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Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta

The Discourse on the Noble Quest | M 26

Also called **Pāsa,rāsi Sutta** The Pile of Snares Discourse

Theme: The events leading up to the great awakening

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1 Oldest Buddha biography

1.0 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26) is the earliest record we have of the events attending the Bodhisattva up to his great awakening. The key sections of the Sutta are as follows:

- §§1-4 Location and occasion for the Sutta.
- §§5-14 The two kinds of quests (*pariyesanā*)—the ignoble (a worldly quest) [§§5-12] and the noble (which leads to awakening) [§13-14].
- §§15-16 The two teachers: Āḷāra Kālāma [§15] and Uddaka Rāma,putta [§16].
- §17 The ascetic striving (self-mortification) at Uruvelā (only briefly mentioned).
- §§18-19 The great awakening; the Dharma’s depth; the hesitation verses.
- §§20-24 Brahma’s supplication and the Buddha’s decision to teach.
- §§25-30 The journey to Uruvelā; Upaka; the 5 monks. The first discourse [§§29.30].
- §§31-44 The Pāsa,rāsi Sutta.

1.1 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta has parallel in the Chinese Āgamas at MĀ 204 (T1.775c-778c) and has the title “Rammaka” (羅摩 *luó mó*) [§2.3], after the name of the brahmin in whose hermitage where the teaching occurs.¹ MĀ 204 has been studied in detail in **THICH MINH CHAU**.² **ANALAYO** has done an interesting comparative study of this sutta (with the Chinese Āgamas and other sources) in his book, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya* (2011:170-189). Some lines of the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta are also found in Sanskrit fragments discovered in Turfan, Central Asia.³

1.2 Many scholars agree that the earliest account of the Buddha’s renunciation and awakening is found in the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta.⁴ Buddhism and religion scholar, **Jonathan S Walters**, in his journal article, “Suttas as History: Four approaches to the *Sermon on the Noble Quest* (Ariyapariyesanasutta)” (*History of Religions*, 1999) concludes that the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta is “arguably the oldest Buddha biography in existence” (1999:283).

The Sutta, Walters notes, “is full of startling silences: here we have no Suddhodana, no Mahā,māyā, no Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, no Yasodharā and Rāhula, no pleasure palace, no women of the harem, no four signs, no Channa, no renunciatory fanfare, no practice of austerities, no Sujātā’s milk-rice, no Māra’s army at the Bodhi tree, no three watches of the night, no seven weeks after the great awakening, no text of the First Sermon (replaced by the heap of snares, frame IV!)” (1993:276). Later biographies of the Buddha “are direct and indirect supplementations” of this Sutta, he further claims (277).⁵

1.3 As such, the story of Suddhodana as a powerful and wealthy king is very likely a later legend: it is clear from the suttas that the Sakyas were vassals (*anuyuttā*) of king Pasenadi of Kosala (D 27,8/3:83).

¹ The name *rammaka* appears only here in the suttas: see DPPN sv.

² THICH MINH CHAU 1991:33, 153-199, 245-250.

³ **ANALAYO** identifies them as follows: Cat nos 1332 & 1714 in SHT 5:227, and cat no 1493 in SHT 6:161. Cat nos 1332 & 1493 have preserved parts of the Intro narration at M 1:161, while cat no 1714 has parts of the verses spoken by the Buddha to Upaka at M 1:171. SHT = *Sanskrihandchriften aus den Turfanfunden* (ed Waldschmidt et al, vols 1-9, 1965-2004): see Textual Conventions III.

⁴ See K R Norman 1990:126 f, qu L Schmithausen 1981:207, qu A Bareau. Also Nakamura 2000: 247 f.

⁵ Cf the story of the child Gotama in **Nālaka S** (Sn 3.11), SD 49.18. See also **The Buddha as myth**, SD 36.2.

In the **Pabbajjā Sutta**, the young ascetic Siddhattha tells Bimbisāra that he (Siddhattha) is a “Kosala-dweller” (*kosala nīketino*), connoting that the Sakyas are a part of Kosala (Sn 422). Furthermore, in the **Dhamma,dāyāda Sutta** (M 89), Pasenadi tells the Buddha, “The Blessed One is a kshatriya and I am a kshatriya; the Blessed One is a Kosalan (*kosalaka*) and I am a Kosalan” (M 89,19/2:124).

The Ambaṭṭha Sutta (D 3), however, gives a clear hint of the republican system of the Sakyas followed by a delightful analogy of the quail.⁶ Apparently, although the Sakya territory was a vassal of rajah Pasenadi, it enjoyed some level of autonomy. This was understandable from Pasenadi’s high regard for the Buddha. Or, it could be simply political expedience: it is better to have an alliance with the Sakyas rather than having to fight these fierce kshatriyas.

1.4 Alexander Wynne, in a close study of the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta (S 22.59),⁷ gives these four reasons showing that **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26) is the earliest account of the Buddha’s awakening (and implicitly, that is also the oldest Buddha biography that we have):

(1) **The awakening of the group of 5 monks** is described in identical terms as that of the Bodhisattva’s “noble quest,” as found in the Ariya Pariyesana Sutta [§12 & §30]. The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta version of the 5 monks’ liberation is remarkable for at least the following reasons.

(2) First, not only are the description of the awakening of both of them given in the same words, **the Bodhisattva and the 5 monks, too, are said to have “attained nirvana”**—*nibbānaṃ ajjhagamāṃ*, in the case of the Bodhisattva [§18], and *nibbānaṃ ajjhagamāṃsu*, in the case of the 5 monks [§30].⁸ This is the *only* place in the suttas where the awakening of the Bodhisattva and any monk are identically described.⁹

(3) Second, the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta is the only Pāli discourse in which the pericope describing the post-awakening knowledge [§18.7] is applied to persons apart from the newly awakened Buddha: **the 5 monks are similarly said to have recognized their awakening with the formula**: “Unshakeable is our freedom of mind. This is our last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for us)!” [§30.7].¹⁰

(4) Third, says Wynne, there is no other account of liberation [awakening] in which the expression “to attain nirvana” (*nibbānaṃ adhi-gam*)¹¹ is used anywhere else in the suttas.¹² This is true of the two verbs in the past tense—*ajjhagamāṃ* and *ajjhagamāṃsu*—but other forms of the phrase, *nibbānaṃ adhi-gam*, do occur in the suttas—interesting almost all of them are in verse.¹³ However, none of these phrases or sentences refer to the Bodhisattva’s awakening. Hence, Wynne’s point is still true and useful.

(5) And fourth, this is the only sutta which is set in the hermitage or ashram (*assama*) of a certain brahmin called Rammaka,¹⁴ who is not otherwise mentioned in the Pāli canon [1.1]. These peculiarities,

⁶ D 3,1.13 f/1:91 (SD 21.3). See A K Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 1970:45.

⁷ S 22.59/3:66-68 = Mv 1.6.38-47 (V 1:13 f), SD 1.2.

⁸ *Ajjhagamāṃ* (= *ajjhagā*), aor 1 sg [§18 = M 1:167,12 etc], “I realized; *ajjhagamāṃsu*, aor 3 pl [§30 = M 1:173,11 etc]; from *adhigacchati*, pres 3 sg, “he realizes.”

⁹ Eg, the account of the Bodhisattva’s realization of the 3 knowledges differs from the similar account of a monk’s realization of the 3 knowledges in the standard long account of the Buddhist path, by using *yathā,bhūtaṃ abbhaññā-sim* (eg M 4,31), SD 44.3, rather than *pajānāti* (D 2,99 f), SD 8.10.

¹⁰ See Wynne 2007:20; also 136 n68), where he points out that the pericope is very similar in the Chin Sarvāstivāda Sūtra version of the text. For the Chin Sarvāstivāda version of this text, see Thich Minh Chau 1991:153-159.

¹¹ Ie the various verbal forms *adhigacchati*, viz *ajjhagamāṃ*, *ajjhagamāṃsu*, etc. See (2) here.

¹² See Wynne 2007:20.

¹³ These occurrences are: *anupubbena nibbānaṃ | adhigacchanti paṇḍitā*, “in stages, the wise realize nirvana” (A 3.57/1:162,29* = A 5.179/3:214,19*); *nibbānaṃ ev’ajjhagamuṃ sapaññā*, “the wise realized nirvana” (S 1.4.3/-1:22,7*); *nibbānaṃ adhigantabbam sabba,sukkhā-p,pamocanam*, “nirvana is to be realized for the release from all suffering” (S 21.4/2:278,19* = It 102/104,17*); *ajjhagā amataṃ santim | nibbānaṃ padam accutaṃ*, “realized the death-free, peace, | nirvana, the unchanging state” (Sn 204 = Vv 50.21/841).

¹⁴ §2.3: *tena h’āyusmanto yena rammakassa brāhmaṇassa assamo ten’ upasaṅkamatha* (M 1:160,29), SD 1.11.

concludes Wynne, suggest that the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta contains the earliest account of the Buddha's awakening.¹⁵ (Wynne 2009a:66)

2 Gotama as bodhisattva and ascetic

2.1 RENUNCIATION & SELF-MORTIFICATION

2.1.1 The Majjhima Commentary calls this discourse **the Pāsa,rāsi Sutta**, “the discourse on the pile of snares,” referring to the simile in §§32-33. It is an example of the rare documentation of the Buddha's life as a bodhisattva,¹⁶ in this case from his meeting with Ājāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāma,putta up to the great awakening. Here is the well-known brief statement on **the great renunciation**:

while still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life, though my mother and father wished otherwise and wept with tearful faces, I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robe, and went forth from the household life into the homeless life. (M 26,14/1:163 = 36,13/1:240 = 85,11/1:93 = D 4,6/1:115 = 5.6/1:129 = S 1.20,4/1:9)

This great renunciation pericope is common to all the pre-awakening narratives in the Majjhima.

2.1.2 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta, however, omits both the account of his self-mortification¹⁷ and the details of the great renunciation. These are, however, found in the following discourses:¹⁸

Bhaya,bherava Sutta	M 4,20/1:21	SD 44.3
Mahā Sīhanāda Sutta	M 12,44-61/1:77-83	SD 49.1, SD 1.13
Mahā Saccaka Sutta	M 36,12-44/1:242-249	SD 49.4, SD 1.12
Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta	M 85,15-54/2:93 f	SD 55.2
Saṅgārava Sutta	M 100,9-41/2:211-213	SD 10.9

and in part recounted in the Vinaya (V 1:1-12), the Dīgha Nikāya (D 4,6 = 5,6; D 14, 16.5.27), the Aṅguttara Nikāya (A 1:145 f), the Udāna (U 1-3), the Sutta Nipāta (Sn 72-74, 74-77, 77-78, 131-136).

2.2 SELF-LIBERATION

2.2.1 The importance of Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta lies in its declaration of the Buddha's earlier motivation in going forth. According to the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta and its Madhyama Āgama parallel, the Buddha states his reason for going forth in search of awakening in very personal terms, speaking of himself (as Bodhisattva) of being subject to old age, to disease, and to death, and of searching a way out of this predicament for himself, without alluding to any wish to give teachings or liberate other beings:

*Yan nunāham attanā jarā,dhammo...attanā vyādhi,dhammo...attanā maraṇa,dhammo...
nibbānam pariyeseyyam.*

Suppose that I, being myself subject to decay...being myself subject to disease...being myself subject to death...were to seek nirvana. (M 26,13/1:163)

¹⁵ For full details, see Wynne 2007:14-25. André Bareau also believed this text to contain the oldest account of the Buddha's awakening (1963:72-74).

¹⁶ Although the *Webster's 3rd International Dictionary* lists both the Sanskrit and Pali forms, I prefer the better known Sanskrit form, Bodhisattva (as I do in other terms like “karma,” “Tathagata” and “nirvana”). From the context it is clear that this refers to the early Buddhist notion. When used in special reference to our Buddha before his awakening, it is initially capitalized. When referring to the Mahāyāna ideal, it is always capitalized as “Bodhisattva.” The same applies for such terms as arhat, buddha, tathagata, etc.

¹⁷ See **Bhaya,bherava S** (M 4,20/1:20 f), **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12,44-61/1:77-82), **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,20-30/1:242-246). Traditionally, ie post-canonically, this period of the Bodhisattva's experiment with self-torture methods lasted “six years.” However, “[t]he Pali Canon does not, to my knowledge, indicate anywhere how long the future Buddha tried alternative methods. In the later literature [Buddhacarita, Lalitavistara, Mahavastu, J 1:67], however, it is often said that it lasted six years.” (Bronkhorst 1993:14 & n18).

¹⁸ For a more detailed collation table, see SD 49.4 (Table 7).

2.2.2 Analayo makes this observation in his *Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya*:

To understand the Buddha's reasoning after his awakening, two other passages could be brought in. One of these passages occurs in **the Brahmanimantanika Sutta**, where in reply to Māra the Buddha explained that his condition of inner freedom was independent of whether he taught or not.¹⁹ The other passage is from **the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta**, according to which the Buddha renounced his life principle and thereby set an end to his teaching activities because his attendant Ānanda had failed to request him to stay alive, even though that would have been possible.²⁰ The point that emerges from these two passages is that the quality of the Buddha's awakening did not in any way depend on him becoming a teacher. His realization was self-sufficient as it were, and there was no need for him to proselyte in order to corroborate the truth he had discovered. Once he had been requested to teach, he did so, but when on a later occasion he was not requested to continue teaching, he stopped teaching. (Analayo 2005 at M 1:167; emphases added)²¹

3 *Samvega* and the 4 sights

3.1 SAMVEGA AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE. When the Bodhisattva, as a young prince, sees the four sights, he is overcome by a powerful spiritual experience termed *samvega*.²² A possible English rendition of the term would be "fear and awe" although this expression is more applicable to a theistic belief-system than to a non-theistic one like Buddhism.

However, if we redefine this phrase without its theistic undertone, then we have the sense of *samvega* (which is found in the English dictionary).²³ The closest, albeit awkward, translation is perhaps "sense of urgency" or "spiritual urgency." **Torkel Brekke**, in his book, *Religious Motivation and the Origins of Buddhism*, explains that

what makes this realization [the inherent suffering of life] so powerful in the case of the prince is the dissonance between his original cognition of his own life and this new knowledge that he himself must grow old, suffer and die...

This cognitive dissonance gives the prince a strong feeling of discomfort, which motivates him to equalize the discrepancy. Obviously the facts of life cannot be changed, and the only solution is to bring his own life into some sort of harmony with these facts. (Brekke, 2002:63)

The spiritual urgency experienced by the young Siddhattha is by no means unique. Many others in his time have left their homes in search of a higher liberating truth. These were the recluses (Pali *samaṇā*; Skt *śramaṇā*) who, at the same time, found no affinity with the established priestly religion of the *brāhmaṇā* or brahmins.²⁴

3.2 THE 4 SIGHTS

3.2.1 In the Sukhumāla Sutta (A 3.38), the Buddha recounts how powerful religious emotion (*samvega*) overcame him as a bodhisattva when he reflected on the true nature of life:

¹⁹ *Desento ... tathāgato sāvakaṇaṃ dhammaṃ tādiso va, adesento pi ... tādiso va* (M 49,30/1:331,18), SD 7.11.

²⁰ D 16,3.3-3.6/2:103 (SD 9). This recurs in the Skt fragments of Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra (Waldschmidt 1951:204) and in Chin parallels DĀ 2, T5, T6 and T7 (T1.15b24, T1.165a13, T1.180b20, T1.191b19); a tr of DĀ 2 in Weller 1939:78-79, of T5 in Puini 1909:36, and of T6 and T7 in Waldschmidt 1944:98-99. For biblio see SD 9.

²¹ For further discussion, see **Brahma,nimantanika S** (M 49), SD 11.7 (2a).

²² For detailed discussion, see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (7.6).

²³ Such as Webster's 3rd New International Dictionary.

²⁴ On *samvega*, further see SD 9 (7f).

(1) Bhikshus, amidst such splendour and wealth,²⁵ and because of such an exceedingly delicate life, this thought arose in me:

“An ignorant ordinary person, though by nature would himself age [decay] and being unable to escape ageing [decay], feels distressed, ashamed, disgusted²⁶ when seeing an old or aged person, being forgetful of himself [his own situation].

Now I, too, by nature, will age and cannot escape ageing. If, bhikshus, when seeing an old or aged person, I were to feel distressed, ashamed, disgusted, that would not be proper for one like myself.”

When I reflected thus, bhikshus, all my **intoxication with youth** vanished.

(2) (Again I reflected:)

“An ignorant ordinary person, though by nature would himself suffer disease and being unable to escape disease, feels distressed, ashamed, disgusted when seeing an ill person, being forgetful of himself.

Now I, too, by nature, will suffer disease and cannot escape disease. If, bhikshus, when seeing an ill person, I were to feel distressed, ashamed, disgusted, that would not be proper for one like myself.”

When I reflected thus, bhikshus, all my **intoxication with health** vanished.

(3) (Again I reflected:)

“An untutored ordinary person, though by nature would himself die and being unable to escape dying, feels distressed, ashamed, disgusted when seeing a dead person, being forgetful of himself.

Now I, too, by nature will die and cannot escape dying. If, bhikshus, when seeing a dead person, I were to feel distressed, ashamed, disgusted, that would not be proper for one like myself.”

When I reflected thus, bhikshus, all my **intoxication with life** vanished. (A 3.38)²⁷

3.2.2 Similar passages reflecting the same sentiment appear in **the Māgandiya Sutta** (M 75)²⁸ and **the Mahāvastu**.²⁹ In **the Vinaya**, the same story is also told of the young man Yasa, whose pre-awakening story parallels that of the Buddha himself (V 1:15). **The (Pañca) Deva,dūta Sutta** (M 130) has a dramatic account of the 5 divine messengers—a tender infant, an old person, a sick person, a criminal being punished, and a dead person—and king Yama, the ruler of the dead, admonishes one newly fallen into his realm, thus:

Did it never occur to you, an intelligent and mature person, that ‘I too am subject to birth ... subject to old age ... subject to disease ... subject to tortures [punishments] ... subject to death ... surely I had better do good through body, speech and mind’?

(Abridged, M 130,3-8/3:178 ff; A 1:138 ff; cf DhA 1:107, AA 1:36, the Makha,deva J)³⁰

3.2.3 In **the Mahā’padāna Sutta** (D 14), in the story of the past Buddha Vipassī, we see these reflective passages on the 3 great “bads” or the “3-D’s of life” (decay, disease, death) dramatized into the famous **4 sights** of an old man, a sick man, a dead man and an ascetic, seen by the bodhisattva prince Vipassī.³¹ The ascetic, of course, represents the way to liberation from the 3 great bads. What is true of a past Buddha, the ancient reciters must have thought, must also be true of our own Gotama Buddha,³² al-

²⁵ “Splendour and wealth,” *iddhi*, or in a word “majesty.”

²⁶ “Would feel troubled, ashamed, disgusted,” *aṭṭiyeyyam harāyeyyam jeguccheyyam*. For fuller analyses of these terms, see **Kevalāḍḍha S** (D 11,5/1:213), SD 1.7 n sv.

²⁷ For full text, see A 3.38/1:145 f (SD 63.7). For further discussion, see SD 5.16 (19.4.2).

²⁸ M 75,10/1:504.

²⁹ Mvst 2:115.

³⁰ See **Deva,dūta S** (M 130), SD 2.23, esp (2.3).

³¹ D 14,2.1-15/2:21-29.

³² The fullest accounts of the 4 sights are in the Nidāna Kathā (intro) of the Jātakas and the Buddha,vaṃsa Commentary (prediction, J 1:57; BA 277), and which says that they were all seen on the same day, and that the “sights”

though no such account is ever found in the Pali Canon itself.³³ And so the same epic tale is thus dutifully recounted down the ages of our own Buddha to this day.³⁴

4 Ālāra Kālāma & Uddaka Rāma,putta

4.1 DID ĀLĀRA & RĀMA TEACH DHYANA?

4.1.1 “Dhyana with right view”

4.1.1.1 Meditation was well known in the Buddha’s time, and it was such a milieu that produced the Buddha and made his presence meaningful and effective. Dhyana, too, was well known before his time, and, of course, in his own time, too. However, the Buddha made a most significant contribution to the history of religion in discovering “**dhyana with right view**,” the profoundly calm and clear mind, that is the basis for renouncing all views and directly seeing into true reality. It is in this spirit that we should understand the famous remark by the devaputra Pañcala,caṇḍa, as recorded in two suttas of the same name—both called **Pañcala,caṇḍa Sutta**—thus:³⁵

In the midst of confines, the sage
of vast wisdom has found the opening—
The Buddha who has awakened to [discovered] dhyana,
the lone lordly bull, the sage.³⁷

*Sambādhe vata okāsaṃ
avindi bhūri,medhaso
yo jhānam,bujjhi³⁶ buddho
paṭilīna,nisabho munī ti*

(S 2.7/1:48 @ SD 33.1b, = A 9.42/4:449 @ SD 33.2)

4.1.1.2 The stanza, recorded in **the (Deva,putta) Pañcala,caṇḍa Sutta** (S 2.7), is first spoken by the devaputra Pañcala,caṇḍa before the Buddha himself,³⁸ and in **the (Pañcalacaṇḍa) Sambādha Sutta** (A 9.42), Ānanda is recorded as giving a full explanation of it to the monk Udāyī.³⁹

4.1.2 Dhyana before the Buddha’s time

4.1.2.1 Brahmavamso, at some point, held the view that the Buddha “discovered dhyana” (in an unqualified way):

When it is said that the Buddha discovered *Jhāna*, it is not to be understood that no one had ever experienced *Jhāna* before. For instance, in the era of the previous Buddha Kassapa, countless men and women achieved *Jhāna* and subsequently realized Enlightenment. But in the India of twenty six centuries ago, all knowledge of *Jhāna* had disappeared. This was one reason that there is no mention at all of *Jhāna* in any religious text before the time of the Buddha.⁴⁰

(Brahmavamso 2003:5)

are said to be enacted by the devas, ie epiphanies (J 1:58 f; BA 280). While BA says the Bodhisattva sees each of these 4 sights every 4 months, the Dīgha Reciters (BA 280) and J recount them as occurring on the same day.

³³ But see Vv 81; Buc bk 3 (The arising of samvega). See H Oldenberg, *Buddha: Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, Berlin: W Hertz, 1881:114.

³⁴ See **(Yama) Deva,dūta S** (A 3.35) + SD 48.10 (2.2). On the 4 sights, see Nakamura 2000:95-99; Piya Tan 2004 2.6; Analayo 2006:104 f.

³⁵ See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (2) & **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1.

³⁶ So Be WT; Ce *jhanam,budhā* (another MS: *jhānaṃ buddhābuddho*); Ee *jhānam abuddhi*; Se *jhanam abuddhi*.

³⁷ *Sambādhe gataṃ okāsaṃ, avudā bhūri.medhaso | yo jhānaṃ abujjhi buddho, paṭilīna,nisabho munī ti*. For *abujjhi* here, S (PTS ed) has vl *abuddhi* (with no change in meaning). S:B tr: “The one of broad wisdom has indeed found | The opening in the midst of confinement, | The Buddha who discovered jhāna | The chief bull, aloof (from the herd), the sage.” See S:B 386 n151.

³⁸ S 2.7/1:48 @ SD 33.1b(2.1).

³⁹ A 9.42/4:449-451, SD 33.2.

⁴⁰ **Dakkhiṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 142) mentions the “outsider free from lust for sense-pleasures” (*bāhirakā kāmesu vitarāga*) that is, a worldly dhyana-attainer⁴⁰ (M 142.5/ 3:255). If such a meditator existed before the Buddha’s time in India or exists outside of Buddhism, then Ajahn Brahmavamso’s assertion that “the Buddha discovered *Jhāna*” may need to be re-examined (Brahmavamso 2003:5). See **The layman and dhyana**, SD 8.5(11c), 2005.

4.1.2.2 Then, he goes to explain the Bodhisattva’s meditation training under Āḷāra Kālāma (from whom he learned to attain the stage of nothingness) and Uddaka Rāma,putta (from whom he mastered his father Rāma’s teaching and attained the stage of neither-perception-nor-non-perception). [§15.1-17]

... these two attainments could not have been connected to *Jhāna*, because the Bodhisatta recalled, just prior to sitting under the Bodhi Tree, that the only time in his life that he had experienced any *Jhāna* was as a young boy, while sitting under a Tree as his father conducted the first-ploughing ceremony (M 36).

One of the reasons why *Jhāna* was not practised before the Buddha’s enlightenment was because people then either indulged in seeking pleasure and comfort of the body or else followed a religion of tormenting the body. Both were caught up with the body and its five senses and knew no release from the five senses. Neither produced the sustained tranquillity of the body necessary as the foundation for *Jhāna*. When the Bodhisatta began the easy practices leading to such tranquility of the body, his first five disciples abandoned him in disgust. Such a practice was not regarded as valid. Therefore it was not practised, and so *Jhāna* never occurred.

(Brahmavamso 2003:6; emphasis added)

4.1.2.3 In other words, following Brahmavamso’s argument, if we accept the young Bodhisattva’s jambul-tree⁴¹ dhyana experience as true, we cannot accept his tutelage under the two teachers, Āḷāra and Rāma (the elder), as true. However, this argument seems somewhat forced. In fact, it is easier to understand why the Bodhisattva *so easily* masters the meditation teachings of the two teachers—that is, *because* he has mastered dhyana, or at least able to attain it, even at a young age!

4.1.2.4 Although it is possible that the story of the two teachers might have been a later interpolation, there is not good reason at all to do so. Brahmavamso’s arguments are simply not sufficient evidence for us to reject such well known stories.

We may regard the child Siddhattha’s dhyana experience under the jambul tree as a result of his past life experience alone, or better, we should attribute his ability to attain such a high level of profound meditation to both his past life experience and to the meditation tradition of his days. This is like the child prodigy of the young Mozart, who we may say had the benefit of both past life experience (nature) and also the rich tradition of music in his society at that time (nurture).⁴²

4.1.2.5 Moreover, the fact that dhyana was known to other non-Buddhist practitioners is well attested in numerous suttas. Such accounts would not be meaningful to the early Buddhists unless there were a well known tradition. Moreover, the nature of dhyana itself is so subjective that it can be difficult to prove any such claims either way—except to go by the textual and historical evidence.

4.1.2.6 We cannot simply throw out the account of the Bodhisattva’s two dhyana teachers to show the Buddha’s “uniqueness.” To do so may imply that the compilers of the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta were wrong in their memory of the Buddha’s quest, or worse, that they had manufactured such a story merely to glorify the Buddha’s uniqueness. [4.3]

4.1.2.7 If we regard religious history as human or human-related events, it must be closely related to the social realities of the founder’s time. No religion arises in a social vacuum: religiosity is itself a human reaction to the social realities and a response to the human capacity for the divine and beyond. In short, a religion evolves, building and bettering itself from its cultural past.

Ancient India has a rich religious past, and by the Buddha’s time had reached a time of significant tension between this religious development and social growth of an unprecedented dimension—the intellectual, political and spiritual development form the foundations and wellspring for what Indian society is today.

⁴¹ Wujastyk (2004) says that *jambu* here is not the “rose-apple” (of Malacca and SE Asia) which was not found in India; it is properly the jambul or black plum.

⁴² There is, of course, a difference here: we do not really know whether the child Siddhattha was ever *nurtured* in meditation, which is unlikely at such a young age. However, the fact that dhyana meditation was already a well known tradition by his time was a more likely explanation than that of a unique childhood experience.

It was a time of unprecedented religious openness, search and experimentation. Religion—being a matter of faith rather than empirical experience—is understandably darkened by the shadows of priestcraft and opportunism. Where there is a market for beliefs, there are those who are ever ready to produce and provide attractive or compelling beliefs, rightly or wrongly—often the latter. In other words, wrong views and wrong practices were also widespread during the Buddha’s time. It would be right and meaningful, then, to understand that the Buddha discovered “dhyana with right view.”⁴³

4.2 RĀMA AND UDDAKA RĀMA,PUTTA [§§15-16]

4.2.1 The Bodhisattva’s visits to Ālāra and to Uddaka are recorded in **the Mahā Saccaka Sutta** (M 36), **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85) and **the Saṅgārava Sutta** (M 100).⁴⁴ An interesting note is made in the Burmese version of the Pali Canon:

The Great Being said, “Friend Rāma,” but Rāma,putta replied, “I’m not Rāma. Rāma was the community teacher (*gaṇ’ācariya*) but he has passed on and is no more. For this reason, sentences relating to Rāma are in the past tense, and so Rāma,putta was a co-religionist with the Great Being, not his teacher. Similarly, the Tīkā notes that the formless attainments are made in text (Pāli) refer to Rāma, not to Uddaka (and so on) [DAṬ:VRI 2:131]. (M:VRI 1:224)

4.2.2 E J Thomas, in his *Life of the Buddha Legend and History*, notes that “[t]he visit to Uddaka Rāma,putta is then described in almost the same terms [as the one with Ālāra Kālāma], but here the doctrine was that which had been realized and proclaimed by Rāma, the father of Uddaka” (1949:63).⁴⁵ **Bodhi** is aware of this, for in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, his translation of the Majjhima Nikāya (1995, 2nd ed 2001) he notes under the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta that

Both Horner in [*Middle Length Sayings*] and Ñāṇamoli in MS err in their translations of the account of Bodhisatta’s meeting with Uddaka Rāmaputta by assuming that Uddaka is identical with Rāma. However, as his name indicates, Uddaka was the son (*putta*) of Rāma, who must have already passed away before the Bodhisatta arrived on the scene. It should be noted that all references to Rāma are in the past tense and the third person, and that Uddaka in the end places the Bodhisatta in the position of teacher. Though the text does not allow for definite conclusions, this suggests that he himself had not yet reached the fourth immaterial attainment.

(Bodhi, 2001:1217 n303)

4.2.3 Such a scholarly lapse is understandable, especially when even long before them, the compilers of the later Buddhist texts, too, missed out this interesting detail of Buddhist history. The distinction between Rāma and his son, Uddaka Rāma,putta, is found in Sarvastivādin, Dharmaguptaka and Mahāsāṅghika accounts of the Bodhisattva’s early meditation experiences.⁴⁶ However, **the Saṅgha,bheda,vastu** and its Tibetan parallel and **the Lalita,vistara** fail to distinguish them,⁴⁷ which as noted by Wynn, “is probably because of a later obfuscation of the tradition” (2007:13).

However, it is clear from the **Uddaka Sutta** that Uddaka Rāma,putta had no high spiritual attainment:

“Bhikshus, although Uddaka Rāma,putta was not himself a knowledge-master (*vedagū*), he claimed: ‘I’m a knowledge-master.’”

⁴³ See further “Were Ālāra and Rāma masters of dhyana?”: **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (2.4). See also Analayo 2015:19-21.

⁴⁴ For a comparable account of the Bodhisattva’s visits to Ārāḍa Kālāma and to Udraka Rāma,putta, see Mvst 2:118,1-120,16.

⁴⁵ Peter Skilling discusses this point in detail in “Uddaka Rāmaputta and Rāma,” *Pāli Buddhist Review* 6,2 1981-82a:99-105. See **Saṅgārava S** (M 100.11 f) in SD 10.9.

⁴⁶ See Skilling 1981-82a:100-102.

⁴⁷ See Skilling 1981-82b:100.

Although he was not himself an all-conqueror (*sabba,ji*), he claimed: ‘I’m an all-conqueror.’
 Although he had not excised the tumour’s root, he claimed: ‘I’ve excised the tumour’s root.’”
 (S 35.103/4:83), SD 96.2

4.2.4 It is possible that the ascetic **Rāma**⁴⁸ was the first (apparently the oldest) of the 8 wise brahmins who attended the Nativity and performed the “protection rites” (*rakkha,kamma*, Miln 236). The Milinda,pañha lists the 8 brahmins as follows: Rāma, Dhaja, Lakkhaṇa, Mantī, Yañña, Suyāma, Subhoja and Sudatta (Miln 236). The Jātaka Commentary gives the same names with minor variations, that is, Koṇḍañña (for Yañña) and Bhoja (for Subhoja) (J 1:56). According to the Jātaka Commentary, seven of the brahmins raised two fingers, prophesizing that the Bodhisattva would either become a universal monarch (*cakka,vatti*) (if he remained in the world), or the Buddha (if he renounced the world) (J 1:56).

4.3 THE STORY OF THE 2 TEACHERS—A FABRICATION?

4.3.1 Some scholars who think that the story of the two teachers’ instructing the Bodhisattva was a fabrication include André Bareau,⁴⁹ Tilmann Vetter,⁵⁰ and Johannes Bronkhorst.⁵¹ Bareau (1963:16) notes that this episode, found in M 26 (M 1:163,31), the Chinese parallel MĀ 204 (T1.776b8), and the Dharma-guptaka Vinaya (T1.428 @ T22.780b8), is absent from the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, which nevertheless does report the intention to teach them (T.1421 @ T22.104a11). Bareau (1963:20) then concludes that Ārāḍa Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra was probably fictitious (“son probablement fictifs,” 1963:20 f), a conclusion accepted by Vetter (1988:xxii).⁵²

This supposed discrepancy, notes **Analayo**, is simply due to the fact that the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya proceeds from the Bodhisattva’s meeting with king Bimbisāra directly to his awakening.⁵³ In view of the narrative emphasis adopted in this Vinaya, it is only natural that neither the apprenticeship under Ārāḍa Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra nor the practice of austerities are mentioned.

4.3.2 Among those who have shown the story of the 2 teachers to be historical are Ghirgo Zafiro-pulo⁵⁴ and Alexander Wynne.⁵⁵ **Wynne’s** short but important article should be read in full. Here, we will only highlight the key points of his convincing arguments.

His first point is that the story of the 2 teachers are corroborated by at least three independent sources: Xuanzang mentions some legendary evidence that relates Udraka Rāmaputra to Rājagrha. It seems to represent the local tradition of the Buddhists living in the area of Rājagrha.⁵⁶ This tradition is confirmed by the account of the Bodhisattva’s training in the Mahāvastu, which also places Udraka Rāmaputra in Rājagrha. (Mvst 2:119,8)

⁴⁸ Not listed in DPPN.

⁴⁹ *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dan les Sutrapitaka et les Vinaya anciens I*, Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 1963.

⁵⁰ *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1988.

⁵¹ *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1986; New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993.

⁵² For a fuller discussion, see Analayo 2014:22-25.

⁵³ The Chin Āgama (T1421 @ T22.102c14) relates that the Bodhisattva, after king Bimbisāra leaves, approaches the Bodhi tree and asks a person nearby for some grass to sit on. Applying Bareau’s mode of interpretation consistently, argues **Analayo**, one would have to conclude that the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya presents an alternative account according to which the Bodhisattva awakens right away, without any need to search for a way to attain it and without any practice of asceticism. This, of course, does not match the remainder of the narration in the same Vinaya (2014: 23 f).

⁵⁴ *L’illumination du Buddha: de la quête à l’annonce de l’Éveil: essais de chronologie relative et de stratigraphie textuelle*, Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1993. He argues against Bareau’s thesis.

⁵⁵ A Wynne, “How old is the Suttapiṭaka?” 2003:22-28; see esp also Wynne, *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*, 2007:9-26, esp 12 f.

⁵⁶ Xuanzang, *Si-Yu-Ki* (tr S Beal), part II, 1906:139 f.

Then, we have **the (Mahā,purisa) Vassa,kāra Sutta** (A 4.35), which says the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, visits the Buddha in Rājagaha and tells him that the rajah Eḷeyya has faith in the recluse Rama,putta.⁵⁷ The Commentary identifies him as Uddaka Rāmaputta.⁵⁸ Vassakāra also appears in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** as the chief minister of king Ajāta,sattu of Magadha.⁵⁹ Vassakāra’s connection with Rāja,gaha and Magadha suggest that the rajah Eḷeyya was a local chieftain in Magadha, probably located near Rāja,gaha. If so, concludes Wynne, it is likely that Uddaka Rāma,putta, too, was situated in the vicinity of Raja,gaha (2007:12 f).

5 The 3 trainings

The Bodhisattva’s spiritual struggle after the great renunciation and just before the great awakening can be historically said to reflect two diametrically opposed religious systems, that is, the two streams of pre-Buddhist meditation methods “primarily represented by the samadhi practitioners of the Upanishads and the self-tormentors of the Jains.”⁶⁰ That is to say, the apprenticeship under Āḷāra Kālāma [§15] and under Uddaka Rāma,putta [§16]. **Sujato’s** remarks should be carefully noted:

Virtually all descriptions [of the Bodhisattva’s apprenticeship] have ignored the obvious point that the Ariyapariyesanā Sutta mentions three stages of this apprenticeship.

Firstly, learning and lip-reciting of the texts.⁶¹ This is a hint that these are ascetics in the mainstream Vedic tradition; the nature of the texts is not specified here, but elsewhere the Buddha recalls that Uddaka Rāmaputta claimed to be a *vedagū*, a master of the Vedas.⁶² Anyway, as we noted above,⁶³ the Vedas are the only texts that are known to the early Suttas. It is sometimes said that these teachers belong to the Sāṃkhya school, but this claim is based on the much later Buddhacarita of Aśvaghōṣa, and is clearly anachronistic.

Secondly, the path, here described as faith, energy, mindfulness, samadhi, and wisdom.⁶⁴

Thirdly, the goal—formless attainments.

These three stages correspond with the classic threefold formulation of Buddhism—study, practice, and realization.⁶⁵ The 5 factors of the path are the same as the Buddhist 5 spiritual faculties—a fact which is usually overlooked by those who wish to interpret this passage as implying the “non-Buddhist” nature of samadhi in general, or of formless attainments in particular.

⁵⁷ A 4.352:35-37 (SD 82.9).

⁵⁸ *Samaṇe rāmaputte ’ti uddake rāmaputte* (AA 3:164,23).

⁵⁹ D 16,1.2/2:72,9 ff = A 7.20/4:17,11 ff @ SD 9. Later, in the same Sutta, he and Sunidha are in charge of the construction of Pataligāma’s defences (D 16,1.26-34/2:86-89; U 87; V 1:228). Vassa,kāra also appears in **Gopaka Mogallana S** (M 108/3:7 ff), SD 33.5, which is set in Raja,gaha.

⁶⁰ Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness*, 2004: 96, 2005: 136 f. This section is largely based on Ajahn Sujato’s work.

⁶¹ The account in **Saṅghabheda,vastu** of Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya omits the mention of lip recital. [Sujato’s fn]

⁶² **Uddaka S** (S 35.103), where a “knowledge-master” (*veda,gū*) is defined as one “who understands as they really are the origin, the passing away, the gratification, the disadvantages [dangers], and the escape in regard to the 6 bases for contact [the six doors of sense-experience, ie through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind]” (S 35.103/4:83 f), SD 96.2.

⁶³ See Sujato 2004:14 f.

⁶⁴ The Sarvāstivādin version (MĀ 204) mentions only faith, energy, and wisdom here, but includes mindfulness just below. The Saṅghabheda,vastu (Gnoli pg. 97) and the Lalita,vistara (Lalv 239.2) mention all 5 spiritual faculties. [Sujato’s fn]

⁶⁵ *Ie pariyaṭṭi paṭipatti paṭivedha*, called the 2 “sublime truths” (*saddhamma*) (VA 225; AA 5:33). The first 2—*pariyaṭṭi* and *paṭipatti*—are called the twofold “teaching” or “dispensation” (*sāsana*) (Nm 143). Here, *priyaṭṭi* is the textual study of the “nine-limbed teaching of the Teacher” (*nav’āṅga satthu sāsana*) (V 3:8; M 1:133; A 2:5, 3:86) [SD 3.2 (1)]; *paṭipatti* is the practice of the 37 awakening-limbs (*bodhi,pakkhiyā dhammā*) (Vbh 249) [SD 6.18 (1)]; and *paṭivedha* is awakening and its attendant knowledges, such as the “threefold knowledge” (*te,vijja*) (D 3:220; A 10.102/5:211) [see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,93-98/1:81-83), SD 8.10].

We cannot know how these qualities were understood in detail in this context; but terms such as *prajñā*, etc, occur commonly in the Upanishads. If it is true that the five spiritual faculties were genuinely associated with the Vedic/Upanishadic tradition, it may be no coincidence that it is in this context that we most frequently meet *sati* treated as “memory.”⁶⁶

It must be noted that the Bodhisatta did not reject the formless attainments in & of themselves. It is definitely not the case that he practiced samadhi meditation but not mindfulness meditation. Rather, he practiced mindfulness meditation to get into samadhi.

Samadhi is emphasized in this account because it was the highest, the most exalted quality acknowledged in those systems, and because of its sublime peacefulness it was mistakenly taken to be the final end of the spiritual path.

The Bodhisatta became disillusioned with ‘that Dhamma’, ie with the teaching taken as a whole, because it led only to rebirth in the formless realm, and was therefore “insufficient” to reach the “excellent state of peace,” the ending of birth, aging, and death. This is in perfect accord with the main stream of the Suttas.

Elsewhere it is said that ordinary people attain samadhi (here the four jhanas⁶⁷ and the four divine abidings⁶⁸), are reborn in the Brahmā realms, and after a long period of bliss fall back into lower realms.⁶⁹ But noble disciples, after reaching the Brahmā realms, attain Nibbana from there.

The difference is not in the states of samadhi as such—these are just manifestations of the mind at peace. The difference is in the views and interpretations, the conceptual wrapping that the experience is bundled up in. The path must be taken as a whole.

If one starts out with wrong view, one’s meditation experiences are likely to simply reinforce one’s preconceptions. If one practices samadhi with the view that one’s soul will become immersed in some exalted state of being, well, one will get what one wishes for.

(Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness*, 2004b: 95 f; 2005b: 137 f; normalized)

6 The 5 monks

The youngest of the 5 monks, **Koṇḍañña**, however, put up only one finger, certain that the Bodhisattva would go forth and become the Buddha (J 1:56). Koṇḍañña followed the Bodhisattva’s career, and at the great renunciation, approached the sons of the other seven brahmins (they themselves having passed on) and invited them to jointly renounce with him to follow the Bodhisattva. Only four of them followed him, and together they became the “group of 5 monks” (*pañca, vaggiya*) (J 56 f).⁷⁰

The Milinda, pañha goes on to say that the Bodhisattva had “five teachers.” His first “teacher” was the group of eight brahmins mentioned above. The others were Sabba, mitta (master of the Vedas), the deva who inspired the Bodhisattva to go forth, the fourth Ājāra Kālāma and the fifth Rāma (Miln 236).⁷¹ **The Therīgāthā Commentary** mentions another teacher of the Bodhisattva, Bhaggava (only one mention), after whom the Bodhisattva went to Ājāra Kālāma (ThīA 2).

⁶⁶ Eg **(Indriya) Vibhaṅga S 1** (S 48.9/5:196 f).

⁶⁷ Eg **Nānā Puggalā S** (A 4.123/2:126-128), SD 8.5 (11d).

⁶⁸ Eg **(Puggalā) Mettā S 1** (A 4.125/2:128 f).

⁶⁹ See eg **Brahmā Nimantanika S** (M 49). The Buddha relates to the Brahmā Baka how he, from being a 4th-dhyana Brahmā of Veha-p, phalā (Abundant Fruit), passes away from there and is reborn as a 3rd-dhyana Brahmā of Subha, kiṇṇā (Radiant Glory), and then as a 2nd-dhyana Brahmā of Ābhassarā (Streaming Radiance). From there he is reborn into the present 1st-dhyana world of Mahā Brahmā. This is in fact a spiritual devolution, a gradual falling from high places! (M 49,10/1:326-1331), SD 11.7.

⁷⁰ See **Dhamma, cakka-p, pavattana S** (S 56.11/5:420-424), SD 1.1 (9).

⁷¹ Rāma is the father of Uddaka Rāma, putta: see **Ariya, pariyesana S** (M 26.6/1:165 f) here; cf J 1:56.

7 Pāsārāsi Sutta

7.1 At the close of the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta, the Buddha is recorded as declaring that those who are caught up with desire for “the 5 cords of sensual pleasures” [§31] are like a deer caught up in “a pile of snares” (*pāsa, rāsi*) [§32]. Both the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta and the Madhyama Āgama version compare being caught up with the 5 kinds of sensual pleasures to a deer caught with pleasure snares, and those aloof from sensual pleasures as being free from Māra’s control, just as a deer not caught in snares is not under the hunter’s control.

In both cases, however, “this passage comes a little unexpected, a sort of anti-climax after the account of the Buddha’s noble quest and full awakening, his subsequent teaching of the 5 monks and their full awakening (Analayo on M 1:173, 2005:94). **G C Pande** wonders, “Is it possible that M 26 represents a ‘confusion’ of two (once) different suttas—the Ariya Pariyesanā and the Pāsārāsi? The wavering of the title would then, incidentally, be well explained” (1957:124). **Analayo** adds in his footnote:

The different Pāli editions do in fact vary in regard to the title: while the PTS and the Sinhalese editions speak of *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta*, the Burmese and Siamese editions speak of the *Pāsarāsi Sutta*, “heap of snares,” a title taken from the simile occurring in the passage under discussion as present. What is possible even more curious is that Buddhaghosa in his commentary on the Majjhima Nikāya [MA 2:163] speaks of the Pāsārāsi Sutta, but in the Atthasālinī [KvuA 35], his commentary on the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, he refers to the same discourse as Ariyapariyesanā. (Analayo, M 1:173, 2005:94 fn 176)

7.2 Analayo further notes:

While in the Pāli version it is not entirely clear if this passage is addressed to the five monks or to the group of monks assembled at Rammaka’s hermitage, according to the Madhyama Āgama presentation the Buddha addressed this examination of sensual pleasures to the five monks.⁷² This seems however less probable, since at this point the five monks had already gained full awakening, so that to warn them of the dangers of sensual pleasures would seem to be beside the point. (Analayo, M 1:173 2005:94 f)

7.3 The Pāsārāsi Sutta [§§31-42] first lists the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (*kāma, guṇa*), that is, the physical body, which needs to be transcended, as it were, before we can attain to the 4 dhyanas [§§34-37] and the formless attainments [§38], and finally, the cessation of perception and feeling, here equated the attainment of nirvana [§42]. This is, in fact, a neat summary of the Buddha’s spiritual progress from the world to awakening itself. Understandably, this passage serves as a sort of preamble to **the first discourse** (S 56.11), which is given to the 5 monks when they are finally ready to hear a proper formulation of the essence of the Buddha’s awakening.⁷³

8 Related suttas

8.1 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26) centres around the two kinds of quests: the noble (*ariya, pariyesanā*) and the ignoble (*anariya, pariyesanā*) [§5]. Similarly, **the Pariyesanā Sutta** (A 4.252) speaks of 2 kinds of quests: the noble and the ignorable.⁷⁴ The noble quest is a spiritual one leading on to liberation, while the ignoble quest is that for material and worldly things bringing that brings suffering with it.⁷⁵

⁷² MĀ 204 = T1.778a11.

⁷³ S 56.11/5:420-424 (SD 1.1).

⁷⁴ A 4.252/2:247 (SD 98.9). It speaks of 4 kinds of quests in each case: the ignoble quest is that of seeking what is subject to decay, to disease, to death and to defilement, while the noble quest is that of rejecting these for the quest for nirvana.

⁷⁵ On its relation to *samannesanā* and *samannesati*, see SD 35.6 (2.3).

The shortest sutta related to this topic is surely **the Dve Pariyesanā Sutta** (A 2.14.4) which simply mentions the quest for material things and the quest for the Dharma, thus:

SD 1.11(8)

(Duka) Pariyesanā Sutta

The (Twos) Discourse on the Quests

A 2.14.4/1:93 = A:B 2.154

Traditional: A 2.3.4.1 = Aṅguttara Nikaya 2, Duka Nipāta 3, Tatiya Paṇṇāsaka 4, Santhāra Vagga 1

Theme: The two kinds of quests

Bhikshus, there are these two kinds of quests. What are the two?

The quest for material things and the quest for the Dharma. [The material quest and the Dharma quest.]

These, bhikshus, are the two kinds of quests.

— evaṃ —

8.2 The Sakka Pañha Sutta (D 21) mentions two kinds of quests (*pariyesanā*), that is, the one to be taken up (*sevitabbā pariyesanā*) and the one not to be taken up (*asevitabbā pariyesanā*).⁷⁶ The quest that is to be avoided is, of course, the same as the 3 kinds of seeking mentioned in **the Paṭilina Sutta** (A 4.38), that is, the seeking for sensual pleasures, seeking for existence, and the holy life as seeking.⁷⁷ **The Mahānidāna S** (D 15/2:58, 61), too, speaks of 2 kinds of quests, one worthy of pursuing (*sevitabba*) and one to be rejected (*asevitabba*).⁷⁸

8.3 The Bāla Paṇḍita Pariyesanā Sutta (A 2.4.8) uses the term “quest for sensual pleasures” (*kāma, pariyesanā*). Mahā Kaccāna tells the brahmin Kaṇḍararāyana that if an elderly person were to get caught up in a quest for sensual pleasures, then he is still *bāla* (a boy, a fool; a wordplay), but if he does not, then he is wise (*paṇḍita*).⁷⁹

8.4 Both the Saññā Nānatta Sutta (S 14.7)⁸⁰ and **the No Pariyesanā nānatta Sutta S** (S 14.8)⁸¹ use the term “diversity of quests” (*pariyesanā, nānatta*) as the end-result of a dependent arising chain, thus: dependent on the diversity of elements (*dhātu, nānatta*), there arises diversity of perception (*saññā, nānatta*), dependent on which arises the diversity of thought (*saṅkappa, nānatta*), dependent on which arises the diversity of desire (*chanda, nānatta*), dependent on which arises the diversity of fevers (*pariḷāha, nānatta*), dependent on which arises the diversity of quests.

8.5 The Acariṃ Sutta (S 14.32), **the Assāda Sutta 2** (S 22.27) and **the Assāda Pariyesanā Sutta 1** (S 35.15) use the format of the threefold quests for gratification (*assāda, pariyesanā*), for disadvantages (*ādīnava, pariyesanā*), and for escape (*nissaraṇa, pariyesanā*). The first Sutta applies this the 4 elements; the second, to 5 aggregates; and the third, to the 6 senses. Understanding all this as they really are, the Buddha declares, he gains awakening.⁸²

8.6 A later form is the neutral noun, *pariyesana*, found only the commentarial works, such as **the Mahā Niddesa** (Nd 262), the canonical commentary on a **Kalaha Vivāda Sutta** verse (Sn 864). It also appears in the Dhammpada Commentary (DhA 3:256, “eagerly seeking the cords of sensual pleasure,” *kāma, guṇe ~ussukka*); DhA 1:75 (with “taking up,” *paṭiggahaṇa* & “enjoying,” *paribhoga*). — — —

⁷⁶ D 21,2.5/3:81 (SD 70.7).

⁷⁷ A 4.38,2/2:41 & SD 43.10 (1.2.2).

⁷⁸ D 15/2:58,31+61,23 (SD 5.17). Cf *pariyesanam paṭicca lābho*, “dependent on seeking there is gain” (D 15/2:-61,14).

⁷⁹ A 2.4.8/1:68,6+10+11 = A:B 2.38. PTS wrongly numbers this as A 2.4.7.

⁸⁰ S 14.7/2:144,5+23.

⁸¹ S 14.8/2:144,29+30, 145,10.

⁸² S 14.32/2:171,5+27 ~ 22.27/3:29,3 f ~ 35.15/4:8,23 f.

The Discourse on the Noble Quest

M 26

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anāthapiṇḍika's park in Jeta's grove near Sāvattḥī.

Some monks wish to hear the Buddha teaching

2 When it was morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Sāvattḥī for alms.

2.2 Then a number of monks went to the venerable Ānanda and said to him:

“Avuso Ānanda, it has been a long time since we last heard a Dharma talk from the Blessed One's own lips. It would be good if we could hear such a talk, avuso Ānanda.”

2.3 “Then let the venerable ones go to the brahmin Rammaka's hermitage [ashram].⁸³ Perhaps there you would be able to hear such a Dharma talk.”

“Yes, avuso.”

3 When the Blessed One had gone on his alms-round in Sāvattḥī, returned and finished his meal, he addressed Ānanda:

“Ānanda, let us go to the Mansion of Migāra's Mother in the Eastern Park for the day's rest.”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda answered the Blessed One in assent. [161]

Then the Blessed One went with the venerable Ānanda to the Mansion of Migāra's Mother for the day's rest.

3.2 When it was evening, the Blessed One rose from meditation and addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, let us go to the Eastern Bath to bathe.”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda answered the Blessed One in assent.

3.3 Then the Blessed One went with the venerable Ānanda to the Eastern Bath to bathe their limbs. When he had finished, he emerged from the water and stood in one robe drying his limbs. The venerable Ānanda then said to the Blessed One:

3.4 “Bhante, the brahmin Rammaka's hermitage is nearby. It is agreeable and delightful. It would be good if the Blessed One went there out of compassion.”

The Blessed One accepted by his silence.⁸⁴

The Buddha at Rammaka's hermitage

4 Then the Blessed One went to the brahmin Rammaka's hermitage. Now on that occasion, a number of monks were sitting together in the hermitage discussing the Dharma. The Blessed One stood outside the door waiting for their discussion to end. Then he coughed and knocked, and the monks opened the door for him.

4.2 The Blessed One entered, sat down on the prepared seat and addressed the monks:

“Bhikshus, what is the talk you are having, sitting together here? And what is the conversation that is left unfinished?”⁸⁵

⁸³ *Assama* (Skt *āśrama*, from *ā*, “away” + *śRAM*, “to be weary”; but also incl meaning of *śAM* (1), “to labour”; cf *śAM* (2), “to be quiet”: (1) here (orig ancient usage) meaning ashram or hermitage, ie, a forest dwelling of an ascetic, usu *jaṭṭila*, eg Uruvelā Kassapa (V 1:24, 26), other *jaṭṭilas* (V 1:246, 4:109; D 2:339), or brahmin, eg Rammaka (M 26,2/1:60 here), Bāvāri (Sn 979); often with leaf-hut (*paṇṇa,sālā*), ambulatory (meditation path, *caṅkama*) and not far from a “village suitable for almsround” (*gocara,gāma*) (SnA 581). (2) The later sense of “a stage in life” is found in Comys, eg of Sumedha (our Bodhisattva) (B 2:29-33; J 1:6-10), of Sāriputta (Ap 15-17 = Tha 1:154); of Vessantara (J 6:520 f, 528-531, 533-540); see also Sn pp104, 111; J 2:284, 4:281, 5:196, 205; Abhidhāna-p, padīpikā (ed Subhūti 1900) 409, 928. See D:R 1:211-217 & P Olivelle, *The Āśrama System*, 1993. See (1.4(5)).

⁸⁴ On this silence of acceptance, see **Silence and the Buddha**, SD 40.1 (2.4).

“Bhante, our Dharma discussion that is left unfinished when the Blessed One arrived was about the Blessed One himself.”

4.3 “Good, bhikshus. It is fitting that you clansmen who have gone forth from the household life into the homeless life to sit together to discuss the Dharma. When you gather together, bhikshus, you should either talk Dharma or keep noble silence.”⁸⁶

Two kinds of quest

5 Bhikshus, there are two kinds of quests: the noble quest and the ignoble quest.⁸⁷

5.1 And what, bhikshus, is **the ignoble quest**?

Here, bhikshus, someone⁸⁸

being himself <u>subject to birth</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to birth;	<i>jāti,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to decay</u> , [162]	seeks what is also subject to decay;	<i>jarā,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to disease</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to disease;	<i>vyādhi,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to death</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to death;	<i>maraṇa,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to sorrow</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to sorrow;	<i>soka,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to defilement</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to defilement.	<i>saṅkilesa,dhamma</i>

6 (1) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be subject to birth?

Wife and children, bhikshus, are subject to birth; men slaves and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, gold and silver, are subject to birth.

These acquisitions⁸⁹ are subject to birth and one is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them, being himself subject to birth, seeks what is also subject to birth.

7 (2) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be subject to decay [ageing]?

⁸⁵ *Kāya nu'ttha, bho ānanda, etarahi kathāya sannisinnā, kā ca pana vo antarā,kathā vipakatā ti?* This is stock, where the person interrupting is usu the Buddha, eg, **D 1,1.4/1:2**; **M 108.6/3:8** (the brahmin Vassa,kāra), **119,2/3:89**, **U 2.2/11**; **J 4/1:120**

⁸⁶ *Dhammī vā kathā ariyo vā tuṅhī,bhāvo.* The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuṅhī,bhāva*), explains **Kolita S** (S 2:273), because within it initial application and sustained application (thinking and pondering) (*vitakka,vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. In **Kāmaḥ S 2** (S 4:293) *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formations (*vacī,saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. Comy on Ariya Pariyesanā S, too, says that the second dhyana is called the noble silence, and explain this sentence as meaning that those who cannot attain *jhāna* are advised to maintain “noble silence” by attending to their basic meditation (*mūla,kammaṭṭhāna*) subject (MA 2:169). See also **Nandaka S** (A 9.4/4:359); Tha 650, 999; ThaA 2:274 (qu M 1:161), but ThaA 3:102 refers this to 4th dhyana. See also **Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.2/4:263 f), SD 24.12.

⁸⁷ “The noble quest and the ignoble quest,” *ariya,pariyesanā* and *anariya,pariyesanā*, respectively. The word *pariyesanā* comes from *pari*, denoting completion or fulfillment, “all around” + *y* (sandhi infix) + *esanā*, “search, quest”. Its verb is *pariyesati* (BHS *pariyeṣate*), “he investigates,”⁸⁷ denoting a sustained outer search, ie, noticing what is lacking in ourselves, we seek “outside,” as it were (eg from other teachers or methods) for answers or liberation: D 1:223; S 1:177, 181, 4:62; A 2:23, 25, 247; Sn 482; Nm 262; Nc 427; J 1:3, 138; Miln 109, 313; DhA 3:163; PvA 31. For other forms, see PED: *pariyesati*. There is also the neut form *~na*: Nm 262; DhA 1:76, 3:256. For details, see SD 43.10 (1.2.4). On its relation to *samannesanā* and *samannesati*, see SD 35.6 (2.3). For related suttas, see (7).

⁸⁸ Four of these conditions—decay, disease, death and defilements (the 4 D’s)—form the topic of (**Catukka**) **Pariyesanā S** (A 4.252), SD 50.9.

⁸⁹ “Acquisitions,” *upadhi*, lit “that on which something is laid or rests, basis, foundation, substratum.” Here, as defined in DP, the term means both “worldly possessions or belongings” as well as “attachment to such possessions (forming a basis for rebirth)”. Comys say there are 4 types of *upadhi* (SA 1:31 = SnA 1:44 f): (1) the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (*kāma*) (MA 2:170; ItA 1:64); (2) the 5 aggregates (*pañcak,khandha*) (MA 3:171; ItA 1:89); (3) the defilements (*kilesa*) (MA 3:171; SnA 1:45 f; ItA 1:64; Nm 1:103); (4) volitional activities (*abhisankhāra*) (ItA 1:64; Nm 1:103). Often confounded with the near-synonym *upādi* (trace (of clinging), substrate): see **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 22,22/2:314), SD 9.2.

Wife and children, bhikshus, are subject to decay; men slaves and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, gold and silver,⁹⁰ are subject to decay.

These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to decay [ageing] and one is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them, being himself subject to decay, seeks what is also subject to decay [ageing].

8 (3) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be subject to disease?

Wife and children, bhikshus are subject to disease; men slaves and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, are subject to disease.

These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to disease and one is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them, being himself subject to disease, seeks what is also subject to disease.

9 (4) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be subject to death?

Wife and children, bhikshus are subject to death; men slaves and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, are subject to death.

These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to death and one is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them, being himself subject to death, seeks what is also subject to death.

10 (5) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be subject to sorrow?

Wife and children, bhikshus, are subject to sorrow; men slaves and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, are subject to sorrow.

These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to sorrow and one is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them, being himself subject to sorrow, seeks what is also subject to sorrow.

11 (6) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be subject to defilement?

Wife and children, bhikshus, are subject to defilement; men slaves and women slaves, goats and sheep, fowl and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, gold and silver, are subject to defilement.

These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to defilement and one is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them, being himself subject to defilement, seeks what is also subject to defilement.

This is the ignoble quest.

12 And what, bhikshus, is **the noble quest**?

Here, bhikshus, someone,

being himself subject to birth, having understood the danger in what is subject to birth, [163] seeks the unborn supreme security from bondage, nirvana;

being himself subject to decay, having understood the danger in what is subject to decay, seeks the undecaying supreme security from bondage, nirvana;

being himself subject to disease, having understood the danger in what is subject to disease, seeks the disease-free supreme security from bondage, nirvana;

being himself subject to death, having understood the danger in what is subject to death, seeks the undying supreme security from bondage, nirvana;

being himself subject to sorrow, having understood the danger in what is subject to sorrow, seeks the sorrowless supreme security from bondage, nirvana;

being himself subject to defilement, having understood the danger in what is subject to defilement, seeks the undefiled supreme security from bondage, nirvana.

This, bhikshus, is the noble quest.

⁹⁰ Comy: Gold and silver are excluded from the things subject to disease, death and sorrow, but they are subject to defilement because they can be alloyed with metals of lesser worth (MA 2:170). The Chinese Āgama version, however, includes money and jewellery being subject to disease, decay and death, as well as subject to sorrow and defilement. **Ñāṇarama**, in Sermon 8, suggests that gold and silver can be born and grow old because “[t]hey are born of craving, conceit and views” (*Nibbāna—the Mind Stilled*, The Nibbāna Sermons 6-10, 2004 2:65). Blanchard: “When the Buddha talks about the problem with gold and silver’s aging, we can see that the real concern is not with an escape from aging, but with escaping from the *dukkha* that can result from aging.” (2012:60).

The search for awakening⁹¹

13 Bhikshus, before my self-awakening, while I was still only an unawakened bodhisattva,⁹² I, too,
being myself subject to birth, sought what was also subject to birth;
being myself subject to decay, sought what was also subject to decay;
being myself subject to disease, sought what was also subject to disease;
being myself subject to death, sought what was also subject to death;
being myself subject to sorrow, sought what was also subject to sorrow;
being myself subject to defilement, sought what was also subject to defilement.

13.2 Then, bhikshus, I thought thus:

‘Why should I, *being myself subject to birth, sought what was also subject to birth?*
 Why should I, *being myself subject to decay, sought what was also subject to decay?*
 Why should I, *being myself subject to disease, sought what was also subject to disease?*
 Why should I, *being myself subject to death, sought what was also subject to death?*
 Why should I, *being myself subject to sorrow, sought what was also subject to sorrow?*
 Why should I, *being myself subject to defilement, sought what was also subject to defilement?*

13.3 Suppose that I,

being myself subject to birth, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to birth, were to seek **the birth-free** [the non-born] (*ajāta*) supreme security from bondage, nirvana;
 being myself subject to decay, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to decay, were to seek **the decay-free** [the non-decaying] (*ajarā*) supreme security from bondage, nirvana;
 being myself subject to disease, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to disease, were to seek **the disease-free** [the non-diseased] (*avyādhi*) supreme security from bondage, nirvana;
 being myself subject to death, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to death, were to seek **the death-free** [the non-dying] (*amata*) supreme security from bondage, nirvana;
 being myself subject to sorrow, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to sorrow, were to seek **the sorrow-free** [non-sorrowing] (*asoka*) supreme security from bondage, nirvana;
 being myself subject to defilement, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to defilement, were to seek **the defilement-free** [the non-defiled] (*asaṅkiliṭṭha*) supreme security from bondage, nirvana.’

14 RENUNCIATION. After some time, bhikshus, while still young, a black-haired young lad endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life,

though my mother⁹³ and father wished otherwise and wept with tearful faces,

I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robe, and went forth from the household life into the homeless life.⁹⁴

⁹¹ **Sukhumāla S** (A 3.38/1:145 f), SD 5.16 (19.4.2), and **Mada S** (A 3.39/1:146 f), SD 42.13, form the prelude to this section.

⁹² *Pubbe va sambodhā anabhisambuddhassa bodhisattass’eva sato*, as at **Bhaya, bherava S** (M 4,3/1:17), **Dvedhā, vitakka S** (M 19,2/1:114), **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,12/1:240), **Bodhi Rāja, kumāra S** (M 85,10/2:93), **Saṅgārava S** (M 100,9/2:211), but different contexts. See also S 2:5, 10, 104, 170, 3:27, 4:7, 8, 97, 289, 5:263, 281; A 1:258, 3:240-242 (passim), 4:439; Pm 2:109; Miln 235. On the use of “bodhisattva,” see Intro (2) header n.

⁹³ This is Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī, Mahā Māyā’s sister and the Buddha’s foster mother. The Buddha’s uterine mother Mahā Māyā (**Mahā’padāna S**, D 2:7, 52, 53; ApA 18; J 1:15; DhA 4:89; ThaA 2:225; CA 39) has passed away a week after the Buddha is born (Tha 534 f; DA 2:431). See Analayo 2012:23-26.

⁹⁴ This same statement is made mutatis mutandis by **Soṇa, daṇḍa S**, D 4,6/1:115 @ SD 30.5), by **Kūṭa, danta S**, D 5,7/1:131 @ SD 22.8(7a)), and by **Caṅkī S**, M 95,9/2:167 @ SD 21.15), all of which say that he is “from a high family” (*uccā kulā*). A stock passage speaks of the Buddha as “the recluse Gotama, a Sakya son who went forth from the Sakya clan” (*samaṇo...gotamo sakya,putto sakya,kulā pabbajito*): **Mv 22.-2/V 1:35; D 4,2/1:111, 13,7/1:236; M 41,2/1:285; S 55,7.2/5:352; A 3.63,1/1:180; Sn p103.**

THE TWO TEACHERS

Ālāra Kālāma

15 Having gone forth in this way, bhikshus, in quest of what is wholesome, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace,⁹⁵

I approached **Ālāra Kālāma**⁹⁶ and said to him:

‘Avuso [Friend] Kālāma, I want to lead the holy life in this Dharma-Vinaya [Dharma and Discipline].’

15.2 Bhikshus, when this was spoken, Ālāra Kālāma said this to me:

‘The venerable one may stay here. This Dharma is such that a wise man [164] can soon attain and dwell in it, realizing for himself through his own direct knowledge his own teacher’s doctrine.’

(1) **MASTERING THE TEXTS.**⁹⁷ Bhikshus, I soon quickly learned that Dharma [ancient lore]. Bhikshus, as far as mere lip-reciting and rehearsal⁹⁸ of his teaching went, I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,⁹⁹ and I claimed, ‘I know and see,’ and there were others who did likewise.

15.3 Bhikshus, I thought thus:

‘It is not through mere faith alone that Ālāra Kālāma declares: “By realizing through his own direct knowledge, I attain and dwell in this Dharma.” Certainly Ālāra Kālāma dwells knowing and seeing this Dharma.’

15.4 Then, bhikshus, I went to Ālāra Kālāma and asked him:

‘Avuso Kālāma, in what way do you declare that by realizing for yourself through your own direct knowledge you attain and dwell in this Dharma?’

Bhikshus, he declared that it was the base of nothingness.

(2) **THE 5 SPIRITUAL FACULTIES.** Bhikshus, I thought thus:

‘Not only Ālāra Kālāma has faith, I, too, have faith.

Not only Ālāra Kālāma has energy, I, too, have energy.

Not only Ālāra Kālāma has mindfulness, I, too, have mindfulness.

Not only Ālāra Kālāma has concentration, I, too, have concentration.

Not only Ālāra Kālāma has wisdom, I, too, have wisdom.¹⁰⁰

15.5 What now if I endeavour to realize the Dharma that Ālāra Kālāma declares he dwells in, having attained and realized direct knowledge for himself?’

Bhikshus, I too, in no long time, having quickly realized direct knowledge for myself, attained and dwelled in that Dharma.

15.6 Then I went to Ālāra Kālāma and asked him:

‘Avuso Kālāma, is it in this way that you declare for yourself that you, realizing direct knowledge for yourself, have attained this Dharma?’

‘That is the way, avuso, that I declare for myself that I, realizing direct knowledge for myself, have attained this Dharma.’

⁹⁵ *Bhikkhave kim,kusala,gavesī anuttaram santi,vara,padam pariyesamāno.*

⁹⁶ Buddhaghosa says that **Ālāra** was also called Dīgha,piṅgala; **Kālāma** was his family name (DA 2:569 = MA 2:171). The story of the Bodhisattva’s first two teachers [§§15-16] is found in several places in the early Canons: **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36/1:240; **Saṅgarāva S** (M 100/2:212); **Madhyam’āgama** of the Sarvāstivāda (T26.776b5-777a4; **Vinaya** of the Dharmaguptakas (T1428.780bt-c19); cf J 1:66; DhA 1:85; ApA 71; BA 6; DhsA 34; MahvS 66. “No word is said about the Buddha’s relationship to these two people, nor indeed do we hear what these men had been or done. This would be hard to explain if the training of the Bodhisattva under them had been related at that time a few pages earlier as it is now.” (Bronkhorst 1993:85 f; see n to §§22-23 on “The first listeners” below).

⁹⁷ On this section (1) and the following two (2-3), see (5): The 3 trainings.

⁹⁸ “Mere lip-reciting and rehearsal,” *oṭṭha,pahata,mattena lapita,lāpana,mattena*, “merely moving the lips and reciting what had been recited” (Thomas 1949:62)

⁹⁹ “I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,” *nāṇa,vādañ ca therā,vādañ ca*. Here, *therā,-vāda* is used in a non-technical sense. The term Theravāda as used of a school is a late post-canonical term.

¹⁰⁰ On these 5 faculties, see Intro (5), in the Sujato quote.

‘That is the way, avuso, that I, too, realizing direct knowledge for myself, have attained and dwell in this Dharma.’

15.7 ‘It is a great gain for us, avuso, that we see¹⁰¹ such a venerable one as a fellow brahmachari [as our companion in the holy life].¹⁰²

The Dharma that I proclaim I have attained through realizing direct knowledge for myself, you yourself dwell in that Dharma, having attained it through realizing direct knowledge for yourself.

The [165] Dharma that you dwell in, having yourself attained realizing direct knowledge for yourself, I too proclaim it, having attained it through realizing direct knowledge for myself.

15.8 Thus, the Dharma that I know, you too know that same Dharma; the Dharma that you know, I too know that same Dharma.

Thus, as I am, so you are; as you are, so am I.¹⁰³

Come now, avuso, let the two of us lead this community!¹⁰⁴

(3) MASTERING THE MIND. Thus, bhikshus, Āḷāra Kālāma, my teacher, placed me, his pupil, on an equal footing with himself and accorded me the highest honour.

15.9 But it occurred to me: ‘This Dharma does not lead to revulsion (with the world), to cessation (of suffering), to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana, but only to rebirth¹⁰⁵ in the base of nothingness.’¹⁰⁶

Bhikshus, dissatisfied with that Dharma, revulsed with it, I left.

Uddaka Rāma,putta

16 Bhikshus, as one in quest of what is wholesome, still seeking the supreme state of sublime peace, I went to **Uddaka Rāma,putta** and said to him:

‘Avuso,¹⁰⁷ I want to lead the holy life in this Dharma-Vinaya [Dharma and Discipline].’

¹⁰¹ *Passāma*.

¹⁰² From here until “as you are, so am I”: *iti yāham dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja pavedemi, taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharasi; yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharasi, taṃ ahaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja pavedemi. Iti yāham dhammaṃ jānāmi, taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi; yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi, taṃ ahaṃ dhammaṃ jānāmi. Iti yādiso ahaṃ, tādiso tvaṃ; yādiso tvaṃ, tādiso ahaṃ.*

¹⁰³ *Iti yādiso ahaṃ, tādiso tvaṃ; yādiso tvaṃ, tādiso ahaṃ.* Cf similar sentence at §16.3 below in connection with Rāma.

¹⁰⁴ See §16.3 below on the leadership of the community.

¹⁰⁵ §15.9 (= M 36/1:140,26 *pe* @ SD 49.4): The Bodhisattva’s reflection here indicates that what Āḷāra Kālāma teaches is the full-fledged attainment of the base of nothingness, as this attainment is specified to lead to rebirth in the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññ’āyatanaṇṇapatti*). Āḷāra’s ability to attain profound levels of concentration is confirmed in the Mahāparinibbāna S (D 16), according to which he was able to enter such deep concentration that he did not even notice 500 carts passing by close to him (D 16/2:130,11 @ SD 9) and its parallels DĀ 2 (T1.19a12), T5 (T1.168b3), T6 (T1.183c15), T7 (T1.197c13, only 50 chariots), and the Skt version (S 360 folio 190V2 in Waldschmidt 1950: 27); not all Chin versions, however, clearly identify him as Āḷāra Kālāma.

¹⁰⁶ “Base of nothingness,” *ākiñcaññ’āyatana*. Comy: Āḷāra taught him the seven attainments (of calmness meditation) ending with the base of nothingness, the third of the four formless attainments. Though these states are spiritually exalted, they are still mundane and do not in themselves lead to nirvana, but merely to rebirth in the realm of nothingness. The lifespan there is 60,000 aeons (world-cycles) but at the end of which one returns to a lower world. As such, one is still caught in Death’s trap (MA 2:172). However, see Intro 4.1. Note here that “realm” (*āyatana*) is a cosmological or ontological term (a place of rebirth); but where *āyatana* is used in a meditative sense, it is rendered as “base.” See SID: *āyatana*. On the interesting point that this is not dhyana, see Intro 4.1.

¹⁰⁷ Be adds this n: *āvuso rāma* (Ce Ke Se) *mahā,satto rāma,puttam eva avoca, na rāmam, rāmo hi tattha gaṇ’ācariyo bhaveyya, tadā ca kālānkato asanto. Ten’ev’ettha rāmāyattāni kriya,paḍāni atīta,kāla,vasena āgatani, uddako ca rāma,putto mahā,sattassa sa,brahma,cāritv-eva vutto, na ācariyo ti. Tīkāyam ca “Pāḷiyam rāmass’eva samāpat-ti,lābhitā āgatā, na uddakassā ti ādi pacchā,bhāge pakāsītā* [D:Be 1:221): The Great Being said, “Friend Rāma,” but Rāma,putta replied, “I’m not Rāma. Rāma was the community teacher (*gaṇ’ācariya*) but he has passed on and is no more. For this reason, sentences relating to Rāma are in the past tense, and so Rāma,putta was a co-religionist

16.2 Bhikshus, when this was spoken, Uddaka Rāma,putta said this to me:

‘The venerable one may stay here. This Dharma is such that a wise man can soon attain and dwell in it, realizing for himself through his own direct knowledge his own teacher’s doctrine.’

(1) MASTERING THE TEXTS.¹⁰⁸ Bhikshus, as far as lip-reciting and rehearsal of his teaching went I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,¹⁰⁹ and I claimed, ‘I know and see,’ and there were others who did likewise.¹¹⁰

16.3 Bhikshus, I thought thus:

‘It is not through mere faith alone that **Rāma** declared: “By realizing through his own direct knowledge I entered upon and dwelled in this Dharma.” Certainly Rāma dwelled knowing and seeing this Dharma.’

16.4 Then, bhikshus, I went to Uddaka Rāma,putta and asked him:

‘Avuso, in what way did Rāma declare that by realizing for himself through his own direct knowledge he entered upon and dwelled in this Dharma?’

Bhikshus, Uddaka Rāma,putta declared that it was the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.¹¹¹

(2) THE 5 SPIRITUAL FACULTIES.

Bhikshus, I thought thus:

‘Not only Rāma had faith, [166] I, too, have faith.

Not only Rāma had energy, I, too, have energy.

Not only Rāma had mindfulness, I, too, have mindfulness.

Not only Rāma had concentration, I, too, have concentration.

Not only Rāma had wisdom, I, too, have wisdom.

16.5 What now if I endeavour to realize the Dharma that Rāma declared he dwelled in, having attained and realized direct knowledge for himself?’

Bhikshus, I too, in no long time, having quickly realized direct knowledge for myself, attained and dwelled in that Dharma.

16.6 Then I went to Uddaka Rāma,putta and asked him:

‘Avuso, was it in this way that Rāma declared for himself that he, realizing direct knowledge for himself, had attained this Dharma?’

‘That was the way, avuso, that Rāma declared for himself that he, realizing direct knowledge for himself, had attained this Dharma.’

‘That is the way, avuso, that I, too, realizing direct knowledge for myself, have attained and dwell in this Dharma.’

16.7 ‘It is a great gain for us, avuso, that we see¹¹² such a venerable one as a fellow brahmachari [as our companion in the holy life].

The Dharma that Rāma proclaimed to have attained through realizing direct knowledge for himself, you yourself, too, dwell in that Dharma, having realized direct knowledge for yourself.

The Dharma that you dwell in, having yourself attained it through realizing direct knowledge for yourself, Rāma, too, proclaimed it, having attained it through realizing direct knowledge for himself.

with the Great Being, not his teacher. Similarly, the Tīkā notes that the formless attainments are made in text (Pāli) refer to Rāma, not to Uddaka (and so on).

¹⁰⁸ On this section (1) and the following two (2-3), see Intro (5): The 3 trainings.

¹⁰⁹ “I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,” *ñāṇa, vādañ ca therā, vādañ ca*. Here, *therā, vāda* is used in a non-technical sense. The term Theravāda as used of a school is a late post-canonical term.

¹¹⁰ *So kho ahaṃ bhikkhave tāvataken’eva oṭṭha, pahata, mattena lapita, lāpana, mattena ñāṇa, vādañ ca vadāmi theravādañ ca. Jānāmi, passāmi ti ca paṭijānāmi ahañ c’eva aññe ca.*

¹¹¹ “Neither-perception-nor-non-perception,” *n’eva, saññā, nāsaññ’āyatana*. This is the name for the 4th dhyana of the formless sphere (*arūpāvacara*), a quasi-conscious state that is surpassed only by the state of complete suspension of consciousness called or the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā, vedayita, nirodha*): see §42 n below.

¹¹² *Passāma*.

16.8 Thus, the Dharma that Rāma knew, you too know that same Dharma; the Dharma that you know, Rāma too knew that same Dharma.

Thus, as Rāma was, so you are; as you are, so Rāma was.¹¹³

Come now, avuso, lead this community!¹¹⁴

(3) MASTERING THE MIND. Thus, bhikshus, Uddaka Rāma,putta, my companion in the holy life, placed me in the position of a teacher and accorded me the highest honour.

16.9 But, bhikshus, it occurred to me: ‘This Dharma does not lead to revulsion (with the world), to cessation (of suffering), to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana, but only to rebirth in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.’¹¹⁵

Bhikshus, dissatisfied with that Dharma, revulsed with the Dharma, I left.¹¹⁶

Uruvelā

17 Bhikshus, still in quest of what is wholesome, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace, I walked by stages through Magadha until eventually I arrived at Senā,nigama near Uru,velā. [167]

There I saw a pleasant spot, a delightful forest grove where a river flowed through a pleasant ford, with smooth banks of white sand, and villages all around for alms-resort.¹¹⁷

Bhikshus, I thought:

‘This is a pleasant spot, a delightful forest grove where a river flows through a pleasant ford, with smooth banks of white sand, and villages all around for alms-resort.

This will indeed serve well for the striving of a clansman intent on spiritual effort.’

I sat down there, bhikshus, thinking: ‘This is, indeed, conducive for spiritual effort.’¹¹⁸

[Insert accounts from *Mahā Saccaka Sutta* (M 36,17-44) & *Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta* (M 12,44-63) here.]¹¹⁹

¹¹³ *Iti yaṃ dhammaṃ Rāmo aññasi taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi, yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi taṃ dhammaṃ Rāmo aññasi. Iti yādiso Rāmo ahoṣi tādiso tuvaṃ, yādiso tuvaṃ tādiso Rāmo ahoṣi:* cf similar sentence in ref to Āḷāra above at §15.4. These sentences here are crucial in showing “**Rāma**,” ie Uddaka’s father, is referred to, and *not* Uddaka himself. Note further the past tense *ahoṣi* used in connection with Rāma. Bodhi: “Both Horner in [*Middle Length Sayings*] and Ñ[āṇamoli] in MS err in their translations of the account of Bodhisatta’s meeting with Uddaka Rāma,putta by assuming that Uddaka is identical with Rāma. However, as his name indicates, Uddaka was the son (*putta*) of Rāma, who must have already passed away before the Bodhisatta arrived on the scene. It should be noted that all references to Rāma are in the past tense and the third person, and that Uddaka in the end places the Bodhisatta in the position of teacher. Though the text does not allow for definite conclusions, this suggests that he himself had not yet reached the fourth immaterial attainment.” (Bodhi, 2001:1217 n303). See Intro (4.2).

¹¹⁴ *Ehi dāni āvuso, tvaṃ imaṃ gaṇaṃ pariharāti.* Note here Uddaka is asking the Bodhisattva to *himself* lead the community. Cf §15.4 where Āḷāra invites the Bodhisattva, “Let the two of us lead this community!” (*Ubho va santā imaṃ gaṇaṃ pariharāmi ti*).

¹¹⁵ “Neither-perception-nor-non-perception,” *n’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatana* [§16.2 n]. On why Rāma could not gain awakening through this attainment, see **Aṭṭhaka,nāgara S** (M 52) @ SD 41.1 (3.2.3). The fact that the Bodhisattva is able to reach either this formless attainment or the 3rd one [§§14.4+9] implies that he has mastered the 4 dhyanas, but still lacks the right view regarding their significance: see SD 49.4 (1.2.5) Remark. On the interesting point that this is *not* dhyana, see (4.1).

¹¹⁶ For the Bodhisattva’s conclusion that dhyana is a pleasure “not to be feared,” which leads to his subsequent meditation and full awakening, see **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,31-32/1:246 f), SD 1.12 (excerpts) + SD 49.4 (full tr).

¹¹⁷ *Tatth’addasaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ bhūmi,bhāgaṃ, pāsādikaṃ ca vana,saṇḍaṃ, nadiṃ ca sandantiṃ setakaṃ supatitthaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ samantā ca gocara,gāmaṃ.*

¹¹⁸ **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36.20-31) picks up from here with graphic details of the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification (see App). This account, however, seems to be an abridgement of a longer account given in **Mahā Sīhanāda S** (M 12.44-61/1:77-82). On overcoming fear in solitary ascetic practice: **Bhaya Bbherava S** (M 4/1:16-24), SD 44.3.

¹¹⁹ For full trs of these Suttas, see M 12 (SD 49.1), & M 36 (SD 49.4).

THE GREAT AWAKENING

Liberation

- 18** Then, bhikshus, being myself subject to **birth**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *birth*,
 seeking the *unborn* [*birth-free*] supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 I realized the unborn [birth-free] supreme security from bondage;
- 18.2 being myself subject to **decay**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *decay*,
 seeking the *undecaying* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 I realized nirvana, the undecaying supreme security from bondage;
- 18.3 being myself subject to **disease**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *disease*,
 seeking the *disease-free* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 I realized nirvana, the disease-free supreme security from bondage;
- 18.4 being myself subject to **death**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *death*,
 seeking the *death-free* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 I realized nirvana, the death-free¹²⁰ supreme security from bondage;
- 18.5 being myself subject to **sorrow**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *sorrow*,
 seeking the *sorrowless* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 I realized nirvana, the sorrowless supreme security from bondage;
- 18.6 being myself subject to **defilement**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *defilement*,
 seeking the *undefiled* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
I realized nirvana, the undefiled supreme security from bondage.
- 18.7 The knowledge and vision arose in me:
 ‘Unshakeable¹²¹ is my freedom of mind.¹²² This is my last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for me)!’ [§30.7]

The Dharma’s depth

- 19** Bhikshus, I thought thus,¹²³
 ‘This Dharma I have realized is deep, hard to see, hard to understand,

¹²⁰ “Death-free,” *amata*, often rendered as “deathless,” or worse “undying, immortal,” all of which suggest an abiding state (as if we live forever there). The point is that nirvana is neither impermanent nor permanent, with neither birth nor death, and beyond positive predication. No one is born in nirvana, and no one dies there. One way of talking about it is through negative language, such as “death-free.” See K R Norman, 1991c: 3-9, 1997: 13. The final choice of translation is your karmic choice, whatever it might be, as long as you define your terms, and that it should be as easy to understand as possible.

¹²¹ “Unshakeable” (*akuppa*, adj, also n, “the unshakeable,” ie, nirvana) (§18.7 = §30.7), also (**Anuruddha**) **Upak-kilesa S** (M 128,32), SD 5.18; also A 3.55 = 7.50 = 8.64 = 9.41; also Tha 182c (*akuppā me vimuttīti*). Comy explains that this stock refers to the “freedom of the fruition of arhathood” (*arahatta,phala,vimutti*) in two ways, by way of means (*kāraṇa*) and object or goal (*ārammaṇa*), both of which are unshakeable (*akuppa*) (MA 2:154). The abstract n *akuppata*, “unshakeability,” is found in a related context at Tha 364c. **Das’uttara S** (D 34) calls this the “the unshakeable knowledge” (*akuppa ñāṇa*), that it is the one thing that should be made to arise (*eko dhammo upā-detabbo*, D 34,1.2(8)/1:273).

¹²² *Akuppā me vimutti*. See SD 4.25 (2.3-2.4). For a philological n, see Norman 1990:24 n2. See prec n.

¹²³ This passage on the Buddha “hesitation” recurs, in full or in part, in **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.1), SD 49.8; **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19/1:167), SD 1.11 = **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,43/2:93), SD 55.2 = **Brahmāyāca-na S** (S 6.1/1:136), SD 12.2 = V 1:4 = 1:6.

peaceful, sublime, unattainable by through discursive thought (or logic),¹²⁴
subtle, to be experienced [to be felt] by the wise.¹²⁵

19.2 But this generation revels in attachment, delights in attachment, rejoices in attachment.¹²⁶

For such a generation, revelling in attachment, delighting in attachment, rejoicing in attachment,
this state is hard to see, that is to say, specific conditionality¹²⁷ and dependent arising.¹²⁸

19.3 And this state is too hard to see, that is to say,

the stilling of all formations,	<i>sabba,saṅkhāra,samatha</i> ¹²⁹
the giving up of all acquisitions,	<i>sabbūpadhi,painissagga</i> ¹³⁰
the destruction of craving,	<i>taṇha-k,khaya</i>
fading away (of lust),	<i>virāga</i> ¹³¹
cessation (of suffering),	<i>nirodha</i>
<u>nirvana</u> .	<i>nibbāna</i> [168]

19.4 Bhikshus, if I were to teach the Dharma, and if others would not understand me, that would be tiresome and troubling for me.’

The “hesitation” verses

19.5 Thereupon, bhikshus, these stanzas unheard before,¹³² arose spontaneously¹³³ in me:

¹²⁴ *Atakkâvacaro* = *na + takka + avacara*, lit, “not in the sphere of discursive thought (or logic)” (V 1:4 = D 2:36 = 37 = M 1:167 = S 1:136 ≈ M 1:487 ≈ 2:172; A 2:289; D 1:12; It 37). See **Mahā’padāna S (D 14,3.1.2)**, SD 49.8.

¹²⁵ The full sentence: *Dhammo gambhīro duddaso duranubodho santo paṇīto atakkâvacaro nipuṇo paṇḍita,vedanīyo*. On the significance of *vedanīya* as “to be felt,” meaning, to be experienced directly, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.5.2); also Reflection, “To live is to feel,” R89, 2007.

¹²⁶ “**Attachment**,” *ālaya*, ie worldly attachment, sensuality, “worldliness” (M:ÑB 1218 n306). The word has a wide range of meanings: 1 (a) house, dwelling, habitat, household, a built structure; (b) nest, lair, perch, shelter; (c) abode, seat, place of rest, resort, haven, repository; (d) domain, field of activity, sphere; 2 (a) liking, inclination, attachment, fondness for, partiality towards; (b) affection, love; (c) (as a metaphysical concept) **desire, yearning, clinging, sensual attachment** (= *taṇhā*); (d) thought preparatory to a decision (regarding the *vassa*), the decision itself; (3) feint, pretence, ruse, dissimulation, impersonation (CPD). **MA**: The term denotes both sense-pleasures and the thoughts of craving concerned with them (MA 2:174 f). **SA** explains *ālaya* objectively as the 5 cords of sensual pleasure (*pañca kāma,guṇa*) [SD 8.7 (2)]. They are called “attachment” because they attach themselves to these 5 cords of sensual pleasure. Subjectively, *ālaya* refers to the 108 mental investigations driven by craving (*taṇha,vicari-itāni*) [A 2:212 f], and it is these that attach themselves to their objects. (SA 1:195)

¹²⁷ “Specific conditionality,” *idap,paccayatā*, ie causal relationship, shows how one thing is related to another, thus: “When this, is that is; when this arises, that arises. When this is not, that is not; when this ceases, that ceases” (M 3:63; S 2:28, 95). See also V 1:5; D 1:85, 2:55; M 1:262; S 2:25, 5:71. See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (6).

¹²⁸ “Dependent arising,” *paṭicca,samuppāda*, is a formulation of the complex interdependence of all mental and physical phenomena, showing how they inherently lacks any permanent entity. See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16.

¹²⁹ *Sabba,saṅkhāra,samatha*: **D 14,3.1/2:36; M 26,19/1:167; S 6.1/1:136, 22.90/3:133; A 3.32,1/1:133**. “Formations,” *saṅkhāra*, here meaning the active aspect of “forming” actions (karma) through body, speech and mind, being either wholesome or unwholesome (S 12.1, 7). Nyanatiloka uses the neologism “karma-formations” to specifically refer to this aspect of *saṅkhāra*, otherwise a word that is polysemic and profound. Sometimes the term *abhisaṅkhāra* is used here (D 3:217; M 1:297; S 12.51; A 1:112). See BDict: *saṅkhāra*.

¹³⁰ “Acquisitions,” *upadhi*, see n4.

¹³¹ “Fading away,” *virāga*, also tr as “dispassion.”

¹³² *pubbe assuta,pubbā*, lit “unheard of before, before.” See Oskar Von Hinüber, “*Anacchariyā pubbe assutapubbā*” in *Selected Papers on Pāli Studies*, Oxford: PTS, 1994:17-24, where he contends that *anacchariyā* represents Skt **an-akṣar-ikā*, but, retorts Bodhi, “his argument rests on the assumption that *pubbe assutapubbā* would be redundancy and therefore *pubbe* must be taken in apposition to the preceding *anacchariyā*. This assumption, however, is contradicted by D 1:184,27-29, where we find *pubbe...sutapubbā* as one block. Interestingly, no corresponding word is to be found in the Mahā,vastu and Lalita,vistara versions of the same incident.” (S:B 431 n365; citations normalized). See foll n.

- 19.6 I have discovered the Dharma with difficulty:
 enough with declaring it!
 Not easily understood [awakened to] it is
 by those lost in lust and hate. *Kicchena me adhigataṃ
 halaṃ dāni pakāsituṃ
 nāyaṃ dhammo susambudho
 rāga,dosa,paretehi*
- 19.7 It goes against the current, abstruse,
 profound, hard to see, subtle—
 those dyed in lust will not see it,
 nor those shrouded in massive darkness.¹³⁴ *Paṭisota,gāmiṃ nipuṇaṃ
 gambhīraṃ duddasaṃ aṇuṃ
 rāga,rattā na dakkhanti
 tamo,khandhena āvuṭā'ti¹³⁵*

Thinking thus, bhikshus, my mind inclined to living at ease,¹³⁶ rather than teaching the Dharma.¹³⁷

BRAHMA'S SUPPLICATION TO TEACH

Brahmā Sahampati

20 Then, bhikshus, Brahmā Sahampati, having known with his own mind the reflection in the Blessed One's mind, thought:

'Alas, the world is lost! Alas, the world is destroyed, now that the mind of the Tathagata, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one, inclines to living at ease, not to teaching Dharma!'¹³⁸

20.2 Then, just as a strong man might stretch his arm out or bend it back, Brahmā Sahampati disappeared from the Brahmā world and reappeared before the Blessed One.

20.3 Then Brahmā Sahampati, having arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, knelt down on his right knee on the ground, raised his palms lotus-wise towards the Blessed One, and said this to him:

'Bhante, let the Blessed One teach the Dharma! Let the Wellfarer [Sugata] teach the Dharma!

¹³³ PTS *acchariyā*; prob wr for *anacchariyā* (Be Ce Se), lit "not wonderful," ie appearing quite naturally or spontaneously (CPD) (D 2: 93 = S 5:259; M 3:121; A 4:211; J 3:70, 406, 4:153, 6:220; cf V 2:17; S 4:301). For the tr here I am guided by the context of **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.19/1:168), where the reading is *anacchariyā*, and where the Buddha himself is the narrator: he is more likely to have said that the stanzas are "spontaneous" rather than "marvellous." Although the Commentators seem to take *anacchariyā* as deriving from *acchariyā*, most translators render it as "spontaneously," apparently invoking *acchara*, "moment." Buddhaghosa glosses *anacchariyā* as *anu-acchariyā*, "repeatedly or following *acchariyā*" (VA 1:133; SA 1:196). For SA Porāṇa Ṭikā gloss and further comments, see S:B 431 n 365. See prev n.

¹³⁴ "Hidden in darkness," *tamo-k,khandhena avaṭā*, lit "blocked by the aggregates of darkness." V 1:4 = M 1:169 = S 1:136; D 2:37 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:315.

¹³⁵ This verse recurs at **Mv 1.5.3** (V 1:5*), SD 12.1 (2.1) = **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.2.3/2:36, Vipassī Buddha), SD 49.8 = **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19.7/1:168), SD 1.11 = **Āyacana S** (S 6.1/1:136), SD 12.2; Mvst 3:315.

¹³⁶ "Inclined to living at ease," *appossukkatāya* = *appa* (little) + *ussukka* (striving for), meaning "little zeal"; ie "careless, unconcerned; living at ease, inactive" (V 2:188; D 2:176 = M 3:175 ≈ D 2:177 = M 3:176; M 1:450; Sn 43; Nc 91 = Ap 9; Thī 457, 477; Dh 330). Comys: *Appossukkatā* means the lack of desire to teach (SA 1:197). But why, when the Bodhisattva had long ago made an aspiration to reach Buddhahood in order to liberate others, is now inclined towards living at ease. Because it is only after reaching awakening did he fully realize the weight of defilements in people's minds and of the Dharma's profundity. Furthermore, he wanted Brahmā to entreat him to teach, so that beings who venerated Brahmā would recognize the Dharma's value and desire to listen to it. (SA 1:197 f; MA 2:176 f on **Ariya Pariyesanā S**).

¹³⁷ Comy asks why, when the Bodhisattva had long ago made an aspiration to reach Buddhahood in order to liberate others, is he now inclined towards inaction. It then explains that it is only after reaching awakening did he fully realize the power of defilements in people's minds and of the Dharma's profundity. Furthermore, he wanted Brahmā to entreat him to teach so that beings who venerated Brahmā would recognize the Dharma's value and desire to listen to it (MA 2:176 f). For a fuller discussion, see **Why the Buddha "hesitated" to teach?** SD 12.1.

¹³⁸ In the **Mahāvastu** account, the deity who approaches the Buddha is simply referred to only as Mahā Brahmā, and is accompanied by many other gods, incl Sakra. On Brahmā Sahampati's role in the Buddha story, see Intro (2).

There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are falling away through not hearing the Dharma. There will be those who will understand the Dharma.¹³⁹

20.4 Brahmā Sahampati said this. Having said this, he further said this:¹⁴⁰

[THE MAGADHA VERSE]¹⁴¹

20.5 There has appeared in the past (until now) in Magadha
an impure Dharma devised by those still tainted.¹⁴²
Throw open this door to the death-free!¹⁴³
Let them hear the Dharma discovered by the stainless one.¹⁴⁴

[Brahma's invitation verses]¹⁴⁵

<p>20.6¹⁴⁶ <i>Sele yathā pabbata,muddhani-ṭ,ṭhito</i>¹⁴⁷ <i>yathāpi passe janatam samantato</i> <i>tathūpamaṃ dhamma,mayaṃ sumedha</i> <i>pāsādam āruyha samanta,cakkhu.</i> <i>Sok 'āvatiṇṇam</i>¹⁴⁹ <i>janatam apeta,soko</i> <i>avekkhassu</i>¹⁵⁰ <i>jāti,jarābhibhūtam</i></p>	<p>Just as one standing on a mountain peak might see the people all around, even so, O wise one, O universal eye,¹⁴⁸ ascend to the palace, made of Dharma! May he consider mankind, sunk in sorrow, overcome by birth and decay! [169]</p>
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¹³⁹ *Desetu bhante bhagavā dhammaṃ desetu sugato dhammaṃ. Santi sattā appa,raj'akkha,jātikā, assavanatā dhammassa parihāyanti. Bhavissanti dhammassa aññātāro 'ti.*

¹⁴⁰ These 3 verses [§§20.5-20.7] occur in **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,20/1:168 f), SD 1.11; **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85/2:93); **Brahmāyācana S** (S 6.1/1:137); V 1:5. Verses §20.6+20.7 recur in **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.9/2:39), SD 49.8

¹⁴¹ The foll 3 verses (Brahma's invitation + the Magadha verses) recur in **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,45/2:93, quoting M 26.21) & **Brahmāyācana S** (S 6.1,13/1:138), BA 18. See prec n.

¹⁴² These 2 lines, in dialectical terms, form the thesis, the real but unsatisfactory state of things stated by Brahmā on behalf of sentient beings as it were. In social terms, this statement clearly refers to the brahminical system of philosophy and practices, that is, the *āstika* system. This statement also means that the liberating truth has been forgotten during this time [see n for line d]. As such, the Buddha's claim that his newly proclaimed Dharma is "unheard before" (*pubbe assuta,pubbā*) is clearly justified. Kvu 4.8/286 discusses the question how far the Buddha did not have a teacher (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,25/1:170 @ SD 1.11) when, as a Bodhisattva (named Jotipāla) he had been Kassapa Buddha's disciple (**Ghaṭikāra S**, M 81.6/2:46, 81.3/2:54), and how far the Buddha's awakening was an insight into "things unheard before" (**Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S**, S 56.11,9-12/5:422 f; V 1:10-12 @ SD 1.1). See also Comy ad loc (KvuA 78). See **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.6.4), SD 9 & Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004b: §§10:20b, 11a.

¹⁴³ Comy: The door to the death-free is the noble path, "the door to the death-free nirvana" (SA 1:199). While *dvāra* here is singular, below [§21] it is plural (*dvārā*).

¹⁴⁴ These last 2 lines form the antithesis to Brahmā's earlier request. The first statement was a definition of the problem, and this second statement is a proposal for its solution. See n for line c.

¹⁴⁵ These 2 verses (without the prec Magadha verse) recur in **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.9), SD 49.8.

¹⁴⁶ This verse recurs in **Vitakka S** (It 2.2.1/33), SD 63.12, spoken by the Buddha Gotama. See prec n.

¹⁴⁷ *Muddhaniṭṭhito* resolved as *muddhāni* (loc, "top, peak, summit") (Sn 689c, 987c || 682c) + *ṭhita* ("standing").

¹⁴⁸ This is the last of "**the 5 eyes**" (*cakkhu*). The Buddha eye (*buddha,cakkhu*) is a name for the knowledge of the degrees of maturity in the faculties of being (*indriya,paropariyatta,nāṇa*) and the knowledge of the dispositions and latent tendencies of beings (*āsayānusaya,nāṇa*). The "knowledge of omniscience" is called the universal eye (*samanta,cakkhu*) (S 559d*); see **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133), SD 10.8 (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76), SD 35.7. The knowledge of the 3 lower paths is called the Dharma eye or "Dharma vision" (*dhamma,cakkhu*). Together with the divine eye or clairvoyance (*dibba,cakkhu*) (S 6.5/1:145, 12.70/2:121 f) and the physical eye (*maṃsa,cakkhu*), these make up the "5 eyes" of the Buddha (Nc 235; SA 1:200). See **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (5.4.1).

¹⁴⁹ Se *sokāvatiṇṇam* (wr). "Sunk in sorrow," *sokāvatinna* = *soka* ("sorrow") + *avatiṇṇa* ("fallen into," past part of *avatarati*, "descend into, dive into"). Cf vl *sokānutiṇṇo* (S 1:123,1). Previous trs seemed to have misread this word.

¹⁵⁰ *Avekkhassu*, "may he consider," imper 2 sg med (Sn 1119 = Ap 488,5; V 1:61* = D 2:39,14* = M 1:168,34* = S 1:137,36*); see CPD sv *avekkhari*.

20.7¹⁵¹ *Uṭṭhehi vīra vijita,saṅgāma,
sattha,vāha aṇaṇa vicara loke.
Desassu¹⁵² bhagavā dhammaṃ
aññātāro bhavissantīti.*

Arise, hero! Victor in battle!
Caravan leader, debt-free one, wander in the world!
Teach the Dharma, O blessed lord!
There will be those who will understand.¹⁵³

The lotus pond

21 Then, bhikshus, heeding Brahmā's plea, and out of compassion for beings, I surveyed the world with the buddha-eye.

21.2 Surveying the world with the buddha-eye, I saw beings
with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes,
the keen and the dull,

the good and the bad,¹⁵⁴

those easy to teach and those hard to teach,

some who live seeing fear in blame (in wrongdoing) and in the hereafter.¹⁵⁵

21.3 Bhikshus, just as in **a lotus pond of blue or red or white lotuses**,¹⁵⁶

some lotuses might be born in the water,

grow in the water, and thrive while submerged in the water, without rising out of the water;

some lotuses might be born in the water,

grow up in the water, and stand up at an even level with the water;

some lotuses might be born in the water and grow up in the water,

but would rise up from the water and stand up in the water without being soiled by the water—

21.4 so, too, bhikshus, surveying the world with the buddha-eye, I saw beings

with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes,

the keen and the dull, the good and the bad,

those easy to teach and those hard to teach,

some who live seeing fear in blame (in wrongdoing) and in the hereafter.

21.5 Then, bhikshus, having seen this, I answered Brahmā Sahampati in verse:¹⁵⁷

*Apārūtā tesam amatassa dvārā
ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddham
vihimsa,saññī paguṇaṃ na bhāsīm
dhammaṃ paṇītaṃ manujesu brahme*

Open to them are the doors to the Deathfree,¹⁵⁸ (O Brahma),
for those with ears, let them declare [ascertain] their faith!¹⁵⁹
Perceiving trouble, I did not speak
the refined, sublime Dharma among humans, O Brahmā.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵¹ This verse recurs, attr to Brahmā Sahampati, in **Buddha Vandana S** (S 11.17/1:234), SD 86.1 = **Brahmāyacana S** (S 6.1/1:137: v560), SD 12.2.

¹⁵² Ee Se *desetu*.

¹⁵³ V 1:4-7; M 1:167-69; S 1:136-39; D 2:36-40 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:314-19; cf S 1:234.

¹⁵⁴ “The good and the bad,” *svākāre dvākāre* = *su* + *ākāra*, *du* + *ākāra*, lit “those with good nature, those with evil nature.”

¹⁵⁵ “Seeing blame ... the hereafter,” *paraloka,vajja,bhaya,dassāvino* (pl), an ambiguous cpd. M:ÑB 261 (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,21/1:169) tr as “seeing fear in blame and in the other world,” which agrees well with Comys, which resolve it as *paralokañ c'eva vajjañ ca bhayato passanti* (MA 2:179; SA 1:200). Bodhi, however, notes that at **Dh 317 f bhaya** and *vajja* are treated as parallel terms, which suggests that the cpd should be resolved as *paraloke vajjañ c'eva bhayañ ca passanti*. (S:B 433 n371). In fact, it is obvious that the two terms are allusions to “moral shame” (*hiri*) and “moral fear” (*ottappa*) respectively.

¹⁵⁶ They are respectively *uppala* (Skt *utpala*), *paduma* (Skt *padma*, *kokanada*), and *puṇḍarīka*. They are all varieties of the species *Nelumbo nucifera* (old name, now obsolete, *Nelumbium speciosum*).

¹⁵⁷ This verse also at V 1:7 (as at M 26.21), **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.7/2:39, spoken by Vipassī Buddha to Mahā Brahmā), **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,21/1:169; MĀ 204 = T765.4), **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,45/2:93, quoting M 26.21); **Āyācana S** (S 6.1.13/1:138), BA 18. Line b appears in **Janavasabha S** (D 18,27/2:217). See foll n.

¹⁵⁸ “The doors to the Deathfree” (*amatassa dvārā*) = the noble path (*ariya,magga*) (VA 963).

¹⁵⁹ On this difficult sentence, see esp SD 12.2 (3).

21.6 Then, bhikshus, Brahmā Sahampati, thought:

‘There is consent by the Blessed One for the teaching of the Dharma,’¹⁶¹ and, after paying homage to me, keeping me on the right, he disappeared right there.¹⁶²

TEACHING THE DHARMA

The first listeners¹⁶³

22 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’

22.2 It then occurred to me, ‘Ālāra Kālāma is wise, intelligent and discerning, and has little dust in his eyes.

22.3 Suppose I [170] taught the Dharma first to Ālāra Kālāma.’

Then, bhikshus, devas approached me and said,

‘Bhante, Ālāra Kālāma died *seven days ago*.’

22.4 And I realized this was true, and thought,

‘Ālāra Kālāma’s death is a great loss. If he had heard this Dharma, he would have understood it quickly.’

23 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’

23.2 Bhikshus, it then occurred to me that Uddaka Rāma,putta is wise, intelligent and discerning, and has little dust in his eyes.

23.3 Suppose I taught the Dharma first to Uddaka Rāma,putta.

23.4 Then, bhikshus, devas approached me and said this,

‘Bhante, Uddaka Rāma,putta died *the night before*.’

¹⁶⁰ This verse: BHS: *apāvṛtaṃ me amṛtasya dvāraṃ | brahmeti bhagavantaṃ ye śrotukāmā | śraddhāṃ pramuṃcantu viheṭṭha, samjñāṃ || viheṭṭha, samjñā praguṇo abhūsi | dharmo asuddho magadheṣu pūrvam ||* (Mvst 3:319, Senart). BHSD: sv viheṭṭhā, however, says that Senart’s text is “very corrupt” (Edgerton 1953: 50). For a detailed study, see SD 12.2 (3).

¹⁶¹ *Katāvakāso kho ’mhi bhagavatā dhamma, desanāya*, free tr: “The Blessed One has consented to the teaching of the Dharma!” Here *bhagavato* (dat, gen) at S 1:138 (PTS 1884) appears to be wr. In **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.21/-1:169), M:ÑB (similarly at V:H 4:10) has “I have created the opportunity for the Blessed One to teach the Dhamma.” CPD: *katāvakāsa*, however, remarks that this rendition is “both grammatically impossible and contextually unlikely; the reading *bhagavato* at S 1:138,26, however, would seem to represent a reinterpretation of the clause supporting the traditional interpretation of the passage, unless the gen is taken as the gen of the agent to be construed with *katāvakāso*.” CPD cites **Mahāvastu**, *bhagavatā mahābrahmaṇe avakāse kṛte* (Mvst 3:319), “which would seem to support the interpretation suggested above.”

¹⁶² V 1:7; M 1:170; S 1:138; D 2:39 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:318; cf. S:B 1:233 n372; also Sn 1146c. We see here an existential role reversal of the God-religion, where instead of man supplicating God for guidance and succour, it is the High God himself who comes down from his heaven to supplicate the Buddha to declare the Dharma for the world’s good.

¹⁶³ **Bronkhorst**: “One suspects that the names of these two men [Ālāra and Uddaka] originally occurred only where the Buddha thinks of possible persons with whom to start his missionary activity. In order to give some context to these mysterious names, the account of the Bodhisattva’s training under teachers with these names was added.” (1993:86). Bronkhorst argues that this view is supported by the fact that although the Mahīśāsaka **Vinaya** mentions the two teachers in the Buddha’s doubt as to teach whom first (T1421.104a.11), it “does not refer to the Bodhisattva’s training under these two even though this *Vinaya* mentions a number of things about the Bodhisattva prior to his awakening (T1421.101a10-102c14) (1993:86). Note also that **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16) mentions a Pukkusa, supposedly a follower of Ālāra Kālāma, visits the Buddha not long after his death (D 16.4.26/2:131). See §§15-16 above.

23.5 And I realized this was true, and thought,
‘Uddaka Rāma,putta’s death is a great loss. If he had heard this Dharma, he would have understood it quickly.’

24 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’

24.2 Bhikshus, it then occurred to me to teach **the group of 5 monks**¹⁶⁴ who attended upon me when I was engaged in my quest, that they were very helpful.

24.3 ‘What now if I taught the Dharma first to them.’

24.4 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Where is the group of 5 monks living now?’

24.5 With the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human, I saw that they were living in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares.

Upaka

25 Then, bhikshus, when I had stayed at Uruvelā as long as I was inclined to, I set out in stages for Benares.

25.2 Between Gayā and the place of the Awakening, the naked ascetic, **Upaka**,¹⁶⁵ saw me on the road and said,

‘Serene are your senses, avuso! Clear and bright is your complexion. Under whom have you gone forth? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess?’ **[171]**

25.3 Bhikshus, after Upaka had spoken thus, I replied him in verse:

25.4 All have I overcome, all do I know,
from all am I detached, all have I renounced,
through the stopping of craving, I am freed,
having understood all by myself, whom shall I call teacher?

25.5 No teacher have I,¹⁶⁶
an equal to me there is none.
In all the world, with its gods, there is no rival to me.
An arhat, indeed, am I in this world.

25.6 Peerless teacher am I.
Alone am I fully self-awakened,
quenched, whose fires are all extinguished.
I’m going to Kāsī to set the wheel of truth in motion.
In this blind world, I shall beat the drum of the death-free state!

25.7 ‘Then, avuso, from your claim, you are worthy as a conqueror of the endless (*ananta,jina*)?’¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ This is prob the oldest canonical ref we have to the 5 monks. See **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11/5:-420-424; V 1:10-12), SD 1.1

¹⁶⁵ Upaka is also called Kāla, probably a nickname for his dark complexion (Thī 309, or Upaganena, Divy 393).

¹⁶⁶ According to Comy on **Ghaṭṭikāra S** (M 81), the Bodhisattva had learned all of Kassapa Buddha’s teachings and was effectively on the brink of streamwinning (MA 3:282). As such, the Buddha’s proclamation here that he has no teacher apparently refers to the fact none of his teachers are alive then. See Analayo on M 81, 2005:8. **Kathā,vatthu** (Kvu 4.8/286) discusses the question how far the Buddha did not have a teacher (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,25/1:170), SD 1.11, when, as a bodhisattva he had been Kassapa Buddha’s disciple, and how the Buddha’s awakening was an insight into “things unheard of before” (**Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S**, S 56,11.9-12/5:422 f; V 1:10-12, (SD 1.1). See also Comy ad loc (KvuA 78).

¹⁶⁷ *Yathā kho tvam āvuso paṭijānāsi arahasi ananta,jino* = V 1:8,27. Here *arahasi* (2 sg) can also be *arahā asi*.

25.8 The conquerors like me are those whose impurities have been destroyed.
All the bad I have conquered.
Therefore, Upaka, am I called conqueror!

25.9 Bhikshus, when this was said, the naked ascetic said, ‘It may be so [I’m sure it is], avuso.’
Shaking his head, he took a byway and departed.¹⁶⁸

The 5 monks

26 Then, bhikshus, walking by stages, I eventually came to the Deer Park at Isipatana, near Benares, and I approached the group of 5 monks.

26.2 When they saw me coming in the distance, they agreed among themselves, thus:

‘Avuso, here comes the recluse Gotama who lives luxuriously, who has given up his striving and reverted to luxury.¹⁶⁹ We should neither pay him homage, nor rise up to him, nor receive his bowl and outer robe. But a seat may be prepared for him. If he likes, he may sit down.’

26.3 However, bhikshus, as I approached, those monks were unable to keep to their decision.

One came to meet me and took my bowl and outer robe; another prepared a seat; another set out water for my feet.

26.4 However, they addressed me by my name and as ‘avuso’ (*āvuso*).¹⁷⁰

27 Thereupon, I told them:

‘Bhikshus, do not address the Tathagata by name and as “avuso.” The Tathagata is an arhat, [172] fully self-awakened.

Listen, bhikshus, the death-free state has been attained. I shall instruct you the Dharma.

Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.’

27.2 When this was said, bhikshus, the group of 5 monks said this to me:

‘Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have *not* gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

¹⁶⁸ MA: Upaka thereafter falls in love with Cāpā, a hunter’s daughter and marries her (ThīA 225). Later, when the marriage fails, Upaka goes to the Buddha who admits him into the order. As a result of his meditation, Upaka becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Avihā heaven of the pure abodes (Suddhāvāsa), where he immediately becomes an arhat (MA 1:190). (See Sn 11 which is made in reference to Upaka’s attainment of non-returning.) Later, Cāpā, too, goes forth and becomes an arhat nun. The importance of this meeting is that the Buddha for the first time proclaims from his own mouth and before another person his new and supreme dignity—the first public statement of his awakening—as well as his determination to liberate the world. This is what is important to the simple follower. Whether Upaka understands his privilege or not is of little consequence. In fact, the Dīgha Commentary says that the Buddha walks all the way (about 7 km) from Gayā to Isipatana, instead of teleporting himself, so that Upaka could meet him (DA 2:471). See also V 1:8; M 1:171; J 1:81; DhA 4:71 f; cf Miln 235; UA 54; Kvu 289; Mvst 3:326. On Upaka, further see SD 49.14 (4.2).

¹⁶⁹ The “luxury” here refers to his taking “some boiled rice and gruel” *odāna, kummāsa* (as *dvandva*), or “rice gruel” (as *tatpurusha*). This offering is prob part of the milk-rice (*pāyāsa*) made by the lady Sujātā, and which is the Bodhisattva’s last meal before the great awakening (J 1:68; SA 1:172; AA 1:401; BA 7; ApA 72; DhsA 34).

¹⁷⁰ *āvuso*, meaning “Friend!” “Sir!”, a polite vocative for monks equal in “rains” with the speaker, or to juniors; prob derived from **āvusso* < **āyuṣmas* (cf Whitney, *A Sanskrit Grammar*, London, 3rd ed 1896 §454); cf BHS *āvusa. āyuṣman*. Uses: (1) by and to non-Buddhists (V 1:8, Upaka; D 2:130, Ālāra Kālāma; M 1:372, nirgrantha; Tha 1196; J 2:448, 3:230); (2) by monks and nuns (a) to laity (V 1:84; M 1:299, to Visākha; J 3:191, 4:244); (b) to each other (but not to the Buddha), post-Buddha only by a senior monk to a junior (*āvuso, vādā*) (V 1:9; D 2:154; UA 311): see **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16), where the Buddha declares that after his passing, only senior monks address juniors as *āvuso* or by name, while juniors shall address seniors as *bhante* or *āyasmā* (D 16,6.2/2:154) & also R O Franke, “The Buddhist Councils at Rājagaha and Vesālī,” *Journal of the Pali Text Soc*, 1908:18-44. See CPD & DP sv.

Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?’

27.3 When this was said, I told them:

‘The Tathagatha does not live luxuriously, nor has he given up his striving and reverted to luxury. The Tathagatha is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

27.4 Listen, bhikshus, the death-free state has been attained! I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dharma.

Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life,

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.’

27.5 For the second time, the group of 5 monks said to me:

‘Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have *not* gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?’

27.6 When this was said, I told them:

‘The Tathagatha does not live luxuriously, nor has he given up his striving and reverted to luxury. The Tathagatha is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

27.7 Listen, bhikshus, the deathfree state has been attained! I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dharma.

Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life,

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.’

27.8 For the third time, the group of 5 monks said to me:

‘Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have *not* gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?’

28 When this was said, I asked the group of 5 monks, thus:

‘Bhikshus, have you ever known me to speak like this before?’

‘No, bhante.’

28.2 ‘Bhikshus, the Tathagata is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

Give ear, bhikshus, the deathfree state has been attained. I shall instruct you the Dharma.

28.3 Practising as you are instructed so that by realizing direct knowledge for yourself here and now, you will in no long time attain and dwell in that supreme goal of the holy life

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into the homeless life.’

The first discourse¹⁷¹

29 [173] Bhikshus, I was able to convince the group of 5 monks.

29.2 Bhikshus, I sometimes instructed two monks while the other three went out for alms, and the six of us lived on what those three monks brought back.

29.3 Bhikshus, sometimes I instructed three monks while the other two went for alms, and the six of us lived on what those two monks brought back.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ This is prob the original form of the “first discourse,” or a gist of the Buddha’s first teachings to the 5 monks, or a key section of the first discourse—we cannot really be sure. However, this is certainly older than the teachings of **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1.

¹⁷² The episode at this point is recorded in **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana S** (S 56.11). A few days later, after they all had become streamwinners, the Buddha taught them the teaching recorded in **Anatta,lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59 @ SD 1.2), upon hearing which they all attained arhathood. The complete episode is recorded in the Vinaya (V 1:7-14) (see Ñāṇamoli, *The Life of the Buddha*, 1992:42-47).

- 30 Then, bhikshus, the group of 5 monks, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to **birth**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *birth*,
 seeking the *unborn* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 realized the unborn supreme security from bondage.
- 30.2 The group of 5 monks, bhikshus, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to **decay**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *decay*,
 seeking the *undecaying* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 realized the undecaying supreme security from bondage.
- 30.3 The group of 5 monks, bhikshus, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to **disease**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *disease*,
 seeking the *disease-free* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 realized the disease-free supreme security from bondage.
- 30.4 The group of 5 monks, bhikshus, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to **death**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *death*,
 seeking the *death-free* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 realized the death-free supreme security from bondage.
- 30.5 The group of 5 monks, bhikshus, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to **sorrow**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *sorrow*,
 seeking the *sorrowless* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 realized the sorrowless supreme security from bondage.
- 30.6 The group of 5 monks, bhikshus, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to **defilement**,
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *defilement*,
 seeking the *undefiled* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,
 realized the undefiled supreme security from bondage, nirvana.¹⁷³

The awakening of the 5 monks

30.7 The knowledge and vision arose in them:

‘Unshakeable is our freedom of mind. This is our last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for us)!’¹⁷⁴

[§18.7]

PĀSA,RĀSI SUTTA¹⁷⁵

The Discourse on the Pile of Snares

The pile of snares

31 Bhikshus, there are these **5 cords of sensual pleasures**.¹⁷⁶ What are the five?

¹⁷³ The Pali is abbreviated so. For an important discussion on the attributes of the conditions leading to nirvana, see Norman, 1995:218-221. The main points to consider here are: (1) The opposition in terms (“death”...“death-free,” etc) here does *not* refer to nirvana but to the opposition between nirvana and a being who is in *samsāra*; (2) The epithets here refer *not* to nirvana but to the conditions that pertain in nirvana, which must be the opposite of those that pertain in *samsāra*; (3) These epithets refer to the conditions of the *beings* who have gained nirvana: such beings are “death-free,” etc, but nirvana itself is actually beyond any attribute.

¹⁷⁴ Compare this ancient account of the arhathood of the 5 monks with that of **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1.

¹⁷⁵ For a discussion on **Pāsa,rāsi S**, see Intro (7) above.

¹⁷⁶ As in **Araṇa,vibhaṅga S** (M 139.9). *Kāma,guṇa* is also tr as “strand(s) of sensual pleasure.”

Forms cognizable by the eye that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

Sounds cognizable by the ear that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

Smells cognizable by the nose that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

Tastes cognizable by the tongue that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

Touches cognizable by the body that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

Bhikshus, these are the 5 cords of sensual pleasures.

32 Bhikshus, of those recluses and brahmins who are tied to these 5 cords of sensual pleasures, infatuated with them, enjoying them with relish,¹⁷⁷ unaware of the danger,

knowing no way out, it may be understood of them:

‘They have met with calamity, with disaster—the Bad One may do with them as he likes.’

32.2 Suppose, bhikshus, a forest deer that is bound, lies down on a pile of snares (*pāsa, rāsi*):¹⁷⁸ it might be understood of it:

‘It has met with calamity, with disaster—

the hunter may do with him as he likes, and when the hunter comes, it cannot go where it wants.’

32.3 Even so, bhikshus, of those recluses and brahmins who are tied to these 5 cords of sensual pleasures,

infatuated with them, enjoying them with relish, unaware of the danger, knowing no way out, it may be understood of them: ‘They have met with calamity, with disaster—the Bad One may do with them as he likes.’

33 Bhikshus, of those recluses and brahmins who are not tied to these 5 cords of sensual pleasures, not infatuated with them, not enjoying them with relish, aware of the danger, knowing the way out, **[174]** it may be understood of them: ‘They have not met with calamity, nor disaster—the Bad One may not do with them as he likes.’

33.2 PARABLE OF THE PILE OF SNARES. Suppose, bhikshus, a forest deer that is unbound lies down on a pile of snares: it might be understood of it: ‘It has not met with calamity, nor disaster—the hunter may not do with him as he likes, and when the hunter comes, it may go where it wants.’

33.3 Even so, bhikshus, of those recluses and brahmins who are not tied to these 5 cords of sensual pleasures, not infatuated with them, not enjoying them with relish, aware of the danger, knowing the way out, it may be understood of them:

‘They have not met with calamity, nor disaster—the Bad One may not do with them as he likes.’

34 Suppose, bhikshus, a forest deer is wandering in the forest wilds—it walks, stand, sits, lies down confidently. Why is that? Because it is out of the hunter’s range.

THE 9 PROGRESSIVE ABODES¹⁷⁹

THE 4 DHYANAS

34.2 (1) So, too,

quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states,
a monk attains and dwells in the **first dhyana**,¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Read *ajjhopanno* (see CPD), “being addicted to, being enthralled by,” (to enjoy doing something) with relish. PTS has *ajjhāpanna*, “with guilt,” guiltily.

¹⁷⁸ Hence, the sutta title as found in Comy: *Pāsa, rāsi Sutta*.

¹⁷⁹ These are the 4 form dhyanas (*rūpa jhāna*), the 4 formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti* or *ārūppa*) and the attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*). **Analyo**, in *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya*, notes that these 9 attainments blinds Māra, “occur in similar terms in the preceding discourse, **the Nivāpa Sutta** [M 25/1:159 f], where the passage fits the context better than in the present instance.” (2005:95): cf A 9.39/4:433 f.

accompanied by initial application and sustained application,
 accompanied by zest and happiness,
 born of seclusion.

Thus, bhikshus, this monk is said to have blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye.¹⁸¹

35 (2) Again, bhikshus,
 with the stilling of initial application and sustained application,
 by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind,
 he attains and dwells in **the second dhyana**,
 free from initial application and sustained application,
 accompanied by zest and happiness,
 born of concentration.¹⁸²

This monk is said to have blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye.

36 (3) Again, bhikshus, with the fading away of zest,
 he dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware,
 and experiences happiness with the body,
 he attains and dwells in **the third dhyana**,
 of which the Noble Ones declare, 'Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.'

This monk is said to have blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye.

37 (4) Again, bhikshus, with the abandoning of joy and abandoning pain,
 and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,
 he attains and dwells in **the fourth dhyana**
 that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.¹⁸³

This monk is said to have blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye.

THE 4 ATTAINMENTS

38 (1) Again, bhikshus,
 by completely transcending the perceptions of form,
 with the disappearance the perceptions of sense-reaction,¹⁸⁴
 with non-attention to perceptions of diversity,
 aware that 'Space is infinite,'
 a monk attains and dwells in **the base of infinite space**.

This monk is said to have blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye.

39 (2) Again, bhikshus,
 by completely transcending the base of infinite space,
 aware that 'Consciousness is infinite,'
 a monk attains and dwells in **the base of infinite consciousness**.

This monk is said to have blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye.

40 (3) Again, bhikshus,
 by completely transcending the base of infinite consciousness,
 aware that 'There is nothing,'

¹⁸⁰ For a more detailed description of the *jhāna* with similes, see **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 1:73-76=2.75-82).

¹⁸¹ *Ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, bhikkhu andham akāsi māraṃ apadaṃ, vadhitvā māra, cakkhuṃ adassanaṃ gato pāpimato*. MA says that this refers to the attainment of any of the 8 dhyanas as bases for insight, over which Māra has no power.

¹⁸² The 2nd dhyana is known as "the noble silence" (*ariya, tuṇhī, bhāva*): see §4n.

¹⁸³ Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4th dhyana—**equanimity** (*upekhā*), **mindfulness** (*sati*) and **one-pointedness of mind** (*cittassa ek'aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5.4).

¹⁸⁴ "Perceptions of sense-reaction," *pañigha, saññā*, also "sensory impact" (M:ÑB 267), "resistance-perception, reflex-perception" (BDict), said to be absent in the formless dhyanas. This is one of those terms that are only used contextually. See Vibh 245, §262; Vism 10.12-16.

a monk attains and dwells in **the base of nothingness**.

This monk is said to be blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye.

41 (4) Again, bhikshus,

by completely transcending the base of nothingness, [175]

a monk attains and dwells in **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**.

This monk is said to be blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye.

42 CESSATION & ARHATHOOD

Again, bhikshus,

by completely transcending the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception,

a monk attains and dwells in **the cessation of perception and feeling**.¹⁸⁵

And having seen the influxes¹⁸⁶ with wisdom, he has destroyed them.¹⁸⁷

43 This monk, bhikshus, is said to have blinded Māra, to be unseen by Māra the Bad One's eye, and to have crossed beyond attachment to the world.¹⁸⁸

He walks, stands, sits, lies down confidently.

Why is that? Because he is out of the Bad One's range."

44 The Blessed One said this. The monks joyfully approved of the Blessed One's word.

— evaṃ —

¹⁸⁵ "The cessation of perception and feeling," *saññā,vedayita nirodha*, ie, the attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*, S 14.11/2:151). The absolute necessary preconditions to the attainment of cessation are said to be the perfect mastery of all the 8 dhyanas as well as the previous attainment of non-returning or arhathood. Comys say that this state may last for 7 days or even longer (MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163). Immediately at the arising of the state, however, there arises in the non-returner, the fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi, phala*), and in the arhat, the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta, phala*) (PmA 1:41, 321). Only an arhat or a non-returner who have mastered the 8 liberations [SD 49.5b (1)] can experience this cessation (A 5.166/3:193 f; Vism 23.18/702, 23.49/-708). On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainments (Vism 708). Cf **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (2); also **Animitta Ceto, samādhi Pañha S** (S 40.9/4:268 f), SD 24.19. On cessation (*nirodha*), see **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.25/1:296) + SD 30.2 (4); **Cūla Vedalla S** (M 44.16-21/1:301 f) + SD 40a.9 (2.5); also SID: *saññā, vedayita, nirodha*.

¹⁸⁶ Influxes (*āsava*). As "mental influxes," the oldest list is prob a set of **3 influxes**—of sense-desire (*kām'āsava*), of existence (*bhav'āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijj'āsava*), as in **Saṅgīti S** (D 33), **Sammā, diṭṭhi S** (M 9), the **Cūla Suññata S** (M 121), **Āsava S** (S 38.8), **Ti, kaṇṇa S** (A 35.8), **(Te, vijja) Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 3.59), **Nibbedhika Pariyāya S** (A 6.63). The 4 influxes, or "floods" (*ogha*) or "yokes" (*yoga*)¹⁸⁶ of (1) sense-desire (*kām'āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav'āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh'āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj'āsava*). See SID: *āsava*.

¹⁸⁷ *Paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti*. This does not refer to a "wisdom-liberated" (*paññā, vimutti*) arhat, but prob one "free both ways" (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*)—he has mastered the 8 liberations (*aṭṭha vimokkha*)—since he is able to attain cessation. See SD 4.25 (233.2-3.3).

¹⁸⁸ This monk, by destroying his influxes (*āsava*) [§42n], becomes temporarily invisible to Māra but permanently out of his reach. On the cessation of perception and feeling, see §42 n.

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(See also SD 49, Bibliography)

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Chinese	EĀ 19.1 *	?	T2.593a24
Chinese	EĀ 24.5 *	神足化	T2.618a27
Chinese	T765 *	本事	T17.679b23  For T765 Akanuma p164 gives the location as T765 at T17.67a, which seems to be a typing error.
Chinese	T1421 *	彌沙塞部和醯五分律	T22.101a12
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