With Vaṅḡsa

*Vaṅḡsasutta*

At one time Venerable Vaṅḡsa was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's 1.1  
Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Now at that time Vaṅḡsa had recently attained perfection. 1.2  
While experiencing the bliss of freedom, on that occasion he re-  
cited these verses:

“We used to wander, drunk on poetry, 2.1  
village to village, town to town.  
Then we saw the Buddha,  
and faith arose in us.

He taught me Dhamma: 3.1  
the aggregates, sense fields, and elements.  
When I heard his teaching  
I went forth to homelessness.

It was truly for the benefit of many 4.1  
that the sage achieved awakening—  
for the monks and for the nuns  
who see that they've reached certainty.

It was so welcome for me 5.1  
to be in the presence of the Buddha.  
I've attained the three knowledges,  
and fulfilled the Buddha's instructions.

I know my past lives, 6.1  
my clairvoyance is purified,  
I am master of three knowledges, attained in psychic  
power,  
expert in comprehending the minds of others.”

*The Linked Discourses with Vaṅḡsa are complete.*

LINKED DISCOURSES IN  
THE WOODS

# The Chapter on In the Woods

SN 9.1

## Seclusion

*Vivekasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time one of the mendicants was staying in the land of the Kosalans in a certain forest grove.
- 1.3 Now at that time that mendicant, during their day's meditation, was thinking bad, unskillful thoughts to do with the lay life. The deity haunting that forest had compassion for that mendicant, and wanted what's best for them. So they approached that mendicant wanting to stir them up, and addressed them in verse:
- 2.1 "You entered the woods desiring seclusion,  
yet your mind strays to outward things.  
As a person, you should dispel the desire for people.  
Then you'll be happy, free of greed.
- 3.1 Mindful, give up discontent;  
let us remind you of the way of the good.  
The dusty abyss is so hard to cross;  
don't let sensual dust drag you down.
- 4.1 Just as a bird strewn with dirt  
sheds that clingy dust with a shake;

so too, an energetic, mindful mendicant  
sheds that clingy dust with a shake.”

Impelled by that deity, that mendicant was struck with a sense 5.1  
of urgency.

SN 9.2

## Getting Up

*Upaṭṭhānasutta*

At one time one of the mendicants was staying in the land of the 1.1  
Kosalans in a certain forest grove.

Now at that time that mendicant fell asleep during the day’s 1.2  
meditation. The deity haunting that forest had compassion for that  
mendicant, and wanted what’s best for them. So they approached  
that mendicant wanting to stir them up, and addressed them in  
verse:

“Get up, mendicant! Why lie down? 2.1  
What’s the point in sleeping?  
How can the afflicted slumber  
when injured by an arrow strike?

You should amplify the faith 3.1  
that led you to go forth  
from the home life to homelessness.  
Don’t fall under the sway of slumber.”

“Sensual pleasures are impermanent and unstable, 4.1  
but idiots still fall for them.  
Among those who are bound, they’re free and  
unattached:  
why bother a renunciate?

By removing desire and greed, 5.1

by going beyond ignorance,  
that knowledge has been perfectly cleansed:  
why bother a renunciate?

6.1 By breaking ignorance with knowledge,  
by the ending of defilements,  
they're sorrowless, unstressed:  
why bother a renunciate?

7.1 Energetic, resolute,  
always staunchly vigorous,  
aspiring to extinguishment:  
why bother a renunciate?"

SN 9.3

## With Kassapagotta

*Kassapagottasutta*

1.1 At one time Venerable Kassapagotta was staying in the land of the Kosalans in a certain forest grove.

1.2 Now at that time Venerable Kassapagotta, having withdrawn for his day's meditation, tried to advise a tribal hunter. Then the deity haunting that forest approached Kassapagotta wanting to stir him up, and recited these verses:

2.1 "A tribal hunter wandering the rugged hills  
is unintelligent, unthinking.  
It's a waste of time to advise him;  
this mendicant seems to me like an idiot.

3.1 The tribal hunter listens without understanding,  
he looks without seeing.  
Though the teaching is spoken,  
the fool doesn't get it.

4.1 Even if you lit ten lamps

and brought them to him, Kassapa,  
he wouldn't see anything,  
for he has no eyes to see."

Impelled by that deity, Venerable Kassapagotta was struck with 5.1  
a sense of urgency.

SN 9.4

## Several Mendicants Set Out Wandering

*Sambahulasutta*

At one time several mendicants were staying in the land of the 1.1  
Kosalans in a certain forest grove.

Then after completing the three months of the rainy season res- 1.2  
idence, those mendicants set out wandering. Not seeing those  
mendicants, the deity haunting that forest cried. And on that occa-  
sion they recited this verse:

"Seeing so many vacated seats today, 2.1  
it seems to me that they must have become dissatis-  
fied.

They were so learned, such brilliant speakers!  
Where have these disciples of Gotama gone?"

When they had spoken, another deity replied with this verse: 3.1

"They've gone to Magadha, they've gone to Kosala, 4.1  
and some are in the Vajjian lands.  
Like deer that wander free of ties,  
the mendicants live with no abode."

SN 9.5

# With Ānanda

## *Ānandasutta*

1.1 At one time Venerable Ānanda was staying in the land of the Kosalans in a certain forest grove.

1.2 Now at that time Ānanda was spending too much time informing the lay people. Then the deity haunting that forest had compassion for Ānanda, wanting what's best for him. So they approached him wanting to stir him up, and recited these verses:

2.1 “You’ve left for the jungle, the root of a tree,  
with quenching in your heart.  
Practice absorption, Gotama, don’t be negligent!  
What is this hullabaloo to you?”

3.1 Impelled by that deity, Venerable Ānanda was struck with a sense of urgency.

SN 9.6

# With Anuruddha

## *Anuruddhasutta*

1.1 At one time Venerable Anuruddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans in a certain forest grove.

1.2 Then a certain deity of the company of the Thirty-Three named Penelope had been Anuruddha’s partner in a former life. She went up to Anuruddha, and recited these verses:

2.1 “Set your heart there,  
where you used to live;  
among the gods of the Thirty-Three,  
whose every desire is granted!  
At the fore of a retinue



of divine maidens, you'll shine!"

"Divine maidens are in a sorry state,  
stuck in self-identity. 3.1

And those beings too are in a sorry state,  
who are attached to divine maidens."

"They don't know pleasure 4.1  
who don't see the Garden of Delight!  
It's the abode of lordly gods,  
the glorious host of Thirty!"

"Fool, don't you understand 5.1  
the saying of the perfected ones:  
all conditions are impermanent,  
their nature is to rise and fall;  
having arisen, they cease;  
their stilling is true bliss.

Penelope, weaver of the web, 6.1  
there'll be no more lives in the hosts of gods.  
Transmigration through births is finished,  
now there'll be no more future lives."

SN 9.7

## With Nāgadatta

*Nāgadattasutta*

At one time Venerable Nāgadatta was staying in the land of the 1.1  
Kosalans in a certain forest grove.

Now at that time Venerable Nāgadatta had been entering the vil- 1.2  
lage too early and returning late in the day. Then the deity haunting  
that forest had compassion for Nāgadatta, wanting what's best for  
him. So they approached him wanting to stir him up, and recited  
these verses:

- 2.1 “Entering too early,  
and returning after spending too much of the day,  
Nāgadatta socializes with lay people,  
sharing their joys and sorrows.
- 3.1 I’m afraid for Nāgadatta; he’s so reckless  
in his attachment to families.  
May he not come under the King of Death’s power,  
under the sway of the terminator!”
- 4.1 Impelled by that deity, Venerable Nāgadatta was struck with a  
sense of urgency.

SN 9.8

## The Mistress of the House

*Kulagharaṇīsutta*

- 1.1 At one time one of the monks was staying in the land of the Kos-  
alans in a certain forest grove.
- 1.2 Now at that time that monk had become too closely involved  
in the affairs of a certain family. The deity haunting that forest  
had compassion for that monk, wanting what’s best for him. So,  
wanting to stir him up, they manifested in the appearance of the  
mistress of that family, approached the monk, and addressed him  
in verse:
- 2.1 “On the banks of the rivers and in the guest houses,  
in meeting halls and highways,  
people come together and gossip:  
what’s going on between you and me?”
- 3.1 “There are lots of annoying sounds  
that an austere ascetic must endure.  
But they mustn’t be dismayed by that,  
for that’s not what defiles you.

If you're startled by every little sound, 4.1  
 like a wind-deer in the wood,  
 they'll call you 'flighty minded';  
 and your practice won't succeed."

SN 9.9

## A Vajji

*Vajjiputtasutta*

At one time a certain Vajjian mendicant was staying near Vesālī in 1.1  
 a certain forest grove.

Now at that time the Vajjis were holding an all-night event in 1.2  
 Vesālī. Then that mendicant, groaning at the noise of musical in-  
 struments being beaten and played, on that occasion recited this  
 verse:

"We dwell alone in the wilderness, 2.1  
 like a cast-off log in the forest.  
 On a night like this,  
 who's worse off than me?"

The deity haunting that forest had compassion for that mendi- 3.1  
 cant, and wanted what's best for them. So they approached that  
 mendicant wanting to stir them up, and addressed them in verse:

"You dwell alone in the wilderness, 4.1  
 like a cast-off log in the forest.  
 Lots of people are jealous of you,  
 like beings in hell of those going to heaven."

Impelled by that deity, that mendicant was struck with a sense 5.1  
 of urgency.

SN 9.10

## Recitation

*Sajjhāyasutta*

- 1.1 At one time one of the mendicants was staying in the land of the Kosalans in a certain forest grove.
- 1.2 Now at that time that mendicant had previously been spending too much time in recitation. But some time later they adhered to passivity and silence. Not hearing the teaching, the deity haunting that forest approached that mendicant, and addressed them in verse:
- 2.1 “Mendicant, why don’t you recite passages of the  
teaching,  
living together with other mendicants?  
When you hear the teaching confidence grows;  
and the reciter is praised in the present life.”
- 3.1 “I used to be enthusiastic about passages of the teaching,  
so long as I’d not realized dispassion.  
But then I realized dispassion, which the good call  
the laying to rest by completely understanding  
whatever is seen, heard, and thought.”

SN 9.11

## Unskillful Thoughts

*Akusalavitakkasutta*

- 1.1 At one time one of the mendicants was staying in the land of the Kosalans in a certain forest grove.
- 1.2 Now at that time that mendicant, during their day’s meditation, was thinking bad, unskillful thoughts, that is: sensual, malicious, and cruel thoughts. The deity haunting that forest had compassion

for that mendicant, and wanted what's best for them. So they approached that mendicant wanting to stir them up, and addressed them in verse:

“Because of improper attention, 2.1  
 you're consumed by your thoughts.  
 When you've given up irrationality,  
 make sure your thoughts are rational.

Thinking about the Teacher, the teaching, 3.1  
 the Saṅgha, and your own ethics,  
 you'll find gladness,  
 and rapture and bliss as well, no doubt.  
 And when you're full of joy,  
 you'll make an end to suffering.”

Impelled by that deity, that mendicant was struck with a sense 4.1  
 of urgency.

SN 9.12

## Midday

*Majjhānikasutta*

At one time one of the mendicants was staying in the land of the 1.1  
 Kosalans in a certain forest grove. The deity haunting that forest  
 approached that mendicant and recited this verse in their presence:

“In the still of high noon, 2.1  
 when the birds have settled down,  
 the formidable jungle whispers to itself:  
 that seems so scary to me!”

“In the still of high noon, 3.1  
 when the birds have settled down,  
 the formidable jungle whispers to itself:  
 that seems so delightful to me!”

SN 9.13

## Undisciplined Faculties

*Pākatindriyasutta*

- 1.1 At one time several mendicants were staying in the Kosalan lands in a certain forest grove. They were restless, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, loose-tongued, unmindful, lacking situational awareness and immersion, with straying minds and undisciplined faculties.
- 1.2 The deity haunting that forest had compassion for those mendicants, and wanted what's best for them. So they approached those mendicants wanting to stir them up, and addressed them in verse:
- 2.1 “The mendicants used to live happily,  
as disciples of Gotama.  
Desireless they sought alms;  
desireless they used their lodgings.  
Knowing that the world was impermanent  
they made an end of suffering.
- 3.1 But now they've made themselves hard to look after,  
like chiefs in a village.  
They eat and eat and then lie down,  
unconscious in the homes of others.
- 4.1 Having raised my joined palms to the Saṅgha,  
I speak here only about certain people.  
They're rejects, with no protector,  
just like those who have passed away.
- 5.1 I'm speaking about  
those who live negligently.  
To those who live diligently  
I pay homage.”
- 6.1 Impelled by that deity, those mendicants were struck with a sense of urgency.

SN 9.14

# The Thief of Scent

*Gandhatthenasutta*

At one time one of the mendicants was staying in the land of the 1.1  
Kosalans in a certain forest grove.

Now at that time, after the meal, on their return from almsround, 1.2  
that mendicant plunged into a lotus pond and sniffed a pink lotus.  
The deity haunting that forest had compassion for that mendicant,  
and wanted what's best for them. So they approached that mendi-  
cant wanting to stir them up, and addressed them in verse:

“This water flower has not been given. 2.1  
When you sniff it,  
this is one factor of theft.  
Good sir, you are a thief of scent!”

“I do not take, nor do I break; 3.1  
I sniff the water flower from afar.  
So based on what evidence  
do you call me a thief of scent?

Why don't you accuse someone 4.1  
who does such vandalizing  
as digging up the roots,  
or breaking off the flowers?”

“I have nothing to say 5.1  
to a person who is a crude vandal,  
soiled like a used nappy.  
You're the one who deserves to be spoken to.

To the man who has not a blemish 6.1  
who is always seeking purity,  
even a hair-tip of evil  
seems as big as a cloud.”

- 7.1        “Indeed, O spirit, you understand me,  
               and you empathize with me.  
               Please speak to me again,  
               whenever you see something like this.”
- 8.1        “I’m no dependent of yours,  
               nor am I your servant.  
               You yourself should know, mendicant,  
               the way that leads to a good place.”
- 9.1        Impelled by that deity, that mendicant was struck with a sense  
               of urgency.

*The Linked Discourses in the Forest are completed.*



LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH SPIRITS

# The Chapter with Indaka

SN 10.1

## With Indaka

*Indakasutta*

1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha on Mount Indra’s Peak, the haunt of the native spirit Indaka.

1.3 Then the native spirit Indaka went up to the Buddha, and addressed him in verse:

2.1 “The Buddhas say that form is not the soul.  
Then how does this body manifest?  
Where do the bones and liver come from?  
And how does one cling on in the womb?”

3.1 “First there’s a drop of coagulate;  
from there a little bud appears;  
next it becomes a piece of flesh;  
which produces a swelling.  
From that swelling the limbs appear,  
the head hair, body hair, and teeth.

4.1 And whatever the mother eats—  
the food and drink that she consumes—  
nourishes them there,  
the person in the mother’s womb.”

SN 10.2

## With a Spirit Named Sakka

*Sakkanāmasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain. 1.1

Then a spirit named Sakka went up to the Buddha, and addressed him in verse: 1.2

“You’ve given up all ties, 2.1  
and are fully freed.  
It’s not a good idea for you, ascetic,  
to be instructing others.”

“No matter what the apparent reason 3.1  
why people are together, Sakka,  
it’s unworthy for a wise person  
to not think of the other with compassion.

If you instruct others 4.1  
with a mind clear and confident,  
your compassion and empathy  
don’t create attachments.”

SN 10.3

## With Spiky

*Sūcilomasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Gayā on the cut-stone ledge in the haunt of Spiky the native spirit. 1.1

Now at that time the native spirits Shaggy and Spiky were passing by not far from the Buddha. 1.2

So Shaggy said to Spiky, “That’s an ascetic.” 1.3

“That’s no ascetic, he’s a faker! I’ll soon find out whether he’s an ascetic or a faker.” 1.5

- 2.1 Then Spiky went up to the Buddha and leaned up against his body, but the Buddha pulled away.
- 2.3 Then Spiky said to the Buddha, “Are you afraid, ascetic?”
- 2.5 “No, sir, I’m not afraid. But your touch is nasty.”
- 2.7 “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!”
- 2.9 “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.”
- 3.1 “Where do greed and hate come from?  
From where spring discontent, desire, and terror?  
Where do the mind’s thoughts originate,  
like a crow let loose by boys.”
- 4.1 “Greed and hate come from here;  
from here spring discontent, desire, and terror;  
here’s where the mind’s thoughts originate,  
like a crow let loose by boys.
- 5.1 Born of affection, originating in oneself,  
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.
- 6.1 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.”

SN 10.4

## With Mañibhadda

*Mañibhaddasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Magadhans 1.1  
at the Mañimālīka Tree-shrine, the haunt of the native spirit Mañi-  
bhadda.

Then the native spirit Mañibhadda went up to the Buddha, and 1.2  
recited this verse in the Buddha's presence:

“It's always auspicious for the mindful; 2.1  
the mindful prosper in happiness.  
Each new day is better for the mindful,  
and they're freed from enmity.”

“It's always auspicious for the mindful; 3.1  
the mindful prosper in happiness.  
Each new day is better for the mindful,  
but they're not freed from enmity.

But someone whose mind delights in harmlessness, 4.1  
all day and all night,  
with love for all living creatures—  
they have no enmity for anyone.”

SN 10.5

## With Sānu

*Sānusutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, 1.1  
Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Now at that time a certain lay woman had a son named Sānu 1.2  
who had been possessed by a native spirit. And as that lay woman  
wept, on that occasion she recited these verses:

- 2.1 “I have heard this from the perfected ones.  
The native spirits will not mess with anyone  
who leads the spiritual life  
by observing the sabbath
- 3.1 complete in all eight factors  
on the fourteenth and the fifteenth days,  
and the eighth day of the fortnight,  
as well as on the fortnight of special displays.  
But now today I see  
native spirits messing with Sānu.”
- 4.1 “What you heard from the perfected ones is right.  
The native spirits will not mess with anyone  
who leads the spiritual life  
by observing the sabbath
- 5.1 complete in all eight factors  
on the fourteenth and the fifteenth days,  
and the eighth day of the fortnight,  
as well as on the fortnight of special displays.
- 6.1 When Sānu regains consciousness tell him  
this saying of the native spirits:  
Don’t do bad deeds  
either openly or in secret.
- 7.1 If you should do a bad deed,  
or you’re doing one now,  
you won’t be freed from suffering,  
though you fly away and flee.”
- 8.1 “Mum, they cry for the dead,  
or for one who’s alive but has disappeared.  
I’m alive and you can see me,  
so mum, why do you weep for me?”

“Son, they cry for the dead, 9.1  
 or for one who’s alive but has disappeared.  
 But someone who has given up sensual pleasures  
 only to come back here again:  
 they cry for them as well,  
 for though still alive they’re really dead.

My dear, you’ve been rescued from hot coals, 10.1  
 and you want to plunge right back in them!  
 My dear, you’ve been rescued from the abyss,  
 and you want to plunge right back there!

Keep pushing forward, it’s what’s best for you! 11.1  
 Who have I got to complain to?  
 When your things have been saved from a fire,  
 would you want them to be burnt again?”

SN 10.6

## With Piyañkara

*Piyañkarasutta*

At one time Venerable Sāriputta was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s 1.1  
 Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery.

Now at that time Venerable Anuruddha rose at the crack of 1.2  
 dawn and recited passages of the teaching. Then the native spirit  
 Piyañkara’s Mother soothed her little child, saying:

“Don’t make a sound, Piyañkara! 2.1  
 A mendicant recites passages of the teaching.  
 When we understand a passage,  
 we can practice for our welfare.

Let us keep from harming living creatures, 3.1  
 and speak no lying words.  
 We should train ourselves well in ethics,

and hopefully we'll be freed from the goblin realm."

SN 10.7

## With Punabbasu

*Punabbasusutta*

- 1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.
- 1.2 Now at that time the Buddha was educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants with a Dhamma talk about extinguishment. And those mendicants were paying heed, paying attention, engaging wholeheartedly, and lending an ear.
- 1.4 Then the native spirit Punabbasu's Mother soothed her little children, saying:
  - 2.1 "Hush, little Uttarā!  
Hush, Punabbasu!  
For I want to listen to the teaching  
of the Teacher, the supreme Buddha.
  - 3.1 Since the Blessed One spoke of extinguishment,  
the release from all ties,  
I have a lasting love  
for this teaching.
  - 4.1 In this world, your own child is dear;  
in this world, your own husband is dear;  
but even greater than that is my love  
for this teaching's quest.
  - 5.1 For neither son nor husband,  
dear as they are, can free you from suffering;  
as listening to the true teaching  
frees living creatures from suffering.
  - 6.1 In this world mired in suffering,



fettered by old age and death,  
 I want to listen to the teaching  
 that the Buddha awakened to,  
 which frees you from old age and death.  
 So hush, Punabbasu!”

“Mom, I’m not speaking, 7.1  
 and Uttarā is silent, too.  
 Focus just on the teaching,  
 for it’s nice to listen to the true teaching.  
 And it’s because we haven’t understood the teaching  
 that we live in suffering, Mom.

He is a beacon for those who are lost 8.1  
 among gods and humans.  
 The Buddha, bearing his final body,  
 the Seer teaches Dhamma.”

“It’s good that my child’s so astute, 9.1  
 this child I bore and suckled!  
 My child loves the pure teaching  
 of the supreme Buddha.

Punabbasu, may you be happy! 10.1  
 Today, I rise.  
 Hear me too, Uttarā:  
 I have seen the noble truths!”

SN 10.8

## With Sudatta

*Sudattasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Cool 1.1  
 Grove.

1.2 Now at that time the householder Anāthapiṇḍika had arrived at Rājagaha on some business. He heard a rumor that a Buddha had arisen in the world.

1.5 Right away he wanted to go and see the Buddha, but he thought, “It’s too late to go and see the Buddha today. I’ll go and see him tomorrow.” He went to bed thinking of the Buddha.

1.8 During the night he got up three times thinking it was morning. Then he approached the Sivaka Gate, and non-human beings opened it for him.

1.11 But as he was leaving the city, light vanished and darkness appeared to him. He felt fear, terror, and goosebumps, and wanted to turn back.

1.12 Then the invisible spirit Sivaka called out:

2.1 “A hundred elephants, a hundred horses,  
a hundred mule-drawn chariots,  
a hundred thousand maidens  
bedecked with jeweled earrings:  
these are not worth a sixteenth part  
of a single forward stride!

3.1 Forward, householder!  
Forward, householder!  
Going forward is better for you,  
not turning back!”

4.1 Then darkness vanished and light appeared to Anāthapiṇḍika. His fear, terror, and goosebumps settled down.

4.2 But for a second time, light vanished and darkness appeared to him. ...

4.3 For a second time the invisible spirit Sivaka called out ...

6.1 “... Going forward is better for you,  
not turning back!”

7.1 Then darkness vanished and light appeared to Anāthapiṇḍika. His fear, terror, and goosebumps settled down.

But for a third time, light vanished and darkness appeared to him. ... 7.2

For a third time the invisible spirit Sivaka called out ... 7.3

“... Going forward is better for you,  
not turning back!” 9.1

Then darkness vanished and light appeared to Anāthapiṇḍika. His fear, terror, and goosebumps settled down. Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika went to the Cool Grove and approached the Buddha. 10.1

Now at that time the Buddha had risen at the crack of dawn and was walking mindfully in the open. He saw Anāthapiṇḍika coming off in the distance. So he stepped down from the walking path, sat down on the seat spread out, and said to Anāthapiṇḍika, “Come, Sudatta.” 11.1

Then Anāthapiṇḍika thought, “The Buddha calls me by name!” Smiling and elated, he bowed with his head at the Buddha’s feet and said to him, “Sir, I trust the Buddha slept well?” 11.6

“A brahmin who is fully extinguished  
always sleeps at ease.  
Sensual pleasures slip off them,  
they’re cooled, free of attachments. 12.1

Since they’ve cut off all clinging,  
and removed the stress from the heart,  
the peaceful sleep at ease,  
having found peace of mind.” 13.1

SN 10.9

## With the Nun Sukkā (1st)

*Paṭhamasukkāsaṭṭha*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. 1.1

1.2 Now, at that time the nun Sukkā was teaching Dhamma, surrounded by a large assembly. Then a native spirit was so devoted to Sukkā that he went from street to street and from square to square, and on that occasion recited these verses:

2.1 “What’s up with these people in Rājagaha?  
They sleep like they’ve been drinking mead!  
They don’t attend on Sukkā  
as she’s teaching the deathless state.

3.1 But the wise—  
it’s as if they drink it up,  
so irresistible, delicious, and nutritious,  
like travelers enjoying a cool cloud.”

SN 10.10

## With the Nun Sukkā (2nd)

*Dutiyasukkāsutta*

1.1 At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground.

1.2 Now at that time a certain lay follower gave food to the nun Sukkā. Then a native spirit was so devoted to Sukkā that he went from street to street and from square to square, and on that occasion recited these verses:

2.1 “O! He has made so much merit!  
That lay follower is so very wise.  
He just gave food to Sukkā,  
who is released from all ties.”

SN 10.11

## With the Nun Cīrā

*Cīrāsutta*

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 a certain lay follower gave a robe to the nun 1.3  
Cīrā. Then a native spirit was so devoted to Cīrā that he went from  
street to street and from square to square, and on that occasion  
recited these verses:

“O! He has made so much merit! 2.1  
That lay-follower is so very wise.  
He gave a robe to Cīrā,  
who is released from all bonds.”

SN 10.12

## With Ālavaka

*Ālavakasutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Ālavī 1.1  
in the haunt of the native spirit Ālavaka.

Then the native spirit Ālavaka went up to the Buddha, and said 1.3  
to him: “Get out, ascetic!”

Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went out. 1.5

“Get in, ascetic!” 1.6

Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went in. 1.7

And for a second time the native spirit Ālavaka said to the Bud- 1.8  
dha, “Get out, ascetic!”

Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went out. 1.10

“Get in, ascetic!” 1.11

Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went in. 1.12

And for a third time the native spirit Ālavaka said to the Buddha, 1.13  
“Get out, ascetic!”

- 1.15      Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went out.  
 1.16      “Get in, ascetic!”  
 1.17      Saying, “All right, sir,” the Buddha went in.  
 1.18      And for a fourth time the native spirit ĀḶavaka said to the Buddha,  
 1.19      “Get out, ascetic!”  
 1.20      “No, sir, I won’t get out. Do what you must.”  
 1.22      “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!”  
 1.24      “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.”
- 2.1          “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?”
- 3.1          “Faith here is a person’s best wealth.  
               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 wisdom.”
- 4.1          “How do you cross the flood?  
               How do you cross the deluge?  
               How do you get over suffering?  
               How do you get purified?”
- 5.1          “By faith you cross the flood,  
               and by diligence the deluge.  
               By energy you get past suffering,  
               and you’re purified by wisdom.”

- “How do you get wisdom? 6.1  
 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 7.1  
 gains wisdom by wanting to learn,  
 having faith in the perfected ones,  
 and the teaching for becoming extinguished.
- Being responsible, acting appropriately, 8.1  
 and working hard you earn wealth.  
 Truthfulness wins you a good reputation.  
 You hold on to friends by giving.  
 That’s how the departed do not grieve  
 when passing from this world to the next.
- A faithful householder 9.1  
 who has these four qualities  
 does not grieve after passing away:  
 truth, principle, steadfastness, and generosity.
- Go ahead, ask others as well, 10.1  
 there are many ascetics and brahmins.  
 See whether anything better is found  
 than truth, self-control, generosity, and patience.”
- “Why now would I question 11.1  
 the many ascetics and brahmins?  
 Today I understand  
 what’s good for the next life.
- It was truly for my benefit 12.1  
 that the Buddha came to stay at ĀḶavī.

Today I understand  
where a gift is very fruitful.

- 13.1 I myself will journey  
village to village, town to town,  
paying homage to the Buddha,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching!”

*The Linked Discourses with Native Spirits are complete.*



LINKED DISCOURSES  
WITH SAKKA

# Chapter One

SN 11.1

## With Suvāra

*Suvārasutta*

- 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!"
- 1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 "Once upon a time, mendicants, the demons marched against the gods.
- 2.2 Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed the god Suvāra, 'Dear Suvāra, the demons march against the gods! Go, and march against the demons!'
- 2.5 'Yes, lord,' replied Suvāra. But he fell into negligence.
- 2.6 For a second time Sakka addressed Suvāra, 'Dear Suvāra, the demons march against the gods! Go, and march against the demons!'
- 2.9 'Yes, lord,' replied Suvāra. But for a second time he fell into negligence.
- 2.10 For a third time Sakka addressed Suvāra, 'Dear Suvāra, the demons march against the gods! Go, and march against the demons!'
- 2.13 'Yes, lord,' replied Suvāra. But for a third time he fell into negligence.
- 2.14 Then Sakka addressed the god Suvāra in verse:

‘Suvīra, go to that place 3.1  
 where you can achieve happiness  
 without working for it or trying hard—  
 and take me with you!’

‘That a lazy man who does no work, 4.1  
 and doesn’t do his duty,  
 should fulfill all his desires:  
 Sakka, grant me this boon!’

‘Suvīra, go to that place 5.1  
 where a lazy man who does no work  
 prospers in unending happiness—  
 and take me with you!’

‘O Sakka, first among gods, 6.1  
 that we might find the happiness  
 that’s sorrowless, unstressed:  
 Sakka, grant me this boon!’

‘If there exists anywhere a place 7.1  
 where one can live happily without working,  
 that surely would be extinguishment’s path!  
 Go there, Suvīra,  
 and take me with you!’

So, mendicants, even Sakka, lord of gods—while living off of the 8.1  
 fruit of his good and bad deeds, and ruling as sovereign lord over  
 these gods of the Thirty-Three—will speak in praise of initiative  
 and energy. But since you have gone forth in such a well explained  
 teaching and training, it would be truly beautiful for you to try  
 hard, strive, and make an effort to attain the unattained, achieve  
 the unachieved, and realize the unrealized!”

SN 11.2

## With Susīma

*Susīmasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!”
- 1.4 “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:
- 2.1 “Once upon a time, mendicants, the demons marched against the gods.
- 2.2 Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed the god Susīma, ‘Dear Susīma, the demons march against the gods! Go, and march against the demons!’
- 2.5 ‘Yes, lord,’ replied Susīma. But he fell into negligence.
- 2.6 For a second time ...
- 2.8 For a third time ...
- 2.10 Then Sakka addressed the god Susīma in verse:
- 3.1 ‘Susīma, go to that place  
where you can achieve happiness  
without working for it or trying hard—  
and take me with you!’
- 4.1 ‘That a lazy man who does no work,  
and doesn’t do his duty,  
should fulfill all his desires:  
Sakka, grant me this boon!’
- 5.1 ‘Susīma, go to that place  
where a lazy man who does no work  
prosperes in unending happiness—  
and take me with you!’
- 6.1 ‘O Sakka, first among gods,  
that we might find the happiness  
that’s sorrowless, unstressed:

Sakka, grant me this boon!'

'If there exists anywhere a place 7.1  
where one can live happily without working,  
that surely would be extinguishment's path!  
Susīma, go to that place  
and take me with you!'

So, mendicants, even Sakka, lord of gods—while living off of the 8.1  
fruit of his good and bad deeds, and ruling as sovereign lord over  
these gods of the Thirty-Three—will speak in praise of initiative  
and energy. But since you have gone forth in such a well explained  
teaching and training, it would be truly beautiful for you to try  
hard, strive, and make an effort to attain the unattained, achieve  
the unachieved, and realize the unrealized!"

SN 11.3

## The Banner's Crest

*Dhajaggasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.2

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.4

"Once upon a time, mendicants, a battle was fought between 2.1  
the gods and the demons. Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed the  
gods of the Thirty-Three:

'Good sirs, when the gods are fighting, if you get scared or ter- 3.1  
rified, just look up at my banner's crest. Then your fear and terror  
will go away.

If you can't see my banner's crest, then look up at the banner's 4.1  
crest of Pajāpati, king of gods. Then your fear and terror will go  
away.

If you can't see his banner's crest, then look up at the banner's 5.1  
crest of Varuṇa, king of gods. Then your fear and terror will go  
away.

- 6.1 If you can't see his banner's crest, then look up at the banner's crest of Īsāna, king of gods. Then your fear and terror will go away.
- 7.1 However, when they look up at those banner's crests their fear and terror might go away or it might not.
- 8.1 Why is that? Because Sakka is not free of greed, hate, and delusion. He is fearful, scared, nervous, quick to flee.
- 9.1 But, mendicants, I say this: If you've gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut and you get scared or terrified, just recollect me: '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.' Then your fear and terror will go away.
- 10.1 If you can't recollect me, then recollect the teaching: 'The teaching is well explained by the Buddha—visible in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.' Then your fear and terror will go away.
- 11.1 If you can't recollect the teaching, then recollect the Saṅgha: 'The Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples is practicing the way that's good, direct, methodical, and proper. It consists of the four pairs, the eight individuals. This is the Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples that is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of greeting with joined palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world.' Then your fear and terror will go away.
- 12.1 Why is that? Because the Realized One is free of greed, hate, and delusion. He is fearless, brave, bold, and stands his ground."
- 12.3 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:
- 13.1 "In the wilderness, at a tree's root,  
or an empty hut, O mendicants,  
recollect the Buddha,  
and no fear will come to you.

If you can't recollect the Buddha— 14.1  
 the eldest in the world, the bull of a man—  
 then recollect the teaching,  
 emancipating, well taught.

If you can't recollect the teaching— 15.1  
 emancipating, well taught—  
 then recollect the Saṅgha,  
 the supreme field of merit.

Thus recollecting the Buddha, 16.1  
 the teaching, and the Saṅgha, mendicants,  
 fear and terror  
 and goosebumps will be no more.”

SN 11.4

## With Vepacitti

*Vepacittisutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

“Once upon a time, mendicants, a battle was fought between 1.2  
 the gods and the demons.

Then Vepacitti, lord of demons, addressed the demons, ‘My 1.3  
 good sirs, if the demons defeat the gods in this battle, bind Sakka,  
 the lord of gods, by his limbs and neck and bring him to my pres-  
 ence in the citadel of the demons.’

Meanwhile, Sakka, lord of gods, addressed the gods of the Thirty- 1.5  
 Three, ‘My good sirs, if the gods defeat the demons in this battle,  
 bind Vepacitti by his limbs and neck and bring him to my presence  
 in the Sudhamma hall of the gods.’

In that battle the gods won and the demons lost. So the gods 1.7  
 of the Thirty-Three bound Vepacitti by his limbs and neck and  
 brought him to Sakka’s presence in the Sudhamma hall of the gods.

- 1.9 And as Sakka was entering and leaving the hall, Vepacitti abused and insulted him with rude, harsh words. So Mātali the charioteer addressed Sakka in verse,
- 2.1 ‘O Maghavā, O Sakka,  
is it from fear or from weakness  
that you put up with such harsh words  
in the presence of Vepacitti?’
- 3.1 ‘It’s not out of fear or weakness  
that I’m patient with Vepacitti.  
For how can a sensible person like me  
get in a fight with a fool?’
- 4.1 ‘Fools would vent even more  
if there’s no-one to put a stop to them.  
So a wise one should stop  
a fool with forceful punishment.’
- 5.1 ‘I think that this is the only way  
to put a stop to a fool,  
when you know that the other is upset,  
be mindful and stay calm.’
- 6.1 ‘I see this fault, Vāsava,  
in just being patient.  
When a fool thinks,  
“He puts up with me out of fear,”  
the idiot will go after you even harder,  
like a cow chasing someone who runs away.’
- 7.1 ‘Let him think this if he wishes, or not—  
“He puts up with me out of fear.”  
Of goals culminating in one’s own good,  
none better than patience is found.
- 8.1 When a strong person



puts up with a weakling,  
they call that the ultimate patience,  
for a weakling must always be patient.

The strength of folly 9.1  
is really just weakness, they say.  
But no-one can challenge a person  
who's strong, guarded by the teaching.

When you get angry at an angry person 10.1  
you just make things worse for yourself.  
When you don't get angry at an angry person  
you win a battle hard to win.

When you know that the other is angry, 11.1  
you act for the good of both  
yourself and the other  
if you're mindful and stay calm.

People unfamiliar with the teaching 12.1  
consider one who heals both  
oneself and the other  
to be a fool.'

So, mendicants, even Sakka, lord of gods—while living off of the 13.1  
fruit of his good and bad deeds, and ruling as sovereign lord over  
these gods of the Thirty-Three—will speak in praise of patience and  
gentleness. But since you have gone forth in such a well explained  
teaching and training, it would be truly beautiful for you to be  
patient and gentle!"

SN 11.5

## Victory by Good Speech

*Subhāsitaṭṭhayaṣuttā*

At Sāvattṭhī. 1.1

- 1.2 “Once upon a time, mendicants, a battle was fought between the gods and the demons.
- 1.3 Then Vepacitti, lord of demons, said to Sakka, lord of gods, ‘Lord of gods, let there be victory by fine words!’
- 1.5 ‘Vepacitti, let there be victory by fine words!’
- 1.6 Then the gods and the demons appointed a panel of judges, saying, ‘These will understand our good and bad statements.’
- 1.8 Then Vepacitti, lord of demons, said to Sakka, lord of gods, ‘Lord of gods, recite a verse!’
- 1.10 When he said this, Sakka said to him, ‘Vepacitti, you are the elder god here. Recite a verse.’
- 1.13 So Vepacitti recited this verse:
- 2.1 ‘Fools would vent even more  
if there’s no-one to put a stop to them.  
So an intelligent person should stop  
a fool with forceful punishment.’
- 3.1 The demons applauded Vepacitti’s verse, while the gods kept silent.
- 3.2 Then Vepacitti said to Sakka, ‘Lord of gods, recite a verse!’ So Sakka recited this verse:
- 4.1 ‘I think that this is the only way  
to put a stop to a fool,  
when you know that the other is upset,  
be mindful and stay calm.’
- 5.1 The gods applauded Sakka’s verse, while the demons kept silent.
- 5.2 Then Sakka said to Vepacitti, ‘Vepacitti, recite a verse!’ So Vepacitti recited this verse:
- 6.1 ‘I see this fault, Vāsava,  
in just being patient.  
When a fool thinks,  
“He puts up with me out of fear,”

the idiot will go after you even harder,  
like a cow chasing someone who runs away.'

The demons applauded Vepacitti's verse, while the gods kept 7.1  
silent.

Then Vepacitti said to Sakka, 'Lord of gods, recite a verse!' So 7.2  
Sakka recited this verse:

'Let him think this if he wishes, or not— 8.1  
"He puts up with me out of fear."  
Of goals culminating in one's own good,  
none better than patience is found.

When a strong person 9.1  
puts up with a weakling,  
they call that the ultimate patience,  
for a weakling must always be patient.

The strength of folly 10.1  
is really just weakness, they say.  
But no-one can challenge a person  
who's strong, guarded by the teaching.

When you get angry at an angry person 11.1  
you just make things worse for yourself.  
When you don't get angry at an angry person  
you win a battle hard to win.

When you know that the other is angry, 12.1  
you act for the good of both  
yourself and the other  
if you're mindful and stay calm.

People unfamiliar with the teaching 13.1  
consider one who heals both  
oneself and the other  
to be a fool.'

- 14.1 The gods applauded Sakka's verses, while the demons kept silent.
- 14.2 Then the panel of judges consisting of both gods and demons said this, 'The verses spoken by Vepacitti evoke punishment and violence. That's how you get arguments, quarrels, and disputes. The verses spoken by Sakka don't evoke punishment and violence. That's how you stay free of arguments, quarrels, and disputes.'
- 14.7 Sakka, lord of gods, wins victory by fine words!'
- 14.8 And that's how Sakka came to win victory by fine words."

SN 11.6

## Bird Nests

*Kulāvakasutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 "Once upon a time, mendicants, a battle was fought between the gods and the demons. In that battle the demons won and the gods lost. Defeated, the gods fled north with the demons in pursuit.
- 1.5 Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed his charioteer Mātali in verse:
- 2.1 'Mātali, don't ram the bird nests  
in the red silk-cotton woods with your chariot pole.  
I'd rather give up our lives to the demons  
than deprive these birds of their nests.'
- 3.1 'Yes, lord,' replied Mātali. And he turned the chariot back around, with its team of a thousand thoroughbreds.
- 3.2 Then the demons thought, 'Now Sakka's chariot has turned back. The demons will have to fight the gods a second time!' Terrified, they retreated right away to the citadel of the demons.
- 3.5 And that's how Sakka came to win victory by principle."

SN 11.7

## Not Betray

*Nadubbhīyasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

“Once upon a time, mendicants, as Sakka, lord of gods, was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, ‘I should never betray even a sworn enemy.’ 1.2

And then Vepacitti, lord of demons, knowing what Sakka was thinking, approached him. 1.4

Sakka saw Vepacitti coming off in the distance, and said to him, ‘Stop, Vepacitti, you’re caught!’ 1.5

‘Dear sir, don’t give up the idea you just had!’ 2.1

‘Swear, Vepacitti, that you won’t betray me.’ 3.1

‘Whatever bad things happen to a liar, 4.1  
or to someone who slanders the noble ones,  
or to someone who betrays a friend,  
or to someone who’s ungrateful,  
the same bad things impact  
anyone who betrays you, Sujā’s husband.’”

SN 11.8

## Verocana, Lord of Demons

*Verocanaasurindasutta*

Near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove. 1.1

Now at that time the Buddha had gone into retreat for the day’s meditation. 1.2

Then Sakka, lord of gods, and Verocana, lord of demons, approached the Buddha and stationed themselves one by each door-post. Then Verocana recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence: 1.3

“A man should make an effort 2.1

until his goal is accomplished.  
When goals are accomplished they shine:  
this is the word of Verocana!”

- 3.1 “A man should make an effort  
until his goal is accomplished.  
Of goals that shine when accomplished,  
none better than patience is found.”
- 4.1 “All beings are goal-orientated,  
as befits them in each case.  
But connection is the ultimate  
of pleasures for all living creatures.  
When goals are accomplished they shine:  
this is the word of Verocana!”
- 5.1 “All beings are goal-orientated,  
as befits them in each case.  
But connection is the ultimate  
of pleasures for all living creatures.  
Of goals that shine when accomplished,  
none better than patience is found.”

SN 11.9

## Hermits in the Wilderness

*Araññāyatanaśisutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.2 “Once upon a time, mendicants, several hermits who were ethical, of good character, settled in leaf huts in a wilderness region.
- 1.3 Then Sakka, lord of gods, and Vepacitti, lord of demons, went to those hermits. Vepacitti put on his boots, strapped on his sword, and, carrying a sunshade, entered the hermitage through the main gate. He walked right past those hermits, keeping them at a distance.

Sakka took off his boots, gave his sword to others, and, putting  
down his sunshade, entered the hermitage through a gate he hap-  
pened upon. He stood downwind of those hermits, revering them  
with joined palms.

Then those hermits addressed Sakka in verse: 1.6

‘When hermits have been long ordained, 2.1  
the odor of their bodies goes with the wind.  
You’d better leave, O thousand-eyed!  
The odor of the hermits is unclean, king of gods.’

‘When hermits have been long ordained, 3.1  
let the odor of their bodies go with the wind.  
We yearn for this odor, sirs,  
like a colorful crown of flowers.  
The gods don’t see it as repulsive.’”

SN 11.10

## Hermits by the Ocean

*Samuddakasutta*

At Sāvattthī. 1.1

“Once upon a time, mendicants, several hermits who were ethi- 1.2  
cal, of good character, settled in leaf huts on the ocean shore.

Now at that time a battle was fought between the gods and the 1.3  
demons.

Then the hermits thought, ‘The gods are principled, the demons 1.4  
are unprincipled. We may be at risk from the demons. Why don’t  
we approach Sambara, lord of demons, and beg him for a pledge  
of safety.’

Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their 1.8  
arm, those hermits vanished from those leaf huts on the ocean  
shore and reappeared in Sambara’s presence. Then those hermits  
addressed Sambara in verse:

- 2.1        ‘The hermits have come to Sambara  
to beg for a pledge of safety.  
For you can give them what you wish,  
whether danger or safety.’
- 3.1        ‘There is no safety for hermits,  
the hated associates of Sakka!  
Though you beg me for your safety,  
I’ll only give you fear!’
- 4.1        ‘Though we beg you for our safety,  
you give us only fear.  
This is what we get from you:  
may endless peril come to you!’
- 5.1        Whatever kind of seed you sow,  
that is the fruit you reap.  
A doer of good gets good,  
a doer of bad gets bad.  
You have sown your own seed, friend,  
now you’ll experience the fruit.’
- 6.1        Then those hermits, having cursed Sambara, as easily as a strong  
person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from Sam-  
bara’s presence and reappeared in those leaf huts on the ocean  
shore.
- 6.2        But after being cursed by the hermits, Sambara woke in alarm  
three times that night.”



# Chapter Two

SN 11.11

## Vows

*Vatapadasutta*

At Sāvatthī. 1.1

“Mendicants, in a former life, when Sakka was a human being, 1.2  
he undertook seven vows. And it was because of undertaking these  
that he achieved the status of Sakka. What seven?

As long as I live, may I support my parents. As long as I live, 1.4  
may I honor the elders in the family. As long as I live, may I speak  
gently. As long as I live, may I not speak divisively. As long as I live,  
may I live at home rid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous,  
open-handed, loving to let go, committed to charity, loving to give  
and to share. As long as I live, may I speak the truth. As long as I  
live, may I be free of anger, or should anger arise, may I quickly get  
rid of it.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he under- 1.11  
took seven vows. And it was because of undertaking these that  
he achieved the status of Sakka.

A person who respects their parents, 2.1  
and honors the elders in the family,  
whose speech is gentle and courteous,  
and has given up divisiveness;

who’s committed to getting rid of stinginess, 3.1

is truthful, and has mastered anger:  
the gods of the Thirty-Three  
call them truly a good person.”

SN 11.12

## Sakka's Names

*Sakkanāmasutta*

- 1.1 Near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove. There the Buddha said to the mendicants:
- 1.3 “Mendicants, in a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he was a brahmanical student named Magha. That's why he's called Maghavā.
- 2.1 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he gave gifts in stronghold after stronghold. That's why he's called Purindada, the Stronghold-Giver.
- 3.1 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he gave gifts carefully. That's why he's called Sakka, the Careful.
- 4.1 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he gave the gift of a guest house. That's why he's called Vāsava, the Houser.
- 5.1 Sakka thinks of a thousand things in a moment. That's why he's called Sahassakkha, the Thousand-Eye.
- 6.1 Sakka's wife is the demon maiden named Sujā. That's why he's called Sujampati, Sujā's Husband.
- 7.1 Sakka rules as sovereign lord over the gods of the Thirty-Three. That's why he's called lord of gods.
- 8.1 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he undertook seven vows. And it was because of undertaking these that he achieved the status of Sakka. What seven?
- 8.3 As long as I live, may I support my parents. As long as I live, may I honor the elders in the family. As long as I live, may I speak gently. As long as I live, may I not speak divisively. As long as I live, may I live at home rid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, loving to let go, committed to charity, loving to give

and to share. As long as I live, may I speak the truth. As long as I live, may I be free of anger, or should anger arise, may I quickly get rid of it.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he undertook seven vows. And it was because of undertaking these that he achieved the status of Sakka. 8.10

A person who respects their parents, 9.1  
and honors the elders in the family,  
whose speech is gentle and courteous,  
and has given up divisiveness;

who's committed to getting rid of stinginess, 10.1  
is truthful, and has mastered anger:  
the gods of the Thirty-Three  
call them truly a good person."

SN 11.13

## With Mahāli

*Mahālisutta*

SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1  
Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

Then Mahāli the Licchavi went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat 1.3  
down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, have you seen Sakka, lord of gods?"

"I have, Mahāli." 3.1

"But surely, sir, you must have seen someone who looked like 4.1  
Sakka. For Sakka is hard to see."

"Mahāli, I understand Sakka. And I understand the things that 5.1  
he undertook and committed to, which enabled him to achieve the status of Sakka.

In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he was a brah- 6.1  
manical student named Magha. That's why he's called Maghavā.

- 7.1 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he gave gifts carefully. That's why he's called Sakka, the careful.
- 8.1 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he gave gifts in stronghold after stronghold. That's why he's called Purindada, the stronghold-giver.
- 9.1 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he gave the gift of a guest house. That's why he's called Vāsava, the houser.
- 10.1 Sakka thinks of a thousand things in a moment. That's why he's called Sahassakkha, Thousand-Eye.
- 11.1 Sakka's wife is the demon maiden named Sujā. That's why he's called Sujampati, Sujā's husband.
- 12.1 Sakka rules as sovereign lord over the gods of the Thirty-Three. That's why he's called lord of gods.
- 13.1 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he undertook seven vows. And it was because of undertaking these that he achieved the status of Sakka. What seven?
- 13.3 As long as I live, may I support my parents. As long as I live, may I honor the elders in the family. As long as I live, may I speak gently. As long as I live, may I not speak divisively. As long as I live, may I live at home rid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, loving to let go, committed to charity, loving to give and to share. As long as I live, may I speak the truth. As long as I live, may I be free of anger, or should anger arise, may I quickly get rid of it.
- 13.10 In a former life, when Sakka was a human being, he undertook seven vows. And it was because of undertaking these that he achieved the status of Sakka.
- 14.1 A person who respects their parents,  
and honors the elders in the family,  
whose speech is gentle and courteous,  
and has given up divisiveness;
- 15.1 who's committed to getting rid of stinginess,  
is truthful, and has mastered anger:

the gods of the Thirty-Three  
call them truly a good person.”

SN 11.14

## Poor

*Daliddasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants!” 1.1

“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.4

“Once upon a time, mendicants, there was a poor person, destitute and pitiful. They took up faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom in the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One. After undertaking these things, when their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, in the company of the gods of the Thirty-Three. There they outshone the other gods in beauty and glory. 2.1

But the gods of the Thirty-Three complained, grumbled, and objected, ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! For when this god was a human being in their past life they were poor, destitute, and pitiful. And when their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, in the company of the gods of the Thirty-Three. Here they outshine the other gods in beauty and glory.’ 2.5

Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three, ‘Good sirs, don’t complain about this god. When this god was a human being in their past life they took up faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom in the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One. After undertaking these things, when their body broke up, after death, they’ve been reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, in the company of the gods of the Thirty-Three. Here they outshine the other gods in beauty and glory.’ 3.1

3.6 Then Sakka, lord of gods, guiding the gods of the Thirty-Three, recited this verse:

- 4.1 ‘Whoever has faith in the Realized One,  
unwavering and well grounded;  
whose ethical conduct is good,  
praised and loved by the noble ones;
- 5.1 who has confidence in the Saṅgha,  
and correct view:  
they’re said to be prosperous,  
their life is not in vain.
- 6.1 So let the wise devote themselves  
to faith, ethical behaviour,  
confidence, and insight into the teaching,  
remembering the instructions of the Buddhas.”

SN 11.15

## Delightful

*Rāmaṇeyyakasutta*

- 1.1 Near Sāvathī in Jeta’s Grove.
- 1.2 And then Sakka, lord of gods, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, “Sir, what is a delightful place?”
- 2.1 “Shrines in parks and forests,  
well-made lotus ponds,  
are not worth a sixteenth part  
of a delightful human being.
- 3.1 Whether in village or wilderness,  
in a valley or the uplands,  
wherever the perfected ones live  
is a delightful place.”

SN 11.16

## Sponsoring Sacrifice

*Yajamānasutta*

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain. 1.1

And then Sakka, lord of gods, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and addressed him in verse: 1.2

“For humans, those merit-seeking creatures, 2.1  
who sponsor sacrifices,  
making worldly merit,  
where is a gift very fruitful?”

“Four practicing the path, 3.1  
and four established in the fruit.  
This is the upright Saṅgha,  
with wisdom, ethics, and immersion.

For humans, those merit-seeking creatures, 4.1  
who sponsor sacrifices,  
making worldly merit,  
what is given to the Saṅgha is very fruitful.”

SN 11.17

## Homage to the Buddha

*Buddhavandanāsutta*

Near Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove. 1.1

Now at that time the Buddha had gone into retreat for the day's meditation. Then Sakka, lord of gods, and Brahmā Sahampati approached the Buddha and stationed themselves one by each door-post. 1.2

Then Sakka recited this verse in the Buddha's presence: 1.4

- 2.1 “Rise, hero! Victor in battle, with burden put down,  
wander the world without obligation.  
Your mind is fully liberated,  
like the moon on the fifteenth night.”
- 3.1 “Lord of gods, that’s not how to pay homage to the Realized  
Ones. This is how it should be done:
- 4.1 ‘Rise, hero! Victor in battle, leader of the caravan,  
wander the world without obligation.  
Let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!  
There will be those who understand!’”

SN 11.18

## Who Sakka Worships

*Gahaṭṭhavandanāsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvatthī.
- 1.3 “Once upon a time, mendicants, Sakka, lord of gods, addressed  
his charioteer Mātali, ‘My dear Mātali, harness the chariot with its  
team of a thousand thoroughbreds. We will go to a park and see  
the scenery.’
- 1.5 ‘Yes, lord,’ replied Mātali. He harnessed the chariot and in-  
formed Sakka, ‘Good sir, the chariot with its team of a thousand  
thoroughbreds has been harnessed. Please go at your convenience.’
- 1.8 Then Sakka descended from the Palace of Victory, raised his  
joined palms, and revered the different quarters.
- 1.9 So Mātali the charioteer addressed Sakka in verse:
- 2.1 ‘Those proficient in the three Vedas worship you,  
as do all the aristocrats on earth,  
the Four Great Kings,  
and the glorious Thirty.  
So what’s the name of the spirit  
that you worship, Sakka?’



‘Those proficient in the three Vedas worship me, 3.1  
as do all the aristocrats on earth,  
the Four Great Kings,  
and the glorious Thirty.

But I revere those accomplished in ethics, 4.1  
who have long trained in immersion,  
who have rightly gone forth  
committed to the spiritual life.

I also worship those householders, 5.1  
the ethical lay followers  
who make merit, Mātali,  
supporting a partner in a principled manner.’

‘Those who you worship 6.1  
seem to be the best in the world, Sakka.  
I too will worship  
those who you worship, Sakka.’

After saying this, Maghavā the chief, 7.1  
king of gods, Sujā’s husband,  
having worshipped the quarters  
climbed into his chariot.”

SN 11.19

## Who Sakka Worships

*Satthāravandanāsutta*

Near Sāvattī in Jeta’s Grove. 1.1

“Once upon a time, mendicants, Sakka, lord of gods, addressed 1.2  
his charioteer Mātali, ‘My dear Mātali, harness the chariot with its  
team of a thousand thoroughbreds. We will go to a park and see  
the scenery.’

- 1.4 ‘Yes, lord,’ replied Mātali. He harnessed the chariot and informed Sakka, ‘Good sir, the chariot with its team of a thousand thoroughbreds has been harnessed. Please go at your convenience.’
- 1.7 Then Sakka descended from the Palace of Victory, raised his joined palms, and revered the Buddha.
- 1.8 So Mātali the charioteer addressed Sakka in verse:
- 2.1 ‘Gods and men  
worship you, Vāsava.  
So what’s the name of the spirit  
that you worship, Sakka?’
- 3.1 ‘It’s the fully awakened Buddha,  
the Teacher of peerless name  
in this world with its gods—  
that’s who I worship, Mātali.
- 4.1 Those in whom greed, hate, and ignorance  
have faded away;  
the perfected ones with defilements ended—  
they’re who I worship, Mātali.
- 5.1 The trainees who take pleasure in decreasing suffering,  
diligently pursuing the training  
for getting rid of greed and hate,  
and going past ignorance—  
they’re who I worship, Mātali.’
- 6.1 ‘Those who you worship  
seem to be the best in the world, Sakka.  
I too will worship  
those who you worship, Sakka.’
- 7.1 After saying this, Maghavā the chief,  
king of gods, Sujā’s husband,

having worshipped the Buddha,  
climbed into his chariot.”

SN 11.20

## Who Sakka Worships

*Saṃghavandanāsutta*

Near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove. 1.1

“Once upon a time, mendicants, Sakka, lord of gods, addressed 1.3  
his charioteer Mātali, ‘My dear Mātali, harness the chariot with its  
team of a thousand thoroughbreds. We will go to a park and see  
the scenery.’

‘Yes, lord,’ replied Mātali. He harnessed the chariot and in- 1.5  
formed Sakka, ‘Good sir, the chariot with its team of a thousand  
thoroughbreds has been harnessed. Please go at your convenience.’

Then Sakka descended from the Palace of Victory, raised his 1.8  
joined palms, and revered the mendicant Saṅgha.

So Mātali the charioteer addressed Sakka in verse: 1.9

‘It’s these who should worship you, 2.1  
namely the humans stuck in their putrid bodies,  
sunk in a corpse,  
stricken by hunger and thirst.

Why then do you envy those 3.1  
who are homeless, Vāsava?  
Relate the hermits’ way of life,  
let us hear what you say.’

‘This is why I envy the 4.1  
homeless, Mātali.  
When they leave a village,  
they proceed without concern.

They hoard no goods in storerooms, 5.1

nor in pots or baskets.

They seek food prepared by others,  
and, true to their vows, live on that.

- 6.1      The wise whose words are full of wisdom,  
            live peacefully and quietly.  
            Gods fight with demons,  
            and mortals fight each other, Mātali.
- 7.1      Not fighting among those who fight,  
            extinguished among those who are armed,  
            not grasping among those who grasp:  
            they're who I worship, Mātali.'
- 8.1      'Those who you worship  
            seem to be the best in the world, Sakka.  
            I too will worship  
            those who you worship, Vāsava.'
- 9.1      After saying this, Maghavā the chief,  
            king of gods, Sujā's husband,  
            having worshipped the mendicant Saṅgha,  
            climbed into his chariot."

# Chapter Three

SN 11.21

## Incinerated

*Chetvāsutta*

Near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove. 1.1  
And then Sakka, lord of gods, went up to the Buddha, bowed, 1.2  
stood to one side, and addressed him in verse:

“When what is incinerated do you sleep at ease? 2.1  
When what is incinerated is there no sorrow?  
What is the one thing  
whose killing you approve?”

“When anger’s incinerated you sleep at ease. 3.1  
When anger’s incinerated there is no sorrow.  
O Vāsava, anger has a poisonous root  
and a honey tip.  
The noble ones praise its killing,  
for when it’s incinerated there is no sorrow.”

SN 11.22

## Ugly

*Dubbhaṇṇiyasutta*

Near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove. 1.1

- 1.3 “Once upon a time, mendicants, there was a native spirit who was ugly and deformed. He sat on the throne of Sakka, lord of gods.
- 1.4 But the gods of the Thirty-Three complained, grumbled, and objected, ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! This ugly and deformed spirit is sitting on the throne of Sakka, the lord of gods.’ But the more the gods complained, the more attractive, good-looking, and lovely that spirit became.
- 2.1 So the gods went up to Sakka and told him what had happened, adding, ‘Surely, good sir, that must be the anger-eating spirit!’
- 3.1 Then Sakka went up to that spirit, arranged his robe over one shoulder, knelt with his right knee on the ground, raised his joined palms toward the anger-eating spirit, and pronounced his name three times: ‘Good sir, I am Sakka, lord of gods! Good sir, I am Sakka, the lord of gods!’ But the more Sakka pronounced his name, the uglier and more deformed the spirit became, until eventually it vanished right there.
- 3.5 Then Sakka, lord of gods, guiding the gods of the Thirty-Three, recited this verse:
- 4.1       ‘My mind isn’t easily upset;  
               I’m not easily drawn into the maelstrom.  
               I don’t get angry for long,  
               anger doesn’t last in me.
- 5.1       When I do get angry I don’t speak harshly,  
               nor do I advertise my own virtues.  
               I carefully restrain myself  
               out of regard for my own welfare.’”

SN 11.23

## The Sambari Sorcery

*Sambarimāyāsutta*

- 1.1 At Sāvattḥī.

- The Buddha said this: 1.2
- “Once upon a time, mendicants, Vepacitti, lord of demons, was 1.3  
sick, suffering, gravely ill. So Sakka went to see him to ask after his  
illness.
- Vepacitti saw Sakka coming off in the distance, and said to him, 1.5  
‘Heal me, lord of gods!’
- ‘Teach me, Vepacitti, the Sambari sorcery.’ 1.8
- ‘I can’t do that, good sir, until I have consulted with the demons.’ 1.9
- Then Vepacitti, lord of demons, asked the demons, ‘Good sirs, 1.10  
may I teach the Sambari sorcery to Sakka, lord of gods?’
- ‘Do not, good sir, teach the Sambari sorcery to Sakka!’ 1.12
- So Vepacitti addressed Sakka in verse: 1.13
- ‘O Maghavā, O Sakka, 2.1  
king of gods, Sujā’s husband,  
a sorcerer falls into the terrible hell—  
like Sambara, for a hundred years.’”

SN 11.24

## Transgression

*Accayasutta*

- At Sāvattthī. 1.1
- Now at that time two mendicants were overly attached, and one 1.2  
of them transgressed against the other. The transgressor confessed  
to the other mendicant, but they didn’t accept it. Then several  
mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side,  
and told him what had happened.
- “Mendicants, there are two fools. One who doesn’t recognize 2.1  
when they’ve made a mistake. And one who doesn’t properly  
accept the confession of someone who’s made a mistake. These are  
the two fools.

- 2.4 There are two who are astute. One who recognizes when they've made a mistake. And one who properly accepts the confession of someone who's made a mistake. These are the two who are astute.
- 3.1 Once upon a time, mendicants, Sakka, lord of gods, guiding the gods of the Thirty-Three, recited this verse:
- 4.1 'Control your anger;  
don't let friendships decay.  
Don't blame the blameless,  
and don't say divisive things.  
For anger crushes bad people  
like a mountain.'

SN 11.25

## Don't Be Angry

*Akkodhasutta*

- 1.1 SO I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.
- 1.3 There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:
- 1.4 "Once upon a time, mendicants, Sakka, lord of gods, guiding the gods of the Thirty-Three, recited this verse:
- 2.1 'Don't let anger be your master,  
don't get angry at angry people.  
Kindness and harmlessness  
are always present in the noble ones.  
For anger crushes bad people  
like a mountain.'

*The Linked Discourses with Sakka are complete.*

THE BOOK WITH VERSES IS FINISHED.



# 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.

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. Feeling the call to the Buddha’s path, he 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 Bundanoon, 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 he established Lokanta Vihara (The Monastery at the End of the World).

## Creation Process

Primary source was the digital Mahāsaṅgīti edition of the Pali Tipiṭaka. Translated from the Pali, with reference to several English translations, especially those of Bhikkhu Bodhi.

## The Translation

This translation was part of a project to translate the four Pali Nikāyas with the following aims: plain, approachable English; consistent terminology; accurate rendition of the Pali; free of copyright. It was made during 2016–2018 while Bhikkhu Sujato was staying in Qimei, Taiwan.

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