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## Kevaḍḍha Sutta

The Discourse to Kevaḍḍha<sup>1</sup> | D 11/1:211-223

Theme: Miracles and what even God does not know

1 Introduction

This discourse belongs to a rare category of religious literature: religious humour,<sup>2</sup> of which it is one of the finest examples. Its import is nonetheless serious in terms of reflecting the true nature of religion and of spiritual development. The discourse clearly does not advocate any feeling of awe towards an inexplicably mysterious universe or of fear of the gods, but advocates that a wise understanding of the true nature of things is possible and desirable, a wisdom that all the gods and God (Brahmā) themselves need.

The Buddha tells Kevaḍḍha about a monk who once asked one of the most disturbing questions of where the very building-blocks of the universe itself cease to exist. The answer cannot be found even if we were to have direct access to the highest heavens. Indeed, the answer is found right here in our own spirituality.

The discourse humorously downplays the role of miracles in religion. The nine kinds of miracles listed here have little in common with the Abrahamic or theistic conception of a miracle. While others may attribute these “miraculous powers” to God, the sutta clearly shows that they are attainable by anyone who has a high level of control of his own mind. **The nine powers** mentioned are:

- (1) Metamorphosis: Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.
- (2) Materialization and dematerialization: He appears; he disappears.
- (3) He goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space.
- (4) He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.
- (5) He walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land.
- (6) Teleportation: Sitting cross-legged he flies through the air like a winged bird.
- (7) With his hand he touches and strokes the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful.
- (8) Astral travel: He has power over his own body up to as far as the Brahmā world [all in §4]
- (9) And mind-reading [telepathy] [§6]

And yet none of these nine powers can bring one spiritual salvation nor are they any sign of spirituality. The greatest of all miracles is that of instruction or education, of the self-conversion from inner darkness to inner lights [§§8-66]. For even the highest heavens are not yet awakened and liberated and are in need of this miracle.

Sections 55-66 are a list of the well-known **six superknowledges** or supernormal faculties (*cha-!-abhiññā*),<sup>3</sup> in ascending significance. The first, being more or less identical to the first eight “worldly” miraculous powers [§4], mentioned above, is of the lowest spiritual significance but the last one is of the highest significance, since it is *the* liberating wisdom.

- (1) Knowledge of psychic powers (*iddhi, vidhā*);
- (2) Knowledge of clairaudience or the “divine ear” (*dibba, sota*);
- (3) Knowledge of mind-reading (*parassa ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*), here called *ādesanā, pāṭihāriya* [§6];
- (4) Knowledge of retrocognition or recollection of past lives (*pubbe, nivāsānussati, ñāṇa*);
- (5) Knowledge of clairvoyance or the passing-away and re-appearance of beings, faring according to their karma (*cutūpapāta yathā, kammāpaga, ñāṇa*) or the “divine eye” (*dibba, cakkhu*);

<sup>1</sup> *Kevaḍḍha*, v1 *Kevaṭṭa* (Skt *Kaivarta*), this latter means “fisher” or “fisherman” (D 1:45; M 1:456; U 24; J 1:210). He was a very wealthy young man of Nālandā. Comy says that he was deeply devoted to the Buddha and this occasioned him to ask the question here (DA 1:388). Although some scholars think that a rich young man is unlikely to have a name like “fisherman,” some editors and translators prefer this name (*Kevaṭṭa*) (see D:RW 1:276 n2). Both RD & Walshe however use *Kevaḍḍha*.

<sup>2</sup> See my essay, “The Buddha’s Smile: A study in Buddhist humour” (NUS lecture, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> On *abhiññā*, see Jayatilleke 1963:438-442.

(6) Knowledge of the destruction of mental influxes (*āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa*).<sup>4</sup>

These superknowledges are part and parcel of the contemplative spiritual life. The Buddha does not condemn any of these powers, but he cautions,

the display of the miraculous eightfold *iddhi* to householders because he views it is unhelpful and dangerous for precisely the reasons [that follow]. He is not making a general judgement about the practice of *iddhi* at all. (Gethin, 2001:100)

Gethin explains that “the saint is somehow less impressive than the wonder-worker flying through the air ...but the display of miraculous *iddhi* as rule achieves nothing worthwhile” (ib).

The man already of confidence and trust sees it as wonderful (and is perhaps impressed for the wrong reasons), while the man without such confidence mistrusts it and sees it as a trick with no deeper significance. (Gethin op cit)<sup>5</sup>

## 2 On the elements (*dhātu*)

Section 67b of this sutta records this question is asked by a “certain monk”: “Where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?” These elements, although physical as opposed to mental, do not merely refer to the “elemental” forces we face, but are the very structure of the universe and life itself, that is, the four states of matter (*rūpa*). In modern terms, **the four elements** may be freely and respectively rendered as solidity, fluidity, heat (plasma) and gas, or more dynamically as *hardness* (or extension), *cohesiveness*, *softness* (decay or maturation) and *motion* (or distension).<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the question asked by a “certain monk” as to “Where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?” [§67b], the *where* of the question should be well noted. It is interesting to note that while the ancient Indian sages and seekers generally discuss existence in outer *spatial* terms,<sup>7</sup> the Buddha speaks in terms of inner space, of the six senses.<sup>8</sup> This spatial notion is clearly evident in the certain monk’s question [§67b]. The primary elements clearly cannot cease in the physical or non-physical universe existing in time and space, that is, a universe made up of the four primary elements themselves. This universe comprises the sense-world (*kāma,dhātu*), the form world (*rūpa,-dhātu*) and the formless world (*arūpa,dhātu*).

Early Upaniṣadic asseverations place the realm of the immortal, the liberated, variously in the *brahmaloka*, *svargaloka*, or the trans-solar region. It is quite literally and spatially the highest cosmic plane. In cosmological *suttas* such the *Devaddha* [sic, Kevaḍḍha Sutta, D 13], the paradise of the god *Brahmā* is merely a *devaloka*, and *devaloka* is not the abode of immortality. (R H Robinson 1972:321)

<sup>4</sup> *Āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16) & **Abhidhamma** lists four *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.1.12/2:81, 16.2.4/2:92), Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937/373 f). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) [43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10-20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: *āsava*.

<sup>5</sup> On the superknowledges (*abhiññā*), see **Miracles** = SD 27.5a (5) & (7.4).

<sup>6</sup> For details on the 4 primary elements (*mahā,bhūta*) and their derivatives, see **Mahā Hatthi,padōpama S** (M 28) = SD 6.16(2).

<sup>7</sup> See eg S Schayer, “Das mahāyānistische Absolutum nach der Lehre der Mādhyamikas,” *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, 1935:401-415; and RH Robinson, “Some methodological approaches to the unexplained points,” 1972: 321 f.

<sup>8</sup> See eg E J Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, London: Routledge & KeganPaul, 1933:128.

Obviously, the answer has to lie outside of such a universe, as something non-temporal and non-spatial, or what is sometimes called “the realm of cessation” (*nirodha, dhātu*),<sup>9</sup> that is, a non-spatial (*apatiṭṭhita*) realm.<sup>10</sup> In other word, the four primary elements cease to exist in nirvana.<sup>11</sup>

### 3 The Buddhist attitude to miracles

**3.1 MIRACLES ARE NOT A MARK OF SPIRITUALITY.** Midway through the Kevaḍḍha Sutta, the Buddha expresses to Kevaḍḍha his disapproval of miracles or psychic wonders (*pāṭihāriya*), especially the wonder of miraculos power (*iddhi, pāṭihāriya*) [§§4-5] and of mind-reading (*ādesana, pāṭihāriya*) [§§6-7]. In fact, the Buddha disapproves of them in the strongest terms, using the well known stock phrase or formula, “**I am troubled, ashamed, disgusted**” (*aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi*).<sup>12</sup> Apparently, this is the only time in the Suttas that we find the Buddha doing so in *these words*.<sup>13</sup> However, the Vinaya, too, records his unequivocal disapproval of such a display, in the story of **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja**.<sup>14</sup>

In the Kevaḍḍha Sutta, the Buddha first defines the miracle [§§4, 6], and goes on to mention the reaction of one with faith and one without faith regarding it. The one who has faith in the miracle speaks of it to an unbeliever, who is unimpressed, claiming that in the case of the wonder of miraculos power (or thaumaturgy), he knows of the Gandhārī charm<sup>15</sup> [§5], and in the case of mind-reading, he knows of the Maṇika charm<sup>16</sup> [§7].

In a contemporary or a futuristic scenario, this can be explained in this way. The unbeliever sees no special merit in *the talk of psychic power* because it could be done with, say, holographic images, air-planes, antigravity devices, etc; nor any the merit in *the talk of mind-reading* because this could be done by a mind-imaging machine.<sup>17</sup> Or, as **Luis O Gomez** puts it: “they are not the exclusive property of the enlightened, or other people could come into possession of these powers by other means, such as the magical arts of Gandhāra (*gandhārī nāma vijjā*)” (1977:221). It should be added that, as pointed out in **the Susīma Sutta** (S 12.70), there are also arhats who do *not* possess any psychic power,<sup>18</sup> and that their spiritual status is in no way inferior to any other arhat.<sup>19</sup>

**3.2 DEFINITION OF PĀṬIHĀRIYA.** The next point we should consider is the definition of “miracle” (*pāṭihāriya*) in the Suttas. The term *pāṭihāriya* (Skt *prātihārya*) can be better understood from its Sanskrit

<sup>9</sup> D 33.1.10(14)/3:215.

<sup>10</sup> See R H Robinson 1972:322 f.

<sup>11</sup> See **Khandha 1 Rūpa** = SD 17.2 (on matter and the 4 elements). For a related discussion in connection with the state of the Tathāgata after death, see **Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 63) = SD 5.8(3.6).

<sup>12</sup> §§5, 7. MA glosses *aṭṭiyatabbam* as *aṭṭena pīḷitena bhavitabbam*, “one should be distressed, (feel) harrassed”; *harāyitabbam* = *lajjitabbam*, “one should be ashamed”; *jigucchitabbam* = *gūtham disvā viya jigucchā uppādetabbā*, “one should arouse disgust (in oneself) as if looking at excrement” (MA 3:129). Elsewhere, the 3rd person stock phrase, *aṭṭiyati harāyati jigucchati*, is more common: A 1:145; M 1:423 = A 4:374; M 3:300; A 4:435, 5:111 (by all formations); J 2:143, 5:280; V 1:87, 88, 3:68. **Aṭṭiyati** (“he is sickened, disgusted, worried, bored, or incommoded (with)”) is denom of *aṭṭa* (Skt *ārta*), “hurt, afflicted, tormented, desperate (Sn 694). **Harāyati** is denom of *hiri* (moral shame). **Jigucchati** (Skt *jugutsati*) (he shuns, avoids, loathes, detests, is revulsed at, disgusted with, horrified at) is desid or redupl of √GUP, “to protect.” A denominative is a noun or a verb der from a noun or adjective, eg “man” (a fleet) or “localize.” See Intro (3) above & **Nibbidā** = SD 20.1.

<sup>13</sup> The stock *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi* is also found in **Vuṭṭha S** (A 9.11.4/4:377, spoken by a certain monk). The form *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi* is found in **Vijayā S** (S 5.4/530\*/1:31), **Khemā Thī** (Thī 140), and **Khalātya Pv** (Pv 1.10.2/8).

<sup>14</sup> See the Pindola story in the Vinaya (Cv 5.8 = V 2:110 f). See also **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja** = SD 27.6a.

<sup>15</sup> The Gandhārī charm, *Gandhārī nāma vijjā*. The Jātaka mentions this charm as especially efficacious for making one invisible (J 4:498 f).

<sup>16</sup> The Maṇika charm is identified by DA as the *Cinta, maṇī vijjā*, ie the charm of the wish-fulfilling gem, which, however, according to **Jātaka** is efficacious for following up trails or tracing footsteps (J 3:504).

<sup>17</sup> On various forms of mind-imaging machines, see SD 17.8c(6.7).

<sup>18</sup> S 12.70/2:119-128 = SD 15.8.

<sup>19</sup> See **Miracles** = SD 27.5a (7.4).

forms. The Sanskrit-English Dictionary says that *pratihārayati* (the verb for *prātihārya*) is the causative form of *prati-√hṛi* or *√hṛ* (“to take”), meaning, “to have one’s self announced to (gen)” [Jātaka,māla 118.13] (SED 673b). The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary gives two readings: *pratihārayati*, ~*reti*, and gives one of its meanings as “has announced, causes to be announced” quoting the same Jātaka,māla source (BHSD 373c).

If we accept this explanation, that *pāṭihāriya* has the sense of “announcing” or attracting attention to oneself by way of a psychic wonder, then it is easy to understand that, as a rule, the performance of psychic wonders is not a spiritually worthwhile effort.<sup>20</sup> In fact, **Buddhaghosa**, too, notes that the miraculous wonder (*pāṭihāriya*) itself is objected to, but not the psychic power (*iddhi*) that is volitional in nature<sup>21</sup> (VA 1203).

**T W Rhys Davids**, in the introduction to his translation of the Kevaḍḍha Sutta, further notes,

They were not, however, miracles in our Western sense. There was no interference by an outside power with the laws of nature. It was supposed that certain people by reason of special (but quite natural) powers could accomplish certain special acts beyond the power of ordinary men.

(D:RD 1:272)

The phrase “beyond the power of ordinary men,” as pointed out by **Rupert Gethin**, is problematic. As Rhys Davids himself states in the above quote, these powers are “quite natural.”

They are the result of meditation success in exactly the same way as, for example, the *jhānas*. True, as Rhys Davids again points out,<sup>22</sup> they are termed *puthujjanika-iddhi* or *iddhi* that may belong to ordinary men as opposed to the *ariyas* or “noble ones” (stream-attainers, once-returners, non-returners and *arahants*). But then this is also true of the four *jhānas* in general and does not constitute any kind of condemnation *per se* as Rhys Davids seems to want to imply.

(2001:100 f)

**The (Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava Sutta** (A 3.60) throws some light here. The same three miracles mentioned in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta are defined in the (Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava Sutta, where, when Saṅgārava asks *who else besides the Buddha himself have such powers*, the Buddha goes on to declares,

“Not just one hundred, brahmin, nor two hundred, nor three hundred, nor four hundred, nor five hundred, but even more than that are endowed with these three miracles!”

“And, master Gotama, where are these monks dwelling now?”

“In the very community of monks, brahmin.” (A 3.60.7b/1:172 f) = SD 16.10

There are of course numerous other Sutta passages on monks with psychic powers, and often these powers are mentioned to be the result of attaining the fourth dhyana.<sup>23</sup> As such, it is clear that the Buddha is *not* condemning these powers, but the *public display* of such powers, especially where they have no didactic purpose or value. This is clear from the definition of the term *pāṭihāriya* above, and from the Vinaya, which we shall now examine.

<sup>20</sup> This is, of course, more true of the Suttas than the Comys, which abound with miraculous stories. Lacking the wisdom and charisma of the Buddha and the early arhats, the later Buddhists were apparently compelled to resort to such stories as a didactic means. See Gethin 2001:100. For a discussion, see **Mythology in Buddhism** = SD 36.1.

<sup>21</sup> *Iddhi,pāṭihāriyan ti ettha vikubban’iddhi,pāṭihāriyam paṭikkhittam, adhiṭṭhān’iddhi pana appaṭikkhittā ti vedittabba* = “Here **the wonder of psychic power** should be understood thus: it refers to the display of miraculous psychic power, but the psychic power by resolve is not forbidden.” (VA 2003). CPD explains “psychic power by resolve (*adhiṭṭhān’iddhi*) as “the power of creating by volition only phenomena outside of one’s body.”

<sup>22</sup> D:RD 1:272.

<sup>23</sup> See eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.81-96/1:75-83) = SD 8.10.

**3.3 THE VINAYA RULE AGAINST PSYCHIC DISPLAY.** **Rupert Gethin**, in his study of *iddhi*, points to the key passage relating to the Buddha's disapproval of miracles (*iddhi*), as stated in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta, thus:

Seeing this (*imam*) danger in the display of miraculos power, Kevaḍḍha, I am troubled, ashamed, disgusted<sup>24</sup> regarding the display of miraculos power...regarding the miracle of mind-reading.<sup>25</sup> (D 11.5+7/1:213 f; emphasis added)

Gethin makes this important observation regarding this passage:

As soon as *imam* is translated the particularity rather than the generality of the condemnation of eightfold *iddhi* becomes obvious. The Buddha's condemning the display of miraculous eightfold *iddhi* to householders because he views it as unhelpful and dangerous for precisely the reasons I have just outlined.<sup>26</sup> He is not making a general judgement about the practice of the eightfold *iddhi* at all. (2001:100)

Gethin's opinion is supported by the Vinaya prohibition regarding the display of miracles (*iddhi*, *pāṭihāriya*) and superhuman states (*uttari, manussa, dhamma*). **The Culla, vagga** of the Vinaya Piṭaka contains this rule:

Bhikshus, a superhuman psychic miracle should not be shown to householders. For whom-ever shows it, there is the offence of wrong-doing. Bhikshus, break the wooden bowl into small fragments, and then give them to the monks as scent-mixed ointment.<sup>27</sup> And, bhikshus, a wooden bowl should not be used.<sup>28</sup>

*Na, bhikkhave, gihīnaṃ uttarimanussadhammaṃ iddhipāṭihāriyaṃ dassetabbam. Yo dasseyya, āpatti dukkaṭassa. Bhandath'etaṃ, bhikkhave, dāru, pattam sakalikaṃ sakalikaṃ katvā, bhikkhūnaṃ añjan'upapisanaṃ detha. Na ca, bhikkhave, dāru, patto dhāretabbo. Yo dhāreyya, āpatti dukkaṭassā'ti.* (Cv 5.8.2 = V 2:110 f)

The case history behind this prohibition concerns the monk **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja**,<sup>29</sup> whose miracle story is found in all the extant Vinayas, albeit with some variants.<sup>30</sup> In the Pali Vinaya, the Buddha is recorded as rebuking Piṇḍola for performing a cheap miracle. The seth of Rājagaha has placed a sandalwood bowl on a high pole and challenges any holy person to bring it down. Piṇḍola hears of this and, at Moggallāna's suggestion, rises into the air by his psychic power and brings it down.

On learning of Piṇḍola's deed, the Buddha reprimands him for using his psychic power in an unworthy manner. The Buddha explains that such an act is neither impressive to those without faith in the Teaching nor to the faithful,<sup>31</sup> and it is unworthy, like a woman exposing herself for a mere coin. The

<sup>24</sup> "I am troubled, ashamed, disgusted," *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi*. See Intro (3).

<sup>25</sup> *Imam kho aham Kevaḍḍha iddhi, pāṭihāriye ādīnavam samanupassamāno iddhi, pāṭihāriyena aṭṭiyāmi harayāmi jigucchāmi.*

<sup>26</sup> See Gethin 2001:98-100.

<sup>27</sup> Cf V 1:203 where sandalwood is one of the five perfumes (*añjan'upapisana*) allowable.

<sup>28</sup> See also Cv 5.37 = V 2:143; cf Niss 21.3 = V 3:243 (V:H 2:115 & = nn1-2), Pāc 40.2.1 = V 4:123 (V:H 2:415 n1).

<sup>29</sup> See **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja Vatthu** (DhA 14.2.2a) = SD 27.6a(2.5).

<sup>30</sup> Cv 5.8 = V 2:110-112; the story is given in greater detail at DhA 14.2a/3:199-203. In Comys, the Piṇḍola incident forms the prelude to the Buddha's performance of the Twin Wonder (*yamaka pāṭihāriya*): the explanation given is that the Buddha made the rule for his disciples, but not for himself! (DA 1:57; DhA 3:204; SnA 570; J 483/4:263). See JS Strong 1979, & S Sylvain Lévi & E Chavannes, "Les seize arhat protecteurs de la loi," *Journal Asiatique* 7 1916: 233-347.

<sup>31</sup> The full stock passage runs: "It neither conduces to faith for those without faith, nor to growth for the faithful. Indeed, bhikshus, it conduces to the lack of faith for those without faith, and to the loss of faith of some in the faith-

Buddha then announces the Vinaya rule against such displays before the laity. The bowl is given to the monks to be broken and ground into sandal paste.<sup>32</sup> Here again, we see that it is the *display* of psychic power to the laity or unordained that is condemned, not the practice itself.<sup>33</sup>

There are two other rules that are related to this rule, namely, the fourth Pārājika and the eighth Pācittiya. **The fourth Pārājika** states that a monk who makes a false claim to any kind of superhuman state entails defeat (that is, automatic falling from monkhood) (V 3:87-109). **The eighth Pācittiya** prohibits the declaration of a superhuman state that one actually possesses to an unordained (that is, either a novice or the laity), an offence that entails expiation (V 4:23-30). Again here these two rules do not condemn psychic power, but their false claims and telling the unordained about it.<sup>34</sup>

#### 4 Related suttas

The Kevaḍḍha Sutta should be studied in connection with **the (Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava Sutta** (A 3.60)<sup>35</sup> that deals with the same three miracles. The interlocutor this time is the brahmin Saṅgārava, an overseer in charge of renovating dilapidated buildings. Saṅgārava meets the Buddha and claims that

We sacrifice and cause others to sacrifice...so both engage in a meritorious practice, the offering of sacrifice that extends to many people. But when one leaves the household life for the homeless life...he attains nirvana for himself alone. This being the case, he only engages in a meritorious deed involving only one person... (A 3.60/1:168)

The Buddha then replies that the Tathagata arises in the world for the benefit of the masses, teaching others the liberating truth that he himself has discovered, benefitting countless people. Ānanda then counter-questions Saṅgārava:

Which of these two practices appeals to you as being simpler and less harmful, and giving richer fruit and greater benefit? (A 3.60/1:169)

Saṅgārava avoids a direct answer (like Mahā Brahmā in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta [81-83]) by thrice replying to Ānanda: “I must honour and praise those like Master Gotama and Master Ānanda!” The Buddha then decides to “release Saṅgārava from that situation” and asks him what the courtiers at the royal palace are discussing that day. To this question, Saṅgārava replies:

The topic of conversation is this, Master Gotama: ‘Formerly there were fewer monks but there were more who performed miracles; but now there are more monks, but fewer who perform miracles.’ (A 3.60/1:170)

The Buddha replies by speaking on the three miracles but gives a more detailed account of the second miracle than in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta. This is especially interesting because it explains how “someone with

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ful (*n’etaṃ bhikkhave appasannānaṃ vā pasādāya pasannānaṃ vā bhīyyo, bhāvāya, atha kho taṃ bhikkhave appasannānaṃ c’eva appasādāya pasannānaṃ ca ekaccānaṃ aññathattāyā ti*). (V 2:112, cf V 2:2)

<sup>32</sup> Cv 5.8 = V 2:110-112.

<sup>33</sup> The V Comy says that it is the miracle (*vikubban’iddhi, pāṭihāriya*) that is objected to, not the psychic power that is volitional in nature (*adhiṭṭhān’iddhi*) (VA 1203). We do find, eg, in (**Pasāda, kampana**) **Moggallāna S** (S 51.14), the Buddha instructing Moggallāna to use his powers to shake up Migāra’s Mansion wherein some monks are cavorting on the second floor (S 51.14/5:269-271 = SD 27.9), and the Buddha himself occasionally performing miraculous feats publicly, such as when crossing the Ganges on his last journey (D 2.1.33/2:89 = SD 9).

<sup>34</sup> See also (**Pāṭihāriya**) **Mahaka S** (S 4.14/4:288-291) = SD 27.2 & **Miracles** = SD 27.5a (7.2).

<sup>35</sup> A 3.60/1:168-173 = SD 16.10. See also Bodhi (tr), *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, 1999:58-61.

faith<sup>36</sup> and devotion” [4, 6] is able to be an informed eye-witness of such a mind-searching psychic display by another, that is,

- (1) By means of a sign (*nimitta*).
- (2) By hearing the voices of humans, non-humans or devas.
- (3) By listening to the sounds of a person’s thought-vibrations<sup>37</sup> (*vitakka, vipphāra, sadda*).
- (4) By mentally penetrating the direction of his mental dispositions when he is in a thought-free state of meditation.

The Aṅguttara Commentary explains how each of these methods work:

- (1) By “a sign” is meant a revelation one receives from a deva who has supernormal knowledge of others’ minds.
- (2) Through directly hearing the voices of those beings.
- (3) The third method depends on the subtle sounds produced by the thoughts that are penetrated by the divine ear itself.
- (4) For one in a thought-free meditation, the mind-reader can only predict, on the basis of the meditator’s mental disposition, the thoughts he would think on emerging from the meditation.

At the end of the exposition, Saṅgārava takes refuge in the Three Jewels for life.

In the **Pāṭika Sutta** (D 24.1.4-5), probably a late work (in the style of the Jātaka stories but of less subtle humour than the Kevaḍḍha Sutta), the Buddha explains to the unbelieving and foolish Sunakkhatta that it is not the purpose of this teaching to perform miracles or explain the origin of the world. Disappointed, Sunakkhatta leaves the Order and turns to the boastful charlatan Pāṭika,putta, a naked ascetic of Vesālī, who falsely claims to be an arhat. Pāṭika,putta challenges the Buddha to a duel of miracles but fails to turn up. As for the Buddha, after giving the public assembly a Dharma talk, “entered into the fire-element and rose into the air to the height of seven palm-trees, burst into flames and fragrance to the height of another seven palm-trees, and then reappeared in the Gable Hall in the Mahāvana.” (D 24.2.-13/3:27).

The Commentary is remarkably silent on this significant episode. It is possible that this miracle episode was inserted later (D:W 598 n749). Although the Buddha has earlier declared that it is not the purpose of his teachings to perform miracles (D 24.1.4/3:3), the events that follow in the sutta contradict this declaration (D 24.2.13/3:27). On the problem of dating the Pāṭika Sutta, T W Rhys Davids says:

We are not entitled on these facts to suppose that the Pāṭika Suttanta was either earlier or later than the Kevaḍḍha, Both may have been already current in the community when the Dīgha was edited, and the editors may have been tolerant of whichever of the opposing views they did not share; or they may have thought the story should go in, as it clearly implied how very silly Sunakkhatta was, and how deplorably weak were the views he held. (D:RD 3:3)

The Kevaḍḍha Sutta should be studied with the **Rohitassa Sutta** (A 4.45/2:47-49) that records an account of how the ascetic Rohitassa Bhoja,putta, using his psychic powers, spent his life traversing the universe at super speed, seeking the end of the universe, but failed to do so even with his death at 100.

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<sup>36</sup> “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlika, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170,21); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati, saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,8 401,23); also called *avecca-p, pasāda* (S 12.41.11/2:69). “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlika* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). **Gethin** speaks of two kinds of faith: the cognitive and the affective (eg ERE: Faith & Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:387): “Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does not—or perhaps cannot—have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith is its affective dimension is a more straightforward positive response to trust or confidence towards something or somebody...the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist writings appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary.” (Gethin 2001:207; my emphases).

<sup>37</sup> Bodhi’s tr.

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# The Discourse to Kevaḍḍha

D 11/1:211-221

[211] 1 Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in Pāvārika’s mango grove near Nālandā. Then Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son approached the Blessed One, and having bowed down, sat down at one side. Sitting there, he said this:

“Bhante, this Nālandā is rich, prosperous, populous, and filled with people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good if the Blessed One were to instruct a monk to perform a psychic wonder (*iddhi, pāṭihāriya*) of the superhuman state<sup>38</sup> so that Nālandā would grow even greater in faith in the Blessed One.”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son:

“Kevaḍḍha, I do not teach the monks thus: ‘Come, bhikshus, display a miracle to the white-clad lay people!’”<sup>39</sup>

2 For a second time, Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son said to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, I am not doing anything detrimental to (the interest of) the Blessed One, but I still say:

“This Nālandā is rich, prosperous, populous, and filled with people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good if the Blessed One were to instruct a monk [212] to perform a psychic wonder of the superhuman state so that Nālandā would grow even greater in faith in the Blessed One.”

And for the second time, too, the Blessed One said this to Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son:

“Kevaḍḍha, I do not teach the monks thus: ‘Come, bhikshus, display a miracle to the white-clad lay people!’”

3a And a third time Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son, addressed the Blessed One, and said:

“Bhante, I am not doing anything detrimental to (the interest of) the Blessed One, but I still say:

“This Nālandā is rich, prosperous, populous, and filled with people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good if the Blessed One were to instruct a monk to perform a psychic wonder of the superhuman state so that Nālandā would grow even greater in faith in the Blessed One.”

### THE 3 KINDS OF MIRACLES

3b Kevaḍḍha, there are **these three kinds of psychic wonders**<sup>40</sup> that I have declared, having directly known and realized them for myself. What are the three?

The wonder of miraculous power, the wonder of mind-reading, and the wonder of instruction.

#### (1) The wonder of miraculous power

4 And what, Kevaḍḍha, is **the wonder of miraculous power (*iddhi, pāṭihāriya*)**?

Here, a monk has manifold psychic powers:

<sup>38</sup> *Uttari, manussa, dhamma*, ie, it could refer to either psychic powers or saintly attainments, but here it is clear from the previous statement that it is the former.

<sup>39</sup> *Na kho dhammaṃ kevaḍḍha desemi bhikkhūnaṃ evaṃ dhammaṃ desemi—etha tumhe bhikkhave gihīnaṃ odā-ta, vasaṇānaṃ uttari, manussa, dhammā iddhi, pāṭihāriyaṃ karoṭhā ti*. The tenor of the remark here is that the Buddha does not regard psychic wonder as a part of his teaching, but conspicuous by its omission is that the Buddha does not mention that it is against the Vinaya—which means that the rule is not or has not been introduced yet. See **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja Vatthu** (DhA 142.2.2a/3:199-203) = SD 27.6a(2.5) & **Miracles** = SD 27.5a, esp (3.1).

<sup>40</sup> These same three miracles are also mentioned in (**Pāṭihāriya**) **Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60). The moot point there however is “Formerly there were fewer monks but there were more who performed miracles; but now there are more monks, but fewer who perform miracles.” (A 3.60/1:168-173) = SD 16.10.

- (1) Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.
- (2) He appears, and vanishes.
- (3) He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.
- (4) He dives in and out of the earth [213] as if it were water.
- (5) He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.
- (6) Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.
- (7) With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.
- (8) He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.

Then someone with faith and devotion sees him having manifold psychic powers<sup>41</sup>—

- (1) *Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.*
- (2) *He appears, and vanishes.*
- (3) *He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.*
- (4) *He dives in and out of the earth [213] as if it were water.*
- (5) *He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.*
- (6) *Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.*
- (7) *With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.*
- (8) *He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.*

5 He reports this to someone who lacks faith and devotion, saying to him, ‘Isn’t it marvellous? Isn’t it wonderful? How very powerful, how very mighty is this recluse! Just now I saw him:

- (1) *Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.*
- (2) *He appears, and vanishes.*
- (3) *He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.*
- (4) *He dives in and out of the earth [213] as if it were water.*
- (5) *He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.*
- (6) *Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.*
- (7) *With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.*
- (8) *He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.’*

Then the person without faith or devotion would say to the person with faith and devotion:

‘Sir, there is something called the Gandhārī charm<sup>42</sup> by which a monk summons manifold psychic powers:

- (1) *Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.*
- (2) *He appears, and vanishes.*
- (3) *He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.*
- (4) *He dives in and out of the earth [213] as if it were water.*
- (5) *He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.*
- (6) *Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.*
- (7) *With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.*
- (8) *He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.’*

What do you think, Kevaddha, isn’t that what the man without faith or devotion would say to the man with faith and devotion?”

“Yes, bhante, he would say that.”

“Seeing this danger in the wonder of miraculos power, Kevaddha, I am troubled, ashamed, disgusted<sup>43</sup> regarding the wonder of miraculos power.

<sup>41</sup> (Paṭihāriya) Saṅgārava S (A 3.60) explains how such a person may know another’s mind: see Intro (3.2).

<sup>42</sup> The Gandhārī charm, *Gandhārī nāma vijjā*. The Jātaka mentions this charm as especially efficacious for making one invisible (J 4:498 f).

## (2) The wonder of mind-reading

**6** And what, Kevaḍḍha, is **the wonder of mind-reading** (*ādesanā,pāṭihāriya*)?

Here, Kevaḍḍha, a monk reads the minds and mental states, the thoughts and ponderings, of other beings and other individuals, thus: ‘This is your mind; this is how it is; such are your thoughts.’<sup>44</sup>

Then someone with faith and devotion sees him *reading the minds and mental states, the thoughts and ponderings, of other beings and other individuals, thus: ‘This is your mind; this is how it is; such are your thoughts.’*

**7** He reports this to someone who lacks faith and devotion, saying to him,

‘Isn’t it marvellous? [214] How very powerful is this recluse! Just now I saw him *reading minds and mental states, the thoughts and ponderings, of other beings and other individuals, thus: ‘This is your mind; this is how it is; such are your thoughts.’*

Then the person without faith or devotion, would say to the person with faith and devotion: ‘Sir, there is something called **the manika charm**<sup>45</sup> by which a monk *read minds and mental states, the thoughts and ponderings, of other beings and other individuals, thus: ‘This is your mind; this is how it is; such are your thoughts.’*

What do you think, Kevaḍḍha, isn’t that what the man without faith and devotion would say to the man with faith and devotion?’

“Yes, bhante, he would say that.”

“Seeing this danger to the miracle of mind-reading, Kevaḍḍha, I am troubled, shamed, disgusted regarding the miracle of mind-reading.

## (3) The wonder of instruction

**8** And what is **the wonder of instruction [the miracle of education]** (*anusāsani,pāṭihāriya*)?

Here, Kevaḍḍha, a monk gives instruction in this way:

‘You should think in this way, not in that way. *Evam vitakketha, mā evam vitakkayittha.*

Direct your attention to this, not to that. *Evam manasi karotha, mā evam manasākattha.*

Let go of this, dwell cultivating that.’<sup>46</sup> *Idam pajahatha, idam upasampajja viharatha.*

This, Kevatta, is called the miracle of instruction.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> “I am troubled, ashamed, disgusted,” *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi*. See Intro (3).

<sup>44</sup> *Evam pi te mano, ittham pi te mano, iti pi te cittan ti*. More commonly known as *ceto,pariya,nāṇa*: see Intro 1. **The (Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60.5 = SD 16.10) & **Sampasādaniya S** (D 28.6/3:104 f = SD 14.10) give a more def of mind-reading.

<sup>45</sup> The *maṇika* charm is identified by DA as the *cinta,maṇi vijjā*, ie the charm of the wish-fulfilling gem, which, however, according to **Jātaka** is efficacious for following up trails or tracing footsteps (J 3:504).

<sup>46</sup> This **miracle of instruction** is given in identical words in **(Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60.6) but receives its longest treatment here onwards. A canonical example of the Buddha’s miracle of instruction is **Acchariya Sutta II** (A 4.128) where after listening to the Buddha’s teachings (1) those attached to the world let go of their worldly attachments (*ālaya*); (2) the conceited let go of their conceit (*māna*); (3) those not delighting in peace (*anupasama,-rata*) turn to peace; (4) those with ignorance destroy their ignorance (*avijjā*) (A 2:131 f). AA gives examples of the miracle of instructions thus: “You should think thoughts of renunciation, not thoughts of sensuality. You should practise the perception of impermanence, not the perception of permanence. You should give up desire for the five cords of sensual pleasure and acquire the supramundane Dharma of the four paths and fruits.”

<sup>47</sup> **The (Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava S** climaxes with Saṅgārava’s answering the Buddha as regards to which of the three miracles appeals to him, thus: “As to the miracles of psychic power and of mind-reading, only the one who performs them will experience their fruit: they belong only to the performer. These two appear to me as being of the nature of a conjurer’s trick. But as to the miracle of instruction, it appeals to me the most!” (A 1:172, abridged)

## THE FRUITS OF RECLUSESHIP (*sāmañña,phala*)

**9** [D 2.40]<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Kevaḍḍha, here a Tathagata appears in the world, an arhat, fully self-awakened one. He teaches the Dharma good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, both in the spirit and in the letter. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

**10** [D 2.41] A houselord or houselord's son, hearing the Dharma, gains faith in the Tathagata and reflects:

‘The household life is stifling, a dusty path. The life of renunciation is like the open air. It is not easy living in a house to practise the holy life completely, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell. What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?’

So after some time he shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness. Having thus gone forth he lives restrained in body, speech, and mind, content with the simplest food and shelter, delighting in solitude.

**11** [D 2.42] When he has thus gone forth, he lives restrained by the rules of the monastic code (Pāṭi-mokkha), possessed of proper conduct and resort.<sup>49</sup> Having taken up the rules of training, he trains himself in them, seeing danger in the slightest faults. He comes to be endowed with wholesome bodily and verbal deeds, his livelihood is purified, and he is possessed of moral virtue. He guards the sense-doors, is possessed of mindfulness and full awareness, and is content.

### [THE MORALITIES §12-44]<sup>50</sup>

#### Perfection of moral virtue

**12** [D 2.43] And how, Kevaḍḍha, is a monk accomplished in moral virtue?

Here, Kevaḍḍha, a monk, having abandoned the destruction of life, he abstains from destroying life. He dwells with rod and sword laid down, conscientious, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

This is part of his moral virtue.

**13.1** [D 2.44] (4) Having abandoned false speech, he abstains from false speech. He<sup>51</sup> speaks the truth, keeps to the truth as his bond, trustworthy, reliable, no deceiver of the world.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(5) Having abandoned divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. **[64]** What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there.

<sup>48</sup> §§9-13 is given as *peyyāla* (abbreviated passage) in the text, but is here laid out in full.

<sup>49</sup> “Resort” (*gocara*), lit “the cow’s routine path or pasture.” Here it refers to two aspects of the renunciate’s life. In the Canon, it refers to places that are regarded as suitable for collecting almsfood (V 2:208). In this sense, *agocara* refers to places that are unsuitable for renunciates to resort to (whether for alms or otherwise) (D 1:63 = It 118; M 1:33; S 5:187; It 96; cf Dh 22). In Comys, *gocara* refers to places suitable for meditation (Vism 127). We can also take *gocara* here in the psychological sense of *ārammana*, that is, sense-objects. In other words, one “possessed of proper conduct and resort” may mean “accomplished in proper conduct of body and of mind.”

<sup>50</sup> These three sections on moral virtue occur verbatim (in whole or with some omissions) in all of the first 13 suttas constituting the Sīla Vagga (the first chapter) of Dīgha Nikāya and, according to TW Rhys Davids, may once have formed a separate “tract” (D:RD 1:3 n1). The Moralities section here have been collated with parallel refs in **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2) = SD 8.10 Intro (3). See also **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1.8-27/1:4-11) = **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 2.43-62/ 2:63-69).

<sup>51</sup> PTS ed has *samaṇo Gotamo* here, which seems rather abrupt.

Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or consolidating those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks words of concord.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(6) Having abandoned abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are humane, soothing, loving, touching, urbane, and delightful and pleasant to the multitude.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(7) Having abandoned idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is true, what is beneficial. He speaks on the Teaching [the Dharma] and the Discipline [the Vinaya]. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, [D 1:5] backed by reason, measured, connected with the goal.<sup>52</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

### **General** [D 1.1.10/1:5,4]

**13.2** (8) He abstains from damaging seeds and plant life.<sup>53</sup>

### **Sāmaṇera, sikkhā 6-10** [D 1.1.10/1:5,5-12]

(9) He eats only once a day, abstaining from the evening meal and from food at improper times.<sup>54</sup>

(10) He abstains from dancing, singing, music and from watching shows.

(11) He abstains from wearing garlands and from beautifying himself with scents and make-up.

(12) He abstains from high and luxurious beds and seats.

(13) He abstains from accepting gold and silver [money].

### **General** [D 1.1.10/1:5,12-27]

(14) He abstains from accepting uncooked grain; raw meat; women and girls; male and female slaves; goats and sheep, fowl and pigs; elephants, cattle, horses, and mares.

(15) He abstains from accepting fields and lands [property].<sup>55</sup>

(16) He abstains from running messages [or errands].

(17) He abstains from buying and selling.

(18) He abstains from dealing with false scales, false metals, and false measures.

(19) He abstains from bribery, deception, and fraud.

(20) He abstains from wounding, executing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plunder, and violence.

This, too, is part of his moral moral virtue.

## 14 THE MEDIUM SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

**14** [D 1.1.11] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on damaging seeds and plant life such as these: plants propagated from roots, stems, joints, buddings, and seeds [65]—he abstains from damaging seeds and plant life such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue. [D 1:6]

**15** [D 1.1.12] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on consuming stored-up goods such as these: stored-up food, stored-up drinks, stored-up clothing, stored-up vehicles, stored-up bedding, stored-up scents, and stored-up meat—he abstains from consuming stored-up goods such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

<sup>52</sup> *attha, saṃhitā*.

<sup>53</sup> Curiously, this replaces the precept against intoxicants which is omitted.

<sup>54</sup> “Improper times” here means between noon and the following dawn (V 1:83).

<sup>55</sup> The Buddha however accepted land from rajahs like Bimbisāra and Pasenadi, and others like Anāthapiṇḍaka and Visākhā, which were received in the name of the Sangha. What is connoted here is accepting land on a personal basis.

**16** [D 1.1.13] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on watching shows such as these: dancing, singing, music, plays, ballad recitations, hand-clapping, cymbals and drums, painted scenes,<sup>56</sup> acrobatic and conjuring tricks,<sup>57</sup> elephant fights, horse fights, buffalo fights, bull fights, goat fights, ram fights, cock fights, quail fights; fighting with staves, boxing, wrestling, war-games, roll calls, battle arrays, and troop movements—he abstains from watching shows such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**17** [D 1.1.14] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on heedless and idle games such as these—eight-row chess, ten-row chess, chess in the air, hopscotch, spillikins [or jackstraws], dice, stick games, hand-pictures,<sup>58</sup> ball-games [marbles], blowing through toy pipes [playing whistling games with folded leaves], playing with toy ploughs, turning somersaults [acrobatics], playing with toy windmills, toy measures, toy chariots, toy bows, guessing letters drawn in the air or on one's back, guessing thoughts, mimicking deformities—[D 1:7] he abstains from heedless and idle games such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**18** [D 1.1.15] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on high and luxurious furnishings such as these—over-sized couches, couches adorned with carved animals, long-haired coverlets, multi-colored patchwork coverlets, white woollen coverlets, woollen coverlets embroidered with flowers or animal figures, stuffed quilts, coverlets with fringes, silk coverlets embroidered with gems; large woollen carpets; elephant, horse, and chariot rugs, antelope-hide rugs, deer-hide rugs; couches with awnings, couches with red cushions for the head and feet—[66] he abstains from using high and luxurious furnishings such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**19** [D 1.1.16] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, enjoy scents, cosmetics, and means of beautification such as these: rubbing powders into the body, massaging with oils, bathing in perfumed water, kneading the limbs, using mirrors, ointments, garlands, scents, creams, face-powders, mascara [darkening one's eye-lashes], bracelets, head-bands, decorated walking sticks, ornamented water-bottles, swords, fancy sunshades, decorated sandals, turbans, gems, yak-tail whisks, long-fringed white robes—he abstains from using scents, cosmetics, and means of beautification such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**20** [D 1.1.17] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on low chatter,<sup>59</sup> such as these: talking about kings, robbers, ministers of state; armies, dangers, and wars; food and drink; clothing, furniture, garlands, and scents; relatives; vehicles; villages, towns, cities, the countryside; women [D 1:8] and heroes; the gossip of the street and the well; tales of the dead; tales of diversity [philosophical discussions of the past and the future], the creation of the world and of the sea, and talk of whether things exist or not [or, talk about gain and loss]<sup>60</sup>—he abstains from talking about low topics such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**21** [D 1.1.18] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on debates such as these—

<sup>56</sup> *Sobha, nagarakam*, “of the city of Sobha” (the city of the Gandharvas or heavenly musicians). RD thinks it refers to a ballet with fairy scenes. Bodhi: “art exhibitions.”

<sup>57</sup> *Caṇḍālam vamsam dhapanam*, an obscure phrase. The performers were presumable of the lowest caste. DA thinks of an iron ball (used for juggling?). Cf **Citta Sambhūta J** (J 4:390) where the phrase appears.

<sup>58</sup> The hand is dipped in paint or dye, then struck on the ground or a wall, so that the player creates the figure of an elephant, a horse, etc. In classical Thai literature, the artful trickster Sī Thanonchai (Skt, Śrī Dhanañjaya) is well known for this skill.

<sup>59</sup> *Tiracchāna, kathā*, lit animal talk. As animals mostly walk parallel to the earth, so this kind of talk does not lead on upwards. Cf Lohicca S (D 1:228).

<sup>60</sup> *Iti, bhavābhāva, kathā*, may be rendered as “being and non-being” or as “profit and loss,” but according to Walshe, the philosophical sense (as in Horner and Ñānamoli translations of Sandaka S, M 76) is preferable.

‘You do not understand this Dharma [Teaching] and Vinaya [Discipline]. I understand this Dharma and Vinaya. What could you understand of this Dharma and Vinaya? You are practising wrongly. I am practising rightly. I am being consistent. You are inconsistent. What should be said first you said after. What should be said after you said first. What you took so long to think out has been refuted. Your viewpoint has been overthrown. You are defeated. Go and try to salvage your viewpoint; extricate yourself if you can!’<sup>61</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**22** [D 1.1.19] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, [67] are bent on relaying messages and running errands for people such as these: kings, ministers of state, noble warriors, brahmins, householders, or youths (who say),

‘Go here, go there, take this there, fetch that here’—he abstains from running messages and errands for people such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**23** [D 1.1.20] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, engage in deceitful pretensions (to attainments), flattery (for gain), subtle insinuation or hinting (for gain), pressuring (for offerings), and pursuing gain with gain, he abstains from such pretensions and flattery.<sup>62</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue. [D 1:9]

### THE GREAT SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE<sup>63</sup>

**24** [D 1.1.21] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as:

reading marks on the limbs [eg, palmistry, sole-reading];

reading omens and signs;

interpreting celestial events [lightning, falling stars, comets];

interpreting dreams;

reading marks on the body [eg, physiognomy, phrenology];

reading marks on cloth gnawed by mice;

offering fire oblations, oblations from a ladle, oblations of husks, rice powder, rice grains, ghee, and oil;

offering oblations using oral spells;

offering blood-sacrifices;

making predictions based on the fingertips;

determining whether the site for a proposed house or garden is propitious or not [geomancy];

making predictions for officers of state;

laying demons in a cemetery;

laying spirits;

reciting house-protection charms [or using charms recited by those living in an earthen house];

snake charming, treating poisoning, curing scorpion-stings and rat-bites;

interpreting animal and bird sounds and the cawing of crows;

foretelling the remaining duration of life;

reciting charms for protection against arrows;

reciting charms to understand the calls of birds and animals

—he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

<sup>61</sup> This is stock: **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1:8), **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 1:66), **Pāsādika S** (D 3:117), **Saṅgīti S** (D 3:210), **Mahā Sakuludāyi S** (M 2:3), **Sāmagāma S** (M 2:245), **Hāliddakāni S 1** (S 3:12), **Viggāhika Kathā S** (S 5:418) and **Mahā Niddesa** (Nm 1:173). See Brahmajāla S, D 1:2 f. Cf **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22) where a similar statement is made regarding the wrong reason for learning the Dharma (M 22.10/1:133).

<sup>62</sup> For details, see Vism 1.61-82.

<sup>63</sup> For Pali listing and nn, see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1.21-27) = SD 25.2.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**25** [D 1.1.22] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as:

determining lucky and unlucky gems, staffs, garments, swords, arrows, bows, and other weapons;  
determining lucky and unlucky women, men, boys, girls, male slaves, female slaves;  
determining lucky and unlucky elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, cows, goats, rams, fowl, quails, lizards [or iguana], long-eared rodents,<sup>64</sup> tortoises, and other animals  
—he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**26** [D 1.1.23] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such [68] as forecasting thus: [D 1:10]

the leaders [rajahs]<sup>65</sup> will march forth [advance];  
the leaders will return [retreat];  
our leaders will attack, and their leaders will retreat;  
their leaders will attack, and our leaders will retreat;  
there will be triumph for our leaders and defeat for their leaders;  
there will be triumph for their leaders and defeat for our leaders;  
thus there will be triumph, thus there will be defeat  
—he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**27** [D 1.1.24] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as forecasting thus:

there will be a lunar eclipse;  
there will be a solar eclipse;  
there will be an occultation of an asterism;  
the sun and moon will go their normal courses;  
the sun and moon will go astray;  
the asterisms will go their normal courses;  
the asterisms will go astray;  
there will be a meteor shower;  
there will be a darkening of the sky;  
there will be an earthquake;  
there will be thunder coming from a clear sky;  
there will be a rising, a setting, a darkening, a brightening of the sun, moon, and asterisms;  
such will be the result of the lunar eclipse, of the solar eclipse *and so on*  
—he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these. [D 1:11]

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**28** [D 1.1.25] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such [69] as forecasting thus:

there will be abundant rain; there will be a drought;  
there will be plenty; there will be famine;  
there will be rest and security; there will be danger;  
there will be disease; there will be health [freedom from disease];  
or they earn their living by counting, accounting, calculation,  
composing poetry, or teaching hedonistic arts and doctrines

<sup>64</sup> *Kaṇṇika, lakkaṇam*, from *kaṇṇa*, “ear.” DA thinks it means either ear-rings or house-gables, both of which do not fit here. Walshe follows the Thai tr which, probably following an old tradition, has *tun*, “bamboo-rat” (see McFarland, *Thai-English Dictionary*, p371). Franke says “an animal that is always mentioned with the hare” and considers that it must mean an animal with long ears.

<sup>65</sup> *Raṇṇam* (gen pl), ie the joint leaders (rajah) of a republican state in ancient India.

—he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**29** [D 1.1.26] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as:

- calculating auspicious dates for marriages (where the bride is brought home or leaves the house), betrothals, divorces;
- calculating auspicious dates for collecting debts or making investments and loans; reciting charms for becoming attractive or unattractive;
- curing women who have undergone miscarriages or abortions [or, reviving the fetuses of abortive women];<sup>66</sup>
- reciting spells to bind a man’s tongue, to paralyze his jaws, to make him lose control over his hands, or to bring on deafness;
- getting oracular answers to questions addressed to a mirror, to a young girl, or to a spirit medium;
- worshipping the sun, worshipping Mahā Brahmā, bringing forth flames from the mouth, invoking the goddess of luck

—he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**30** [D 1.1.27] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as:

- promising gifts to deities in return for favors; fulfilling such promises;
- demonology;
- teaching house-protection spells;
- inducing virility and impotence;
- consecrating sites for construction;
- giving ceremonial mouthwashes and ceremonial bathing;
- offering sacrificial fires;
- preparing emetics, purgatives, expectorants, diuretics, headache cures;
- preparing ear-oil, eye-drops, oil for treatment through the nose, collyrium [eye-wash] and counter-ointments;
- curing cataracts, practising surgery, practising as a children’s doctor, administering medicines and treatments to cure their after-effects

—he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.<sup>67</sup> [D 1.1.27 ends here.] [D 1:12]

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

### ***Confidence through practising the above moralities***

**31** A monk, maharajah, thus accomplished in moral virtue sees no danger anywhere owing to his restraint through moral virtue. Just as a head-anointed noble kshatriya rajah who has defeated his enemies sees no danger anywhere from his enemies, [70] in the same way the monk thus accomplished in moral virtue sees no danger owing to his restraint through moral virtue.

Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue, he feels within himself a blameless joy.<sup>68</sup>

This is how a monk is accomplished in moral virtue.

<sup>66</sup> *Viruddha, gabbha, karaṇam.*

<sup>67</sup> It is the practice of medicine for gain that is here condemned. (Walshe)

<sup>68</sup> “A blameless joy,” *anavajja, sukham.* Comy: “He experiences within himself a blameless, faultless, wholesome bodily and mental joy accompanied by such phenomena as non-remorse, gladness, rapture, and tranquillity, which are based on moral virtue as their proximate cause” (DA 1:183); “a joy free from faults” (*niddosa, sukha*, MA 2:214 = AA 3:198). Evidently, this joy arises on account of being free from the fear of being blamed of moral faults. Cf *avyāseka, sukha* below [§64].

## (B) MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Sense-restraint (Custody of the senses)

**32** And how, maharajah, does a monk guard the sense-doors?

<sup>69</sup>(1) Here, maharajah, when a monk sees a form with the eye, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.<sup>70</sup>

So long he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure<sup>71</sup> might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the eye-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the eye-faculty.

(2) When he hears a sound with the ear, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that ear-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the ear-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the ear-faculty.

(3) When he smells a smell with the nose, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that nose-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the nose-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the nose-faculty.

(4) When he tastes a taste with the tongue, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that tongue-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the tongue-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the tongue-faculty.

(5) When he feels a touch with the body, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail**.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that body-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

<sup>69</sup> This whole para: *Idha mahārāja bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuyyañjana-g, gāhī. Yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ cakkhundriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhā, domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā an-vāssaveyyuṃ, tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṃ, cakkhundriye saṃvaraṃ āpajjati. On Na nimit-ta-g, gāhī hoti nānuyyañjana-g, gāhī, lit “he is not one who grasps at a sign, he is not one who grasps at a detail (feature),” see SD 19.14. Comys say that “**sign**” (*nimitta*) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda, rāga, vasena*) or on account of merely one’s view (*diṭṭhi, matta, vasena*); “**detail**” (*anuyyañjana*) here refers to finding delight by grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhsA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74). On other meanings of *nimitta*, see SD 13 §3.1a.*

<sup>70</sup> See *Nimitta & anuyyañjana* = SD 19.14.

<sup>71</sup> “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā, domanassaṃ*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the five hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one’s meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā, domanassa*, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S** (A 3.101): “Bhikshus, before my enlightenment, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... ‘Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world’.” (A 3.101/1:258, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the body-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the body-faculty.

(6) When he cognizes a mind-object with the mind, **he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.**

So long he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the mind-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the mind-faculty.<sup>72</sup>

Possessing this noble restraint over the sense-faculties, he feels within himself an undefiled joy.<sup>73</sup>

This, maharajah, is how a monk guards the sense-doors.

### Mindfulness and full awareness<sup>74</sup>

**33** And how, maharajah, is a monk possessed of mindfulness and full awareness?

Here, maharajah,

- (1) while going forward or back, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (2) while looking forward or back, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (3) while bending or stretching, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (4) while carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (5) while eating, drinking, chewing and tasting, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (6) while voiding or peeing, he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
- (7) while walking, while standing, while sitting, while asleep, while awake,<sup>75</sup> while talking, or while remaining silent, he is clearly aware of what he is doing.

This, maharajah, is how [71] a monk is possessed of mindfulness and full awareness.

### Contentment

**34** And how, maharajah, is a monk content?

Here, maharajah, he is content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes he sets out only with these with him.

Here, just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden; so too is he content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes, he takes only these with him.<sup>76</sup>

This, maharajah, is how a monk is content.

### Abandoning the mental hindrances

**35** [D 2.67] Possessing this noble aggregate of moral virtue, this noble restraint over the sense faculties, this noble mindfulness and full awareness, and this noble contentment, he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw.

<sup>72</sup> D 2.64/1:70, 10.2.2/1:207, 33.1.11(10)/3:225; M 27.15/1:180, 33.20/1:223, 38.35/1:269, 51.16/1:346, 53.8/1:355, 94.18/2:162, 101.33/2:226; S 35.120/4:104, 35.239/4:176; A 3.16/1:113, 4.14/2:16, 4.37/2:39, 4.164/2:152 (×4), 4.198.11/2:210, 5.76.12/3:99 f, 5.140.11/3:163, 10.99.6/5:206, 11.18.23/5:351. For a detailed analysis, see Vism 1.53-69/20-22. For a study, see *Nimitta & anuvyañjana* = SD 19.14.

<sup>73</sup> “A joy that is undefiled,” *avyāseka, sukham* [vI *abyāseka, sukham*]. Comy: “He experiences the purified joy of higher consciousness (*adhicitta, sukha*), which is undefiled, unblemished, since it is devoid of the blemish of the defilements” (DA 1:183; MA 2:213 = AA 3:198). Evidently, this joy arises from meditation and mindfulness; cf *anavajja, sukha* above [§63].

<sup>74</sup> *Sati, sampajañña* = *sati*, “mindfulness,” *sampajañña*, “full awareness.” In *Satipaṭṭhānas Ss*, however, this section is “full awareness” (*sampajañña*); “mindfulness” (*sati*). See SD 13 Intro (3.6abc).

<sup>75</sup> “When asleep, when awake” *sutte jāgarite*. Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, “lying down, sleeping.” See SD 13 Intro (3.6c).

<sup>76</sup> This bird parable: D 2.66/1:71 = M 51.15/1:346 = 38.34/1:268 = 112.14/3:35 = A 4.198.10/2:209 f.

Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.<sup>77</sup>

**36** [D 2.68] (1) Abandoning **covetousness** with regard to the world, he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness.

(2) Abandoning **ill will and anger**, he dwells with a mind devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will and anger.

(3) Abandoning **sloth and torpor**, he dwells with a mind devoid of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light. He cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor.

(4) Abandoning **restlessness and remorse**, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and remorse.

(5) Abandoning **spiritual doubt**, he dwells having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity with regard to wholesome mental states. He cleanses his mind of doubt.

### Similes for joy without hindrances

**37** [D 2:69] (1) “Suppose, Kevaddha, that a man, taking a loan, invests it in his businesses. His businesses succeed. He repays his old debts and there is a surplus for wife and ornaments. The thought would occur to him,

“Before, taking a loan, I invested it in my businesses. Now my businesses have succeeded. I have repaid my old debts and there is a surplus for wife and ornaments.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

**38** [D 2:70] (2) Suppose, Kevaddha, that a man falls sick, in pain and seriously ill. He does not enjoy his meals and there is no strength in his body. As time passes, he recovers from that sickness. He enjoys his meals and there is strength in his body. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was sick; now I have recovered from that sickness. I enjoy my meals and there is strength in my body.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

**39** [D 2:71] (3) Suppose, Kevaddha, that a man is bound in prison. As time passes, he eventually is released from that bondage, safe and sound, with no loss of property. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was bound in prison. Now I am released from that bondage, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

**40** [D 2:72] (4) Suppose, Kevaddha, that a man is a slave, subject to others, not subject to himself, unable to go where he likes. As time passes, he eventually is released from that slavery, subject to himself, not subject to others, free, able to go where he likes. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was a slave, subject to others, not subject to myself, unable to go where I like. Now I am released from that slavery, not subject to others, subject to myself, able to go where I like.’

Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

**41** [D 2:73] (5) Suppose, Kevaddha, that a man, carrying money and goods, is travelling by a road through desolate country. As time passes, he eventually emerges from that desolate country, safe and sound, with no loss of property. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, bearing money and goods, I was traveling by a road through desolate country. Now I have emerged from that desolate country, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

**42** [D 2:74] In the same way, Kevaddha, when these five hindrances are not abandoned in himself, the monk regards it as a debt, a sickness, a prison, slavery, a road through desolate country.

**43** [D 2.75] When he knows that these five hindrances are abandoned in him, he regards it as solvency, good health, release from prison, emancipation, a place of security.

<sup>77</sup> Comy. He applies mindfulness towards his meditation subject; or he sets it up in the region of the mouth. As such, it is said in **the Vibhaṅga**: “This mindfulness is set up, set up well, at the tip of the nose or at the sign of the mouth” (Vbh §537/252). NT: The “sign of the mouth” (*mukha, nimitta*) is the middle region of the upper lip, against which the air strikes when it comes out of the nose.

**44a** [D 2.76] Seeing that they have been abandoned within him, he becomes glad. For one who is glad, zest arises. For one whose mind zestful, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body becomes happy. For one who is happy, the mind concentrates.<sup>78</sup>

## THE FOUR DHYANAS

### The 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana

**44b** [D 2.77] Quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states, he enters and remains in **the first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, [215] accompanied by zest and happiness born of seclusion [ie *samādhi*].<sup>79</sup> He permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body with the zest and happiness born of seclusion.

**45** [D 2.78] Just as if a **skilled bathman or bathman's apprentice** would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again and again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within and without—would not drip; even so, the monk permeates, this very body with the zest and happiness born from detachment. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of seclusion.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana

**46** [D 2.79] Furthermore, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he enters and remains in **the second dhyana**, free of initial application and sustained application,<sup>80</sup> accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration. He permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body with zest and happiness born of concentration.

**47** [D 2.80] Just as a **lake with spring-water welling up from within**, having *no* inflow from the east, *no* inflow from the west, *no* inflow from the north, or *no* inflow from the south, and with the skies *not* bringing heavy rain over and again.<sup>81</sup> Yet the cool spring welling up from within the lake would permeate and pervade, flood and fill it with cool waters—there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters.

Even so, the monk permeates this very body with the zest and happiness born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of concentration.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana

**49** [D 2.81] And furthermore, with the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body. He enters and remains in **the third dhyana**, of which the Noble Ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’ He permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body with the happiness [of body], free of zest [of mind].

<sup>78</sup> *Tass'ime pañca nīvarāṇe pahīṇe attani samanupassato pāmojjaṃ jāyati. Pamuditassa pīti jāyati. Pīṭimanassa kāyo passambhati. Passaddha, kāyo sukhaṃ vedeti. Sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.* This important stock passage is found throughout the Nikāyas: see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.76/1:73) = SD 8.10n for refs.

<sup>79</sup> Dhyana factors: *vitakka vicāra pīti sukhaṃ ek'aggatā.*

<sup>80</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within it initial application and sustained application (thought and discursion, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya, pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate).

<sup>81</sup> Be Ce M 39/1:277,4 = M:Be *devo ca na kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya; Ce devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ nānupaveccheyya.* Ee Se omit *na: devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya.* For preferring the *na* reading, see **Dhyana** = SD 8.4 (8.2).

**50** [D 2.82] Just as in a **lotus pond of the blue, white, or red lotuses**,<sup>82</sup> born and growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated, pervaded, suffused and filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; even so, the monk permeates this very body with the happiness free of zest, so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded with this happiness free of zest.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.

### The 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana

**51** [D 2.83] And furthermore, with the abandoning of joy and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of joy and grief—he enters and remains in **the fourth dhyana**, that is neither pleasant nor painful and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity. He sits, pervading the body with a pure, bright mind, so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by a pure, bright mind.

[D 2.84] Just as if **a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth** so that there would be no part of his body over which the white cloth did not extend; even so, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright mind. There is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by pure, bright mind.<sup>83</sup>

## SUPERKNOWLEDGES

### Insight knowledge

**52** [D 2.85] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects,<sup>84</sup> pliant, malleable, steady and totally undisturbed,

he directs and inclines it to **knowledge and vision**.

He understands thus:

‘This body of mine is endowed with form, composed of the four primary elements, born from mother and father, nourished with rice and porridge, subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, and dispersion. And this consciousness of mine is supported here and bound up here.’<sup>85</sup>

**53a** [D 2.86] Just as if there were a beautiful beryl gem of the purest water—eight faceted, well polished, clear, limpid, consummate in all its aspects, and going through the middle of it was a blue, yellow, red, white, or brown thread—and a man with good eyesight, taking it in his hand, were to reflect on it thus:

‘This is a beautiful beryl gem of the purest water—eight faceted, well polished, clear, limpid, consummate in all its aspects, through which runs a blue, or yellow, or red, or white, or brown thread.’<sup>86</sup>

Even so—with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and totally undisturbed—he directs and inclines it to knowledge and vision.

He understands thus:

‘This body of mine is endowed with form, composed of the four primary elements, born from mother and father, nourished with rice and porridge, subject to uncertainty, rubbing, pressing, breaking up and destruction. And this consciousness of mine is supported here and bound up here.’

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.

<sup>82</sup> *uppala* (Skt (*utpala*), *paduma* (*padma*) and *piṇḍarīka* respectively).

<sup>83</sup> This analogy tries to show how the natural luminosity of the mind pervades the whole being of the meditator.

<sup>84</sup> *upakkīlesa*: to be distinguished from *kīlesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff. are meant. Most of these are not hindrances in themselves but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (D:W 546 n124)

<sup>85</sup> Rhys Davids (D:RD 1:87 n3) points out that this and other passages reject and disprove the idea that consciousness (*viññāna*) transmigrates. Sāti, who held on to this belief, was rebuked by the Buddha (M 38.1-7/1: 256-259). The Visuddhi, magga says that a new relinking consciousness (*paṭisandhi, citta*) arises at conception, dependent on the old consciousness (Vism 17.1644 ff).

<sup>86</sup> Close parallel in **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14.1.21/2:13) = SD 49.8 & **Acchariya Abbhūta S** (M 123.12/3:121) = SD 52.2.

### Knowledge of the mind-made body

**53b** [D 2.87] “With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and totally undisturbed,

he directs and inclines it to creating **a mind-made body**.<sup>87</sup> From this body he creates another body, endowed with form, mind-made, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties.

**54** [D 2.88] Just as if **a man were to draw a reed from its sheath**, the thought would occur to him: ‘This is the sheath, this is the reed. The sheath is one thing, the reed another, but the reed has been drawn out from the sheath.’

Or as if a man were to draw a sword from its scabbard. The thought would occur to him:

‘This is the sword, this is the scabbard. The sword is one thing, the scabbard another, but the sword has been drawn out from the scabbard.’

Or as if a man were to pull a snake out from its slough. The thought would occur to him: ‘This is the snake, this is the slough. The snake is one thing, the slough another, but the snake has been pulled out from the slough;

Even so, with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and totally undisturbed,

from this body he creates another body, endowed with form, mind-made, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.

### KNOWLEDGE OF THE FORMS OF SUPERNORMAL POWER

*Mundane superknowledges [55-64];<sup>88</sup> supramundane superknowledge [§65-66]*

#### (1) Psychic powers

**55** [D 2.89] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

he directs and inclines it to the manifold psychic powers:

- (1) Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.
- (2) He appears, and vanishes.
- (3) He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.
- (4) He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.
- (5) He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.
- (6) Sitting cross-legged, he goes through the air like a winged bird.
- (7) With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.
- (8) He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.

**56** [D 2.90] Just as **a skilled potter or his assistant** could craft from well-prepared clay whatever kind of pottery vessel he likes, or as a skilled ivory-carver or his assistant could craft from well-prepared

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<sup>87</sup> *Mano, mayā kāya*. The elder **Cūḷa Panthaka** is declared by the Buddha as the foremost of those monks skilled in creating the mind-made body (A 1:24). The Comys say he is skilled in attaining the form dhyana (*riipa jhāna*) and *samatha* practice, while his elder brother, Mahā Panthaka, is skilled in the formless dhyana (*aruppa*) and in *vipassanā* practice. While other monks are able to produce only one or two mind-made forms of themselves, Cūḷa Panthaka projects as many as 1000 at the same time, each doing a different action. However, when even one was touched, all the rest disappeared (AA 1:216 f; DhA 1:247 f; J 1:118; ThaA 2:237 f; PmA 2:405 f; ApA 318). On *mano, mayā*, see Sue Hamilton, *Identity and Experience*, 1996:138-168 (ch 7).

<sup>88</sup> Note that both the first two types of miracles [§§4-10] are listed here again [§§59-66] but this time approved of by the Buddha since they have arisen in connection with spiritual attainment, not as worldly manifestations.

ivory any kind of ivory-work he likes, or as a skilled goldsmith or his assistant could craft from well-prepared gold any kind of gold article he likes—

even so, with his mind thus *concentrated*, he has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.

### (2) The divine ear

**57** [D 2.91] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

he hears, by means of the **divine-ear element**,<sup>89</sup> purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

**58** [D 2.92] Just as if **a man travelling along a highway were to hear the sounds** of kettledrums, small drums, conch-shells, cymbals and tom-toms, he would know,

‘That is the sound of kettledrums; that is the sound of small drums; that is the sound of conches; that is the sound of cymbals; that is the sound of tom-toms’—even so, with his mind thus *concentrated*, he hears, by means of the divine ear-element, purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction

### (3) Mind-reading

**59** [D 2.93] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of mind-reading**.<sup>90</sup> He knows the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind.

*<sup>91</sup>He knows a mind with lust as a mind with lust,  
and a mind without lust as a mind without lust.*

*He knows a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion,  
and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion.*

*He knows a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion,  
and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion.*

*He knows a contracted mind [due to sloth and torpor] as a contracted mind,  
and a distracted mind [due to restlessness and remorse] as a distracted mind.*

*He knows an exalted mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] as an exalted mind,  
and an unexalted mind [not developed by dhyana] as an unexalted mind.*

*He knows a surpassable mind as a surpassable mind,  
and an unsurpassable mind as an unsurpassable mind.*

*He knows a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind,  
and an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind.*

*He knows a released mind as a released mind,  
and an unreleased mind as an unreleased mind.*

**60** [D 2.94] Just as if **a young man or woman, fond of ornaments**, examining the reflection of his or her own face in a bright mirror or a bowl of clear water would know ‘blemished’ if it were blemished, or ‘unblemished’ if it were not—even so, with his mind thus *concentrated*, he knows the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind.

*He knows a mind with lust as a mind with lust,*

<sup>89</sup> “Divine-ear element,” *dibba, sota, dhātu*, clairaudience.

<sup>90</sup> *Ceto pariya, ñāna*, ie, telepathy or mind-to-mind communication.

<sup>91</sup> The following section (italicized) is a list of mental states apparently taken from **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.-12), where it is more appropriate. (D:W)

*and a mind without lust as a mind without lust.  
 He knows a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion,  
 and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion.  
 He knows a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion,  
 and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion.  
 He knows a contracted mind [due to sloth and torpor] as a contracted mind,  
 and a distracted mind [due to restlessness and remorse] as a distracted mind.  
 He knows an exalted mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] as an exalted mind,  
 and an unexalted mind [not developed by dhyana] as an unexalted mind.  
 He knows a surpassable mind as a surpassable mind,  
 and an unsurpassable mind as an unsurpassable mind.  
 He knows a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind,  
 and an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind.  
 He knows a released mind as a released mind,  
 and an unreleased mind as an unreleased mind*

—he knows each of them just as it is.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.

#### (4) The knowledge of the recollection of past lives

**61** [D 2.95] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the recollection of past lives.**<sup>92</sup> He recollects his manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two births, three births, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand, many aeons<sup>93</sup> of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, [recollecting,]

‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’

Thus he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.

**62** [D 2.96] Just as if **a man were to go from his home village to another village**, and then from that village to yet another village, and then from that village back to his home village. The thought would occur to him,

‘I went from my home village to that village over there. There I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, talked in such a way, and remained silent in such a way. From that village I went to that village over there, and there I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, talked in such a way, and remained silent in such a way. From that village I came back home’,<sup>94</sup>

*Even so, with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*

*he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the recollection of past lives.*<sup>95</sup> *He recollects his manifold past existence, that is to say, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred*

<sup>92</sup> “Past lives,” *pubbe,nivāsa*, lit previous abodes. This power is also called the divine eye (*dibba,cakkhu*) or clairvoyance.

<sup>93</sup> Aeon, *kappa*, or world-cycle.

<sup>94</sup> The 3 villages are the world of sense-desire, the form world, and the formless world (DA).

<sup>95</sup> *Pubbe,nivāsanānussati,ñāṇa*, lit “the knowledge of the recollection of past abidings [existences].” The remainder of this is expanded into 4 sections in **Brahmajāla S** (D 1.1.31-34/1:13-16 = SD 25.3(76.3)) and 3 sections in **Sampasādanīya S** (D 27.15-17/3:107-112 = SD 10.12). In both cases, each explains how the eternalist view arose.

*thousand births, many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, thus:*

*‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’*

*Thus, maharajah, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.*

This, too, Kevaddha, is called the miracle of instruction.

### (5) The knowledge of the passing away and re-appearance of beings

**63** [D 2.97] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the passing away and re-appearance of beings**. He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],<sup>96</sup> purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing, and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their karma:

*‘These beings—who were endowed with evil conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—after death, when the body has broken up, have re-appeared in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell.*

*But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—after death, when the body has broken up, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’*

Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and *how they fare according to their karma*.

**64** [D 2.98] Just as if there were a **mansion in the central square [where four roads meet]**, and a man with good eyesight standing on top of it were to see people entering a house, leaving it, walking along the street, and sitting in the central square. The thought would occur to him,

*‘These people are entering a house, leaving it, walking along the streets, and sitting in the central square.’*

*Even so, with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*

he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the passing away and re-appearance of beings**. He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],<sup>97</sup> purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing, and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their karma:

*‘These beings—who were endowed with evil conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—after death, when the body has broken up, have re-appeared in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell.*

*But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—after death, when the body has broken up, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’*

Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and *how they fare according to their karma*.

This, too, Kevaddha, is called the miracle of instruction.

<sup>96</sup> *dibba,cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma,cakkhu*) (§104).

<sup>97</sup> *dibba,cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma,cakkhu*) (§104).

### (6) The knowledge of the destruction of mental influxes

**65** [D 2.99] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and totally undisturbed, the monk directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes**.<sup>98</sup> He knows, as it really is, that

this is suffering (*dukkha*);  
 this is the arising of suffering;  
 this is the ending of suffering;  
 this is the path to the ending of suffering;

these are mental influxes;  
 this is the arising of influxes;  
 this is the ending of influxes;  
 this is the path to the ending of influxes.’

His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the influx of sensual desire, the influx of existence, the influx of ignorance.<sup>99</sup> With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released (am I)!’ He knows that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life has been lived, done is that which needs to be done. There is nothing further beyond this.’<sup>100</sup>

**66** [D 2.100] Just as if there were **a pool of water in a mountain glen**, clear, limpid, and unsullied, where a man with good eyesight standing on the bank could see shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting, and it would occur to him,

‘This pool of water is clear, limpid, and unsullied. Here are these shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.’

Even so, with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and totally undisturbed, the monk directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the ending of the mental influxes *and in due course is liberated*.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.

**67a** These, Kevaḍḍha, are the three miracles that I declare, having directly known and realized them for myself.

## THE END OF THE UNIVERSE

### Questioning the gods

**67b** Once, Kevaḍḍha, in this very community of monks this thought occurred to a certain monk:<sup>101</sup> ‘Where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’<sup>102</sup>

Then, Kevaḍḍha, that monk attained to such a state of mental concentration that the way leading to the gods appeared before him.

**68** Then, Kevaḍḍha, that monk approached the gods of **the retinue of the Four Great Kings**<sup>103</sup> and, then asked them,

‘Avuso, where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’

<sup>98</sup> On the influxes (*āsava*), see Intro (1) n.

<sup>99</sup> See previous n.

<sup>100</sup> *Nāparaṃ ithatāya*: lit “there is no more of ‘thusness’.” See **Mahā Nidāna S** (M 15.22).

<sup>101</sup> The **Rohitassa S** (A 4.45/2:47-49) records an account of how the ascetic Rohitassa Bhoja,putta, using his psychic powers, spent his whole life traversing the universe, seeking the end of the universe, but failed to do so.

<sup>102</sup> *Kattha nu khi āvuso ime cattāro mahā, bhūtā aparisesā nirujjhanti, seyyāthīdam paṭhavī, dhātu āpo, dhātu tejo, dhātu vāyo, dhātu.*

<sup>103</sup> The monk visits the devas in stages, from the lowest heaven in the sense world to the highest of the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana level, that is, Mahā Brahmā. On such gods (including those that follow) and realms of existence, see, for example, Francis Story, *Gods and the Universe*, Wheel 180-181, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society & D:W 38-45.

When this was said, the gods of the retinue of the Four Great Kings [216] said to the monk,  
‘We too do not know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder. But there are the Four Great Kings who are higher and more sublime than we.

They should know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder...

**69** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **the Four Great Kings**, and then asked them,  
‘Avuso, where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’

When this was said, the Four Great Kings said to the monk,

‘We too do not know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder. But there are the Thirty-three Gods who are higher and more sublime than we.

They should know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder.’

**70** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **the Thirty-three Gods** and, and then asked them,

‘Avuso, where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’

When this was said, the Thirty-three Gods said to the monk,

‘We too do not know here the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder. But there is the leader of gods called Shakra, who is higher and more sublime than we.

He should know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder.’ [217]

**71** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **Shakra**, the leader of the gods, and then asked him,

‘Friend, where do the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’

When this was said, Sakka, the leader of the gods said to the monk,

‘I too do not know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder. But there are the Yama gods, who are higher and more sublime than we....

**71** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **the Yama gods**,...

‘We too do not know....’ But there is the devaputra Suyama, who is higher and more sublime than we....

**72** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the devaputra Suyama,...

‘I too do not know....’ But there are the Tusita devas, who is higher and more sublime than we....

**74** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the Tusita devas,...

‘We too do not know....’ But there is the devaputra Santusita, who is higher and more sublime than we....

**75** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the devaputra Santusita,...

‘I too do not know....’ But there are the Nimmana,rati gods who are higher and more sublime than we....

**76** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the Nimmana,rati gods,...

‘We too do not know....’ But there is the devaputra Sunimmito who is higher and more sublime than we....

**77** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the devaputra Sunimmito,...

‘I too do not know....’ But there is the devaputra Sunimmito who is higher and more sublime than we....

**78** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the Paranimmita,vasavatti gods,...

‘We too do not know....’ But there is the devaputra Vasavatti [220] who is higher and more sublime than we.

He should know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder.’

**79** Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the devaputra **Vasavatti** and, then asked them,

‘Avuso, where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’

When this was said, the devaputra Vasavatti said to the monk,

‘I too do not know here the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder. But there is the leader of gods called retinue of Brahma, who is higher and more sublime than we.

He should know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder.’ [217]

**80** So that monk, Kevaddha, attained to such a state of mental concentration that the way leading to the retinue of Brahma appeared before him.

Then, Kevaddha, that monk approached the gods of **the retinue of Brahmā**, and then asked them: ‘Avuso, where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’

When this was said, the gods of the retinue of Brahmā said to the monk,

‘We too do not know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder. But there is **Brahmā**, the Great Brahmā, the Vanquisher, the Unvanquished, the Supreme Seer of All, the All-powerful, the Lord God, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Ordainer,<sup>104</sup> the Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be.<sup>105</sup> He is higher and more sublime than we. He should know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder.’

‘But where, avuso, is Great Brahmā now?’

‘Bhikshu, we do not know where Great Brahmā is or how Great Brahmā is. But when signs appear, lights issue forth, and a radiance appears, Great Brahmā will appear. For, these are the signs of Great Brahma’s appearance.’

**81** It was not long before Great Brahmā [221] appeared. So the monk approached Great Brahmā and said, ‘Avuso, where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’

When this was said, Great Brahmā said to the monk,

‘I, bhikshu, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-knowing, the All-powerful, the Lord God, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be.’<sup>106</sup>

**82** For the second time the monk asked Great Brahmā and again Great Brahmā gave this same reply.<sup>107</sup>

**83** On the third time, the monk said to Great Brahmā,

‘Avuso, I did not ask you if you were Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-knowing, the All-powerful, the Lord God, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be. I asked you where these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder.’

Then Great Brahmā, taking the monk by the arm and leading him off to one side, [222] said to him,

‘These gods of the retinue of Brahmā believe, “There is nothing that Great Brahmā does not know. There is nothing that Great Brahmā does not see. There is nothing that Great Brahmā is unaware of. There is nothing that Great Brahma has not realized.” That is why I did not say in their presence that I, too, do not know where the four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder. So you have acted wrongly and incorrectly in bypassing the Blessed One going in search of an answer to this question elsewhere. Go right back to the Blessed One and ask him this question. However he answers it, you should bear it in mind.’

**84** Then, just as it takes a strong man to stretch his bent arm or to bend his stretched arm, the monk disappeared from the Brahmā world and immediately appeared before me. Having bowed down to me, he sat down at one side. Sitting there at one side, he said to me, ‘Bhante, where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’

<sup>104</sup> Comy: “I am the supreme ordainer. I am the one who appoints beings to their places, ‘You be a noble [kshatriya], you a brahmin, you a merchant, you an artisan! You be a householder, you a renunciant! And you be a camel, you a cow!’” (DA 1:111 f)

<sup>105</sup> *Aham asmi Brahmā Mahā, brahmā abhibhū anabhibhūto aññad-atthu, daso vasavatti issaro kattā nimmātā seṭṭho sañjita vasī pitā bhūta, bhavyānam.* This is stock: for humorous riposte to this, see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.42/-1:18) = SD 25.2

<sup>106</sup> *Aham asmi Brahmā Mahā, brahmā abhibhū anabhibhūto aññad-atthu, daso vasavatti issaro kattā nimmātā seṭṭho sañjita vasī pitā bhūta, bhavyānam.*

<sup>107</sup> Saṅgārava gives a similar evasive answer in **Saṅgārava (Pāṭihāriya) S** (see Intro above).

## The land-sighting bird

85 When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, I said to him,

‘Once, bhikshu, some sea-faring merchants took a land-sighting bird<sup>108</sup> and set sail in their ship. When they could not see the shore, they released the land-sighting bird. It flew to the east, the south, the west, the north, straight up, and to all the intermediate points of the quarters. If it saw land in any direction, it flew there. If it did not see land anywhere, it returned right back to the ship.

In the same way, bhikshu, having gone [223] as far as the Brahmā world in search of an answer to your question, you have come right back to my presence.

Your question should not be phrased in this way: ‘Where, bhante, do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?’ Instead, it should be phrased like this:

Where do earth, water, fire, wind find no footing?  
Here long and short, small and great, fair and foul,  
Name and form totally cease without remainder?

And the answer to that is:<sup>109</sup>

The consciousness without attribute [non-manifesting],<sup>110</sup> without end, radiant all around<sup>111</sup>—  
There earth, water, fire, wind find no footing.  
There long and short, small and great, fair and foul,  
Name and form are totally stopped.  
With the cessation of consciousness all this stops.”<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> *Tīra, dassī sakuna*: the parable also at (**Paribhāsaka**) **Dhammika S** (A 6.54.5/3:368) = SD 84.3. This bird-dispatching episode is found in numerous ancient flood myths. The first Mesopotamian flood story known to the western world was that of Berossus, a 3rd-century BCE priest of Marduk in Babylon, who wrote a 3-volume history of his country. Xisuthros, the hero of the flood story in Berossus’s account, sends out some birds from the vessel and they too return to him after failing to find food or land. He waits a few days, then sends them out again. They return with their feet tinged with mud. The third time he sends them out they do not return. A similar sequence is related in the most famous, detailed and complete account of Mesopotamian flood stories: the ancient Akkadian Gilgamesh Epic (Tablet XI) (2000-650 BCE) in which Utnapishtim waits seven days after grounding before releasing a dove, then a swallow, and then a raven to search for dry land. This episode is also found in the Noah story (1500-500 BCE) in the Bible (Gen 8:11).

<sup>109</sup> The first stanza line, *viññānam anidassanam anantaṃ sabbato, pabham*, as in **Brahma, nimantanika S** (M 49.-25/1:329) = SD 11.7. On the unestablished consciousness, see *Viññāna* = SD 17.8a(11.3).

<sup>110</sup> “Without attribute [signless],” *anidassana*, “invisible.” Nāṇananda renders it as “non-manifesting” (*Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971:59). See Bodhi’s important n at M:ÑB 1249 n513. See also Thanissaro’s nn: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.11.0.than.html> & <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.049.than.html>.

<sup>111</sup> “Radiant all around,” *sabbato, pabham*, where *pabham*, vl *paham*. Nāṇamoli, in his *Majjhima tr*, takes *pabham* to be the negative present participle of *pabhavati* (“to be able”)—*apabham*—the negative-prefix *a* elided in conjunction with *sabbato*: “The sense can be paraphrased freely by ‘not predicating being in relation to “all,”’ or ‘not assuming of “all” that it is or is not in an absolute sense’” (M:ÑB 1249 n513). But, argues Bodhi, “if we take *pabham* as ‘luminous,’ which seems better justified, the [Majjhima] verse links up with the idea of the mind as being intrinsically luminous [A 1:10]” (id). See D:W 557 n241. Cf A 1.10 (SD 8.3) where the mind is said to by nature radiant (*pabhassara*) & A 2:139 where the light of wisdom (*paññā, pabha*) is called the best of lights. See Bodhi’s important n at M:ÑB 1249 n513. See also Sue Hamilton, *Identity and Experience*, 1996:100 f.

<sup>112</sup> The Buddha makes a similar statement by way of an Udāna (inspired utterance) on the parinirvana of **Bāhiya Dārucīriya**: “Where water, earth, fire and wind find no footing, | There neither brightness burns nor sun shines | There neither moon gleams nor darkness reigns. | When a sage, a brahmin, through wisdom has known this by himself. | Then he is freed from form and formless, from joy and pain.” (U 9). A similar verse is found at S 1.69/1:15, and a similar teaching is given by Mahā Cunda to Channa 4.87/4:59. On this verse (D 11.85) see D:W 557 n242 & **Mahā Parinibbāna S** = SD 9 Intro (9h).

The Blessed One said this. Kevaḍḍha the houselord's son joyfully approved of the Blessed One's word.

— evaṃ —

**Table 1.7** The thirty-one realms of existence according to the Pali sources<sup>113</sup>

<u>WORLD</u> ( <i>dhātu</i> )	<u>COSMOLOGY</u>	<u>PSYCHOLOGY</u>
	REALM ( <i>bhūmi</i> )	KARMA (leading to rebirth in corresponding realm)
<b>FORMLESS WORLD</b> ( <i>arūpa, dhātu</i> )	Neither-perception-nor-non-perception ( <i>n'eva, saññā, nāsaññ'āyatana</i> )	<b>FORMLESS SPHERE</b> ( <i>arūpāvacara</i> )
	Nothingness ( <i>ākiñcaññ'āyatana</i> )	Formless attainments ( <i>arūpa samāpatti</i> )
	Infinite consciousness ( <i>viññānañc'āyatana</i> )	
	Infinite space ( <i>ākāsānanc'āyatana</i> )	
<b>FORM WORLD</b> ( <i>rūpa, dhātu</i> )	The supreme ( <i>akaniṭṭhā</i> )	PURE ABODES ( <i>suddh'āvāsa</i> ) Path of non-return ( <i>anāgāmi, magga</i> ) Supramundane 4 <sup>th</sup> dhyana
	The clear-visioned ( <i>sudassī</i> )	
	Of clear beauty ( <i>sudassā</i> )	
	The serene ( <i>ātappa</i> )	
	The durable ( <i>aviha</i> )	
	Unconscious beings ( <i>asañña, satta</i> )	Unconscious attainment ( <i>asañña, samāpatti</i> )
	Abundant Fruit ( <i>veha-p, phala</i> )	Ordinary 4 <sup>th</sup> dhyana
↑ <i>destroyed by wind</i>	Radiant glory ( <i>subha, kiṇha</i> )	3 <sup>rd</sup> dhyana
	Boundless glory ( <i>appamaṇa, subha</i> )	
	Limited glory ( <i>paritta, subha</i> )	
↑ <i>destroyed by water</i>	Stream radiance ( <i>ābhassara</i> )	2 <sup>nd</sup> dhyana
	Boundless radiance ( <i>appamān'ābha</i> )	
	Limited radiance ( <i>paritt'ābha</i> )	
↑ <i>destroyed by fire</i>	Great Brahma ( <i>mahā brahmā</i> )	1 <sup>st</sup> dhyana
	Brahma's ministers ( <i>brahmā purohita</i> )	
	Brahma's retinue ( <i>brahmā pārisajja</i> )	
<b>SENSE WORLD</b> ( <i>kāma, dhātu</i> )	Lords of other's creations ( <i>paranimmita, vasavatti</i> )	<b>HAPPY DESTINIES</b> ( <i>sugati</i> )
	Those who delight in creation ( <i>nimmāna, ratī</i> )	10 courses of wholesome karma motivated by non- attachment, loving- kindness and wisdom
	The contented ( <i>tusita</i> )	
	The Yāma gods ( <i>yāma</i> )	
	The thirty-three ( <i>tāvatiṃsa</i> )	
	The four great kings ( <i>cātum, mahārājika</i> )	
	Human beings ( <i>manussa</i> )	
	Titans ( <i>asura, kāyāi</i> )	
	Ghosts ( <i>petti, visāya</i> )	
	Animals ( <i>tiracchāna, yoni</i> )	
	Hell beings ( <i>niraya</i> )	

<sup>113</sup> Based on Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, 1998:116-117.

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