

Aṭṭha, puggala Sutta 1

The First Discourse on the Eight Individuals

[Recollection of the 9 virtues of the Noble Sangha]

(Aṅguttara Nikāya 8.59/4:292)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006

Introduction

1 Saints of the path

The goal of becoming a Buddhist is to live happily here and hereafter, that is, to overcome suffering in this life itself as a basis for spiritual liberation. Those who keep to the Teaching and have awakened to various levels of wisdom and freedom from spiritual ignorance are called “noble individuals” (*ariya, puggala*), or noble disciples (*ariya, sāvaka*) or, to use a more common term, “saints.” They are collectively known as the noble community (*ariya, saṅgha*), comprising all those who are awakened or on the way to awaken, whether they are monastics or laity.

There are eight kinds of such saints, or four pairs of the path (*magga*, ie one on the way “to be” (eg streamwinner-to-be) one, and the fruition (*phala*, ie he who has “become” one, eg streamwinner-become).¹ Except for the arhat-become (who has attained the fruition of arhathood), all the other seven saints are known as “learners” (*sekha*).

These four categories of sainthood have often been mistaken as “stages” of spiritual development. They may be regarded as stages in the sense that at each successive level, the saint progressively overcomes more and more of the ten mental fetters;² but one need not go through all the “stages” to awaken to liberating wisdom. Indeed, it is sufficient to become a streamwinner (*sotāpanna*); for, in not more than seven lives, one shall surely have eradicated all the mental fetters and be liberated.

1. The arhat (*arahata*) is one who has broken all the ten mental fetters and one’s defilements are all destroyed (*khīṇāsava*); therefore one is an adept (*asekha*), that is, no more a learner. Once an arhat passes away, he is no more reborn but attains final nirvana, free of all suffering. Although the Buddha and all arhats have the same spiritual liberation, the arhats (and the learners) are known as the Buddha’s followers (*buddh-ānubuddha*)³ because they arise after the Buddha, the first arhat. Although the wisdom of an arhat (other than the Buddha) is less than that of the Buddha himself, all the arhats have various types of great spiritual accomplishments.⁴

¹ S 1:220; A 2:56 4:373; Sn 227.

² **The 10 fetters** are: (1) Self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), (2) doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), (5) repulsion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa, rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa, rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 10.13/5:17; Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*paṭigha*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*oram, bhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddham, bhāgiya*).

³ Tha 679, 1246.

⁴ Buddhaghosa gives a list of 5 kinds of arhats (Vism 710), viz:

- (1) those wisdom-liberated (*paññā, vimutti*);
- (2) those liberated both ways (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutti*), ie liberated by wisdom and of mind (*ceto, vimutti*), ie he is liberated from the physical body (*rūpa, kāyato*) by the formless attainments and from the mental body (*nāma, kāyato*)—ie, from the “mind class” of feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness—through the path of arhathood. See **Kiṭṭhagiri S** (70) = SD 11.1 Intro 5.1(1) & BDict, qv.
- (3) those possessing the threefold knowledge (*te, vijja*), ie of anamnesis or retrocognition (the recollection of past lives), of clairvoyance (“divine eye”) and of the extinction of defilements (D 3:220 275; A 5:211);
- (4) those possessing the sixfold superknowledge (*cha-ḷ- abhiññā*), ie psychic powers, clairaudience (“divine ear”), telepathy (mind-reading) and the 3 knowledges mentioned in (3) (D 3:281; A 3:280);
- (5) those accomplished in the 4 analytic skills (*paṭisambhidā, patta*) (A 1:24, 3:120; Pm 2:202).

2. **The non-returner** (*anāgāmi*) (ie one who does not return to the sense world) has eliminated the fetter of sensual craving and ill will, thereby fully liberating himself from all the first 5 or “lower” mental fetters (*orambhāgiya saṃyojana*), thus ensuring his rebirth in the Pure Abodes (*suddhāvāsa*) of the higher Brahma world (4th dhyana), where the momentum of his spiritual training will lead him to final liberation.

3. **The once-returner** (*sakadāgāmi*) has not only overcome the first 3 fetters, but by further development on the path, he has removed (4) sensual craving and (5) ill will in their grosser forms, that is, he has attenuated lust, hatred and delusion, and will return to this world only once more before reaching nirvana.

4. **The streamwinner** (*sotāpanna*, one who has entered the stream leading to nirvana) has broken the first 3 fetters that bind one to cyclic existence (*samsāra*), namely: (1) self-identity view, (2) doubts, (3) attachment to rules and rituals. Such a one will take rebirth amongst devas and humans for a maximum of 7 lives, after which he will attain final nirvana. Due to his spiritual attainment, a streamwinner will never break any of the five precepts nor be reborn lower than the human realm (A 1:231-235).

All these latter 3 types of saints still remain subject to the five higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya saṃyojana*): (6) craving for form existence, (7) craving for formless existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness, and (10) ignorance. These saints are, however, all endowed with the spiritual faculties of higher moral conduct (*adhisīla*), higher consciousness (*adhicitta*), and higher wisdom (*adhipaññā*) that enable them to progress on the spiritual path without sliding back to the level of the worldling (*puthujjana*). Because they train in the 3 aspects of the spiritual higher learning (*adhisikkhā*), they are called “**learners**” (*sekha*), that is, they are learning to walk the path to awakening.

2 Streamwinning and refuge-going.

In numerous discourses, the listener, having understood the Buddha’s Teaching and inspired with faith, then turns to seek refuge in the Three Jewels. The stock formula for refuge-going runs thus:

Excellent, master Gotama! Excellent, Master Gotama! Venerable sir, just as if
 one were to place upright what had been overturned,
 or were to reveal what was hidden,
 or were to show the way to one who was lost,
 or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,
 in the same way, in numerous ways, the Dharma has been made clear by the Blessed Gotama.

I go to the Blessed Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks. May the Blessed Gotama remember me as a layman who has gone for refuge from this day forth for life.
 (Sn p15,18-23)⁵

The opening paragraph reflects the speaker’s understanding of what he has heard of the Buddha’s Teaching, and is inspired by it. This might be said to be his “joyful knowledge of the Dharma” (*dhamma,veda*).⁶ The closing paragraph is his profession of faith in the Three Jewels—in fact, of naturally becom-

⁵ *Abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama. Seyyathā pi bho Gotama nikkujjitaṃ vā ukkujjeyya paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya mūlhasa vā maggaṃ ācikkheyya andhakāre vā tela,pajjotaṃ dhāreyya, cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhinti ti, evam eva bhotā Gotamena aneka,pariyāyena dhammo pakāsito. Esāhaṃ bhavantaṃ Gotama saraṇaṃ gacchāmi dhammaṃ ca bhikkhu,saṅghaṃ ca. Upāsakaṃ maṃ bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge paṇ’upetaṃ saraṇaṃ gataṃ.* (D 1:85, 202, 2:133, 3:193; M 1:368, 371, 379 x3, 391, 2:97; S 4:306, 332, 325, 340); with *bhavaṃ Gotamo* as witness (V 3:6; D 1:110, 125, 147, 234; M 1:24, 184, 205, 489, 501, 2:44, 145, 157, 177, 184, 208, 213; 3:7, 206; S 1:174, 175, 177, 178, 179, 180, 182 x2, 183, 2:23, 75, 184, 4:113, 231, 5:12, 75, 126, 174; A 1:56, 57, 62, 157, 158, 159, 160, 166, 168, 173, 2:201, 176, 3:230, 236, 364, 408, 4:45, 56, 179, 5:236, 251, 273, 303; Sn 25); with *bhante bhagavā* as witness (S 1:70; A 2:113, 183, 200, 3:357, 358, 4:185, 186, 5:268); with *bhagavā* as witness (V 1:16, 37, 226, 236 x2, 237, 143, 2:157, 193; A 4:185; U 49); with *bhavaṃ Ānando* as witness (D 1:210; S 5:273); with *ayyo Ānando* as witness (A 1:219); with *bhavaṃ Kassapo* as witness (D 2:352; S 4:121); with *bhavaṃ Kaccāno* as witness (M 2:90 x2; S 1:67, 68); with *bhavaṃ Udeno* as witness (M 2:162, 163); with *bhava Piṅgiyāni* as witness (A 3:239). For a pl version (ie taking refuge as a group), see **Venāga,pura S** (A 3.63.7b/1:184) = SD 21.1.

⁶ On *attha,veda* (see foll para) & *dhamma,veda*, see **(Agata,phala) Mahānāma S** (A 6.10/3:284-288) = SD 15.3(3).

ing a part of them, that is, of the Arya Sangha or community of noble saints. His faith in the True Teaching is shown by his going for refuge “from this day forth for life,” attesting to the fact that he is at least a streamwinner.⁷ Such a refuge-going marks the beginning of the pilgrim’s progress along the spiritual path by way of “joyful knowledge of the true goal” (*attha,veda*).

This stock passage containing the four similes of the teaching of the Dharma always follows the exclamation of “It is wonderful! It is marvellous!” The Commentaries explain the meaning of **the four similes** as follows:

1. “Just as if one were to set upright what is overturned”—when one turns away from the True Dharma and has fallen into a false Dharma, the Blessed One helps one to emerge from that false Dharma.
2. “Just as if one were to reveal what is hidden away”—the Blessed One has revealed the Teaching, which has been hidden by the jungle of wrong views from the time when the Teaching of the Buddha Kassapa disappeared.
3. “Just as if one were to point out the right path to the lost”—when one is travelling on a wrong path, the Blessed One pointed out to one the path to heaven and to liberation.
4. “Just as if one were to bring a lamp into a dark place”—when one is drowned in the darkness of delusion and cannot see the gem-like forms of the Buddha and the other two Jewels, the Blessed One brings one the Dharma Lamp that dispels the darkness of delusion concealing those Jewels.

Because the Dharma has been revealed in these ways by the Blessed One, it is said that “the Dharma has been shown by the Blessed One in diverse ways.”

(DA 1:228 f, AA 2:106 f, SnA 155 f, UA 286 f)

This stock passage usually describes the arising of the “dustless, stainless Dharma Eye” (*virajam vītamalam dhamma, cakkhui*),⁸ the means by which one sees the true nature of impermanence. It signals the attainment of one or other of the three lower supramundane paths, that is, streamwinning, once-return, or non-return (DA 237), and most often the first of these.⁹

3 A missing verse?

We have noted in the study on **the Dhajagga Sutta** (S 11.3),¹⁰ that in the Saṅghānussati there is a noticeable hiatus after the line *sāmīci, paṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka, saṅgho*, which abruptly goes on with *yad idaṃ cattāri purisa, yugāni aṭṭha purisa, puggalā*, where, as a rule, *yad idaṃ* would refer back to a previous statement which it expands. This preceding passage (given in **bold italics** above), apparently missing from the Saṅghānussati verse, is found in **the Aṭṭha, puggala Sutta 1** (A 8.59).¹¹ This missing passage, however, is found in the Sanskrit version of the Saṅghānusmṛti of **the Dhvajāgra Sūtra**,¹² as evident here:

⁷ It is however possible that this stock passage could have been used in cases where the postulant is only moved by the Buddha’s Teaching but is still not yet a saint. However, as a rule this stock passage points to one’s attaining of streamwinning. It would be very curious that such a passage is reflective of merely an intellectual or social exercise in merely applauding a teaching given.

⁸ V 1:11, 16, 40; D 1:86, 110, 2:288; S 4:47; A 4: 186; U 50.

⁹ eg DA 278, AA 4:102, cf AA 2:356 ad A 1:242.

¹⁰ S 11.3.15 = SD 15.5 Intro (2). For a more detailed study, see **Brahma, vihāra S** (A 10.208/5:299) = SD 2.10.

¹¹ See n ad loc.

¹² This Skt passage is found in Skilling, *Mahāsūtras*, 1994 1:269-275.

Saṅghānusr̥ti

suprapatipanno bhagavataḥ śrāvaka,saṅghaḥ
nyāya,pratipannaḥ
ṛju,ḍṣṭi,pratipannaḥ
dharmānudharma,pratipannaḥ anudharma,cārī |

¹⁵santi saṅghe *srotāpatti,phala,sākṣātkriyāyai*
pratipannakāḥ

santi saṅghe *srotāpannāḥ*

santi saṅghe *sakṛdāgāmi,phala,sākṣātkriyāyai*
pratipannakāḥ

santi saṅghe *sakṛdāgāmināḥ*

santi saṅghe *anāgāmi,phala,sākṣātkriyāyai*
pratipannakāḥ

santi saṅghe *anāgāmināḥ*

santi saṅghe *arhat,phala,sākṣātkriyāyai*
pratipannakāḥ

santi saṅghe *arhantāḥ* |

yad uta catvāri puruṣa,yugāni
aṣṭau puruṣa,pudgalaḥ

¹⁷eṣa bhagavataḥ śrāvaka,saṅghaḥ
śīla,sampannaḥ samādhi,sampannaḥ
śraddhā,sampannaḥ śruta,sampannaḥ
vimkutaḥ,sampannaḥ vimukti,jñāna,-
darśana.sampannaḥ |

¹⁸āhavanīyaḥ
prāhavanīyaḥ
añjali,karaṇīyaḥ
samīci,karaṇīyaḥ
anuttaram puṇya,kṣetram dakṣiṇīyo lokasya |

Saṅghānussati

supatipanno¹³ bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho
uju,paṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho
ñāya,paṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho
sāmīci,paṭipanno¹⁴ bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho

[*sotāpanno*
sotāpatti,phala,sacchikiriyāya paṭipanno

sakadāgāmī
sakadāgāmi,phala,sacchikiriyāya paṭipanno

anāgāmī
anāgāmi,phala,sacchikiriyāya paṭipanno

arahā
arahattāya paṭipanno |]

yad idaṃ cattāri purisa,yugāni
aṭṭha purisa,puggalā

esa bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho

āhuneyyo
pāhuneyyo
dakkhiṇeyyo
añjali,karaṇīyo
anuttaram puñña-k,khettaṃ lokassā ti |

Recollection of the Sangha (Pali version)

The Blessed One's community of disciples keeps to the good way [moral virtue];
... keeps to the straight way [concentration];
... keeps to the true way [the eightfold path];
... keeps to the proper way [attainment of the path]. (S 1:220,7) [15]

[There is **the streamwinner**;
the one on the path to realizing the fruit of streamwinning.

There is **the once-returned**;
the one of the path to realizing the fruit of the fruit of once-return.

There is **the non-returned**;
There is the one on the path realizing the fruit of non-return.

There is **the arhat [the worthy saint]**;
the one on the path to realizing the fruit of the fruit of arhathood.]
(A 4:292,12 = D 3:255)¹⁶

These are four pairs of persons,
the eight individuals: | (S 1:220,11) [15]

This is the Blessed One's community of disciples is*
accomplished in moral virtue, in concentration,
in faith, in learning,
in the knowledge and vision of liberation;
[*This italicized passage is from the Sanskrit.]

worthy of offerings,
worthy of hospitality,
worthy of gifts,
worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms,
a supreme field of merit for the world. (S 1:220,12) [15]

¹³ Ee Se *supatipanno*; Be Nāl Se *suppatipanno* throughout para.

¹⁴ *Sāmīci* is found in line 22 of the Skt Saṅghānusr̥ti.

¹⁵ Artha,viniścaya Sūtra 46,3.

¹⁶ This parallel, missing from Buddhānussati stock passage, is from **Saṅgīti S** (D 33.3.1(3)/3:255) & **Aṭṭha,puggala S 1** (A 8.59/4:292,12; A:Be [III] 115,26; A:Nāl 383,12; A:Se 23:301,6; no vll except that the *vagga* is called *Sandhāna*- in Se and *Gotamī*- in Be and Nāl. See **Aṭṭha,puggala S 1** = SD 8.59.

¹⁷ Artha,viniścaya Sūtra 47,6.

¹⁸ Artha,viniścaya Sūtra 47,7.

As noted, the missing passage is found in the **Aṭṭha,puggala Sutta** (A 8.59) and the **Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33). It fits nicely into the middle of the Saṅghānussati verse, giving a good flow of ideas. However, there is no need to revise the current version of the Saṅghānussati verse, as we as yet do not know the real reason/s for its absence (if there is any reason at all). Nevertheless, most reciters or meditators when they reach this point in the verse, knowing to whom this passage refers, would mentally fill in the eight types of saints.

4 Buddhaghosa's commentary

Buddhaghosa, in his magnum opus, the **Visuddhi,magga**, explains the 9 qualities or virtues (*guṇa*) of Saṅgha.

The Recollection of the Saṅgha

(Based on Vism 7.89-100/218-221)

89 One who wishes to cultivate the recollection of the Saṅgha should go into solitary retreat [spend personal quiet time] and recollect the virtues [qualities] of the Saṅgha, thus:

<i>supaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho</i>	The Blessed One's community of disciples keeps to the good way;
<i>uju,paṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho</i>	the Blessed One's community of disciples keeps to the straight way;
<i>ñāya,paṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho</i>	the Blessed One's community of disciples keeps to the true way;
<i>sāmīci,paṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho</i>	the Blessed One's community of disciples keeps to the proper way. ¹⁹
<i>yad idaṃ cattāri purisa,yugāni aṭṭha,purisa,puggalā</i>	These are the four pairs of persons, the eight individuals,
<i>esa bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhiṇeyyo aṅjali,karaṇīyo anuttaraṃ puñña-k,khettam lokassā ti</i>	this Blessed One's community of disciples is worthy of offerings, ²⁰ worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts, ²¹ worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms, a supreme field of merit for the world. (M 7.7/1:37; A 6.10.4/3:286)

[**Supaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho**, “The Blessed One's community of disciples keeps to the good way.”]

90 Herein, “keeps to the good way” (*supaṭipanna*) means “well entered on the way” (*sutṭhu paṭipanna*). What is meant is that he has entered on a way (*paṭipanna*), that is the right way (*sammā paṭipadā*), the way that is irreversible, the way that conforms (with reality), the way that is free from hostility, the way that is in keeping with the Dharma.

They listen (*suṇanti*) attentively the Blessed One's instruction, thus they are “listeners” [disciples] (*sāvaka*).

¹⁹ There seems to be an abrupt break here, with the mention of “These four pairs of persons...” which seems to refer back to some missing passage, which evidently is found in the Skt version: see Intro 3: Saṅghānussmṛti & **Aṭṭha,puggala S 1** (A 4:292 = D 33.3.1(3)/3:255).

²⁰ *Āhuneyyo*. That is, worthy of receiving sacrifices or offerings. The Skt cognate *āhavanīya* refers to that which was offered as an oblation as in *āhuneyy'aggī*, one of the 3 brahminical sacrificial fires (the one in the east).

²¹ *Dakkhiṇeyyo*. Traditionally refers to honoraria or gifts to teachers after completion of tutelage under them. Specifically refers to offerings made for the benefit of the departed by way of dedication of merits to them.

The community of disciples is the Sangha of those listeners. The meaning is that the totality of disciples forms a discipleship (*sāvaka,samūha*) because it comprises those compatible both in moral virtue and in right view. [219]

That right way, being straight (*uju*) [99b], not bent, not crooked, not twisted, is called noble (*ariya*) and true (*ñāya*) and, on account of its being fitting, is known as proper (*sāmīci*). Therefore, the noble community that has entered on that way, it is said, also *keeps to the straight way, keeps to the true way, and keeps to the proper way.*

91 Furthermore, the Sangha *keeps to the good way* because it has entered on the way in keeping with what is instructed in the well-proclaimed Dharma and Vinaya, and because it has entered on the undisputed [clear] way (*apaṇṇaka,paṭipada*).

It *keeps to the straight way* because it has entered on the way that avoids the two extremes²² and takes the middle way,²³ and because it has entered on the way of the abandonment of the ways of body, speech and mind that are bent, crooked and twisted.

It *keeps to the proper way* because it has entered on the way of those who are worthy of proper acts (of veneration, etc).

93 *Yad idaṃ, “these (as previously mentioned)).”* The four pairs of persons (*cattāri purisa,yugāni*): Taking them in pairs, the one who stands in the first path and the one who stands in the first fruition as one pair; in this way, there are four pairs.

The eight individuals (*aṭṭha,purisa,puggalā*): Taking them individually, the one who stands in the first path as one and the one who stands in the fruition as one; in this way, there are eight individuals.

And here in the compound *purisa,puggala* (persons), the words *purisa* and *puggala* have the same meaning, but it is expressed in this way to suit differing individuality in terms of the teaching.

This Blessed One’s community of disciples (*esa bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho*): This community of the Blessed One’s disciples taken in pairs as the four pairs of persons (*purisa*), and individually as the eight persons (*purisa,puggala*).

The 4 noble saints (<i>ariya</i>)	The 4 pairs (<i>cattāri purisa,yugāni</i>) The 8 individuals (<i>aṭṭha purisa,puggalā</i>)
4. The arhat (<i>arahata</i>)	8. The arhat (fruition) (<i>phala</i>) 7. The one on the <u>path</u> (<i>magga</i>) to the fruition of arhatood
3. The non-returner (<i>anāgāmi</i>)	6. The non-returner (fruition) 5. The one on the <u>path</u> to the fruition of non-return
2. The once-returner (<i>sākadāgāmi</i>)	4. The once-returner (fruition) 3. The one on the <u>path</u> to the fruition of once-return
1. The streamwinner (<i>sotāpanna</i>)	2. The streamwinner (fruition) (<i>phala</i>) 1. The one on the <u>path</u> (<i>magga</i>) to the fruition of streamwinning

94 *Āhuneyyo, “worthy of offerings.”* A gift [sacrifice] (*āhuna*) is what one brings that is fit for offering [sacrificing], meaning, what is brought from afar and worthy of being given to the morally virtuous. It is a name for the four requisites.²⁴ The Sangha is worthy of receiving the gift [sacrifice] because it makes it bear great fruit, thus it is “worthy of offerings” (*āhuneyya*).

²² That is, sensual indulgence (annihilationism) and of self-torture (eternalism): see foll n.

²³ See **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana S** (S 56.11.2-3/5:420) = SD 1.1 Intro 3.

²⁴ *Catu,paccaya*, ie almsfood or food, robes or clothing, lodging and shelter, and medicine and medical support (V 1:58).

[NOTE] The Sanskrit cognate *āhavanīya* refers to that which is offered as an oblation as in *āhuneyy-aggī*, one of the three brahminical sacrificial fires (the one in the east).

95 Or, alternatively, all kinds of wealth [property] that one has brought from afar, that is worthy of being given (*hunitabba*) here, is what should be offered to (*āhavanīya*). Or, what is worthy of being offered by the Sakyas and others, is what should be offered.

And to the brahmins, fire is said to be what is worth making offerings to (*āhavanīya*); for they hold the belief that what is offered [sacrificed] to it brings great fruit. **[220]** But if a sacrifice were offered for the sake of its great fruit, then the Sangha should be sacrificed to. For great is the fruit of what is sacrificed [offered] to the Sangha. Thus it is said:

Even if for a hundred years, one were tend the fire in the forest,
If one were to honour those of cultivated minds for even a moment,
That homage is far better than that hundred years of sacrifice. (Dh 107)

And the word *āhavanīya* (“that which should be offered to”), which is used in the sects (*nikāya*),²⁵ is the same in meaning as this word *ahuneyya* (“worthy of offerings”). The difference is merely in the syllables. Thus it is “worthy of offerings.”

96 Pāhuneyyo, “worthy of hospitality.” Giving made to visitors from all the quarters is called “hospitality” (*pāhuna*), prepared with respect for the sake of beloved and dear relatives and friends.

But even more than being hospitable to such objects of hospitality, it is fitting (*yutta*) to give to the Sangha, too. For there is no object of hospitality so worthy of it as the Sangha, since it is encountered in a Buddha-period, and wholly endowed with lovable and endearing qualities.

So it is “worthy of hospitality” since the hospitality is fit to be given to it, and it is fit to receive it.

But those who take the text as *pāhavanīya* (“worthy to be shown hospitality”) hold that the Sangha is worthy to be placed first, and so what is to be given should first of all be brought here and given (*sabba, paṭhamam ānetvā ettha hunitabban*), and for that reason it is “worthy to be shown hospitality” (*pāhavanīya*), or since it is worthy of offerings in all respects (*sabba, pakārena āhavanam arahati*); thus it is “worthy to be shown hospitality” (*pāhavanīya*). Here this is called *pāhuneyya* in just the same sense.

97 Dakkhineyyo, “worthy of gifts.” What is given out of faith in the world to come is called a “gift” (*dakkhina*). The Sangha is worthy of that gift, or it is helpful to that giving because it purifies it, making it of great fruit; thus it is “worthy of gifts” (*dakkhineyya*).

[NOTES]

(1) *Dakkhina* specifically refers to offerings made for the benefit of the departed by way of dedication of merits to them (Kh 7).²⁶

(2) *Dakkhina* is a teacher’s honorarium (VvA 229 f).

(3) *Dakkhina* (cp Lat dexter) means the “right” hand. Hence, one keeps one right side to the object of respect when saluting or taking leave, as in the phrase, *padakkhinaṃ karoti*.²⁷ In the Orient, it is also the hand with which one offers things.

98 Anuttaram puñña-k,khettaṃ lokassa, “a supreme field of merit for the world”: an incomparable place in all the world for growing merit. Just as the place for growing the king’s or a courtier’s rice or corn is the king’s rice-field or the king’s corn-field, so the Sangha is the place for growing all the world’s merit.

For the various kinds of merit bringing welfare and happiness for the world grow depending on the Sangha.

Therefore, the Sangha is “a supreme field of merit for the world.”

99a When one recollects the virtues of the Sangha in this way, by way of “the Blessed One’s community of disciples keeps to the good way” and so on, **[221]** then

²⁵ “In the Sarvāstivāda and so on,” VismṬ 230.

²⁶ Kh 7.12/6 = SD 2.7.

²⁷ V 1:17; S 1:138; A 1:294, 2:21, 182, 3:198; Sn 1010; J 1:50, 60, 3:392.

...his mind is not obsessed by lust, not obsessed by hate, not obsessed by delusion. At that time, his mind is straight, inspired by the Sangha.

((Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta, A 6.10.4/3:286 = SD 15.3)

5 The meaning of *khetta*

5.1 KINDS OF FIELDS. The ninth and last virtue of the Sangha in the Saṅghānussati verse is that it is “a supreme field of merit for the world.” The world “field” (*khetta*) is, of course, used in a figurative sense, invoking fertility and plenty, that is, the efficacious spiritual benefits of supporting the noble disciples as a community or individually. The image of a field is understandable as agriculture was a key economy of the central Gangetic plain during the Buddha’s time.

The Pali word *khetta* (Vedic *kṣetra*; cf *kṣiti*, dwelling-place, the earth) literally means a field, a plot of land, arable land, a site.²⁸ It is used as a mark of wealth or possession in the definition of a kshatriya (*khattiya*; Skt *kṣatriya*), “the lord of the fields” (D 3:93). In the same way, it is connected with *vatthu*, that is, *khetta,vatthu* (field and goods) to denote objects of trade.²⁹

The Mahā Niddesa (Nm 248) explains *khetta* as consisting of 7 kinds of grain (*satta dhañṇāni*), namely, (high-grade) winter rice (*sāli*),³⁰ monsoon rice (*vīhi*), kidney-beans (*mugga*), beans (*māsa*), barley (*yava*), wheat (*godhūma*) and sesame (*tila*), which form the “first” (natural) grains (*pubb’añṇāni*),³¹ as distinguished from *apar’añṇāni*, that is, prepared items of the seven mentioned.³² The Mahā Niddesa glosses *vatthu* (goods) as those of the household (*ghara*), of the granary (*koṭṭhaka*), of the earlier time (*pure*), of later time (*pacchā*), of the monastery (*ārāma*), and of the monastic residence (*vihāra*) (Nm 248).³³

5.2 BUDDHA-FIELDS. The Visuddhi-magga mentions three kinds of Buddha-fields (Vism 13:31):

- (1) the field of birth (*jāti,khetta*), which covers the 10,000 world-systems that quake when the Buddha is born, awakens, passes away, etc.
- (2) the field of authority or efficacy (*āṇā,khetta*), which covers the 100,000 world-systems where the parittas³⁴ are efficacious, that is, the Ratana Sutta (Sn no 13), the Khandha Paritta (Vin 2:109; A 2:72), the Dhajagga Paritta (S 1:218), the Āṭānāṭiya Paritta (D 3:194) and the Mora Paritta (J 2:33).
- (3) the field of range (*visaya,khetta*; also: sphere, vision) is boundless depending on the Buddha's wish (A 1:228).

When the physical universe is destroyed during the collapsing cycle, the first two fields are affected. When the universe re-evolves, they reappear at the same time.³⁵

Based on this idea of the range (*visaya*) and the field (*khetta*) of the Buddha, there later evolved in the Mahāyāna, the doctrine of Buddha-fields (*Buddha,kṣetra*), for example, in the Saddharma.puṇḍarīka Sūtra (p210), the Large Sukhāvātī,vyūha, the Smaller Sukhāvātī,vyūha, and the Suvarṇābhāsottama Sūtra.³⁶

5.3 FIELDS OF MERIT. As mentioned earlier [5.1], *khetta* is used in the Saṅghānussati verse in a figurative sense. Figuratively, the term *khetta* means the soil of merit, the deposit of good deeds, which like a

²⁸ D 1:231, S 1:134, 4:315 (3 kinds); A 1:229 = 239 4:237; Sn 524; J 1:153; Pv 2:9.68 = DhA 3:220; DhA 1:98; PvA 62; Miln 47.

²⁹ D 1:5 3:164; S 2:41 5:473 = A 2:209;A 5:137; Sn 769;DA 1:78 = MA 2:210 = AA ad A 2:209; Pug 58; PvA 3.

³⁰ Rice as *vīhi* (Skt *vrīhi*) (*Oryza sativa*), or broadcast rice, had its origins in India around 3000 BCE and was certainly known to later Vedic people. It was a rainy season crop ripening in autumn but whose yield was limited. This form of rice when cooked is called *odana* (ts), ie boiled rice. The change came when the people learned and used the art of paddy transplantation or wet paddy production, which was grown as a winter crop. This better quality rice was known as *sāli* (Skt *sāli*) (RS Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India*, 1983:96, 161f). This is the surplus that created the institutions of kings (Collins, 1993:309). For other socioeconomic factors of the Ganges Plain during the Buddha’s time, see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16) = SD 9 Intro (7).

³¹ V 3:151 4:267; Nc 314; J 2:185; Miln 106; DA 1:78, 270; DhA 4:81.

³² V 3:50, 4:48, 265, 267; cf V:H 1:83.4.

³³ Cf Sn 858, Dhs 597, Vbh 71 f.

³⁴ See **Dhajagga S** (S 11.3) = SD 15.6(1).

³⁵ Cf MA 4:114.

³⁶ See Ency Bsm: Buddhakṣetra.

fertile field, bears fruit to the advantage of the giver of gifts or doer of good (Vism 220).³⁷ The Vimāna Vatthu Commentary mentions the three accomplishments (*sampatti*) of merit-making as:³⁸

- (1) accomplishment of the field (*khetta,sampatti*), that is, the worthy recipient of the gift (the noble Sangha, the Buddha, awakened disciples, etc);
- (2) accomplishment of mind (*citta,sampatti*), that is, purity of intention; and
- (3) accomplishment of means (*payoga,sampatti*), that is, the purity of the procuring the gift.

(VvA 102)

6 Benefits of the recollection of the Sangha

99b So when he has suppressed the mental hindrances, by preventing obsession (*pariyuṭṭhāna*) due to greed, etc, and his mind is straight (*uju*) before the meditation subject, then his initial application and sustained application occur with an inclination towards the Sangha's virtues.

As he continues to exercise initial application and sustained application on the Sangha's virtues, zest (*pīti*) arises in him. With a zestful mind, with the zest as a basis [proximate cause], his bodily and mental disturbances gain tranquillity (*passaddhi*). When the disturbances have been tranquillized, bodily and mental joy (*sukha*) arise in him. Being joyful, his mind, taking the Sangha's virtues as objects, becomes concentrated (*samādhīyati*), so that the dhyana-factors eventually arise in a single thought-moment.

But due to the depth of the Sangha's qualities, or else due to his being occupied in recollecting qualities of many kinds, he only reaches access concentration,³⁹ not full concentration (*appanā*), that is, dhyana. That (access concentration) is itself regarded as the recollection of the Dharma, because it has arisen by virtue of the recollecting of the Sangha's qualities.

100 [BENEFITS] When a monk is devoted to this recollection of the Sangha, he is respectful and deferential to the Sangha. He attains great faith, great mindfulness, great wisdom and great merit. He has much zest and gladness. He conquers fear and dread. He is able to withstand pain. He comes to feel that he is living in the presence of the Sangha.

And his body, while occupied with the recollection of the Sangha's virtues, is worthy of veneration as an uposatha-hall (*uposatha,ghara*). His mind tends towards the attainment of the Sangha's virtues.

When he is confronted by an opportunity for transgression, due to his clear recollection of the Sangha's good qualities, moral shame and moral fear⁴⁰ as though he were before the Sangha itself.

If he penetrates no higher, he would at least cross over to a happy destiny.

Therefore, one who is truly wise would surely cultivate heedfulness,

In this way, one always has great power (*anubhāva*) through recollection of the Sangha.

(Vism 7.99-100/220 f)

³⁷ Cf *khetta,jina*, "field-conqueror," Sn 523, 524.

³⁸ See also **Cāgānussati** = SD 15.12.

³⁹ "Access concentration" (*upacāra*). In meditation, an entirely clear and immovable image (*nimitta*) arising at a high degree of concentration is called **counter-image** (*paṭibhāga,nimitta*). As soon as this image arises, the stage of neighbourhood (or access) concentration (*upacāra,samādhī*) is reached. For details, see SD 13.3.1d(7); also see BDict: *kaṣiṇa,samādhī*.

⁴⁰ Moral shame (*hiri*) is often paired with moral fear (*ottappa*) (eg M 1:271; S 2:220; A 2:78; It 34; Tikap 61; J 1:127; Vism 221; DhA 3:73), and, as the foundation for morality, called "the world-protectors" (*loka,pāla*, A 1:51), since they are the preconditions for a functional society. According to Visuddhi,magga, the proximate cause for moral shame is self-respect, while for moral fear it is respect for others. Out of self-respect (*attāna garu katvā*), one, like the daughter of a good family, rejects evil-doing through moral shame. Out of respect for others (*param garu katvā*), one, like a courtesan, rejects evil-doing through moral fear (Vism 14.142/464 f). The former is sometimes known as self-regarding moral conduct (motivated by the *shame* the deed entails), while the latter as other-regarding moral conduct (motivated by the healthy *fear* of karmic repercussion). As such, these two actions are known as the two bright states that protect the world, if not for which "one would neither respect one's mother, nor one's mother's sister, nor one's brother's wife, nor one's teacher's wife" (A 1:50). For detailed n, see **Abhabba S** (A 10.76.20/-5:146) = SD 2.4 n. See **Hiri Ottappa S** (A 2.9/1:50 = SD 2.5).

7 The eighty great elders

The Commentaries sometimes speak of “the eighty great elders” (*asīti mahā,thera*),⁴¹ without listing who they are. A full list, however, is given in the Thera,gātha Commentary gives a list of the eighty great elders (ThaA 3:205), as follows.

- 1-5 (The five monks) Aññāsi Koṇḍañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma, Assaji,
- 6 Nālaka,
- 7-11 (Yasa and his four friends) Yasa, Vimala, Subāhu, Puṇṇaji, Gavampati,
- 12-14 (The Kassapa brothers) Uruvela Kassapo, Nadī Kassapo, Gayā Kassapo,
- 15-16 Sāriputtā, Mahā Moggallāna,
- 17 Mahā Kassapa,
- 18 Mahā Kaccāyana,
- 19 MahāKoṭṭhika,
- 20 Mahā Kappina,
- 21 Mahā Cunda,
- 22 Anuruddha,
- 23 Kaṅkhā,revata,
- 24 Ānanda,
- 25-29 Nandaka, Bhagu, Nanda, Kimila, Bhaddiya,
- 30 Rāhula,
- 31 Sīvali,
- 32 Upāli,
- 33 Dabba Malla,putta,
- 34 Upasena,
- 35 Khadira,vaniya Revata,
- 36 Puṇṇa Mantāṇi,putta,
- 37 Puṇṇo Sunāparantaka,
- 38 Soṇa Kuṭi,kaṇṇa,
- 39 Soṇā Kolivīsa,
- 40 Rādha,
- 41 Subhūti,
- 42 Aṅgulimāla,
- 43 Vakkali,
- 44 Kāl’udāyī,
- 45 Mahā Udāyī,
- 46 Pilinda,vaccha,
- 47 Sobhita,
- 48 Kumāra Kassapa,
- 49 Raṭṭha,pāla,
- 50 Vaṅgīsa,
- 51 Sabhiya,
- 52 Sela,
- 53 Upavāna,
- 54 Meghiya,
- 55 Sāgata,
- 56 Nāgita,
- 57 Lakuṇṭaka Bhaddiya,
- 58 Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja,
- 59-60 Mahā Panthaka, Cūla Panthaka,
- 61 Bākula,

⁴¹ Mentioned as a group name at Vism 98; DhA 1:14.

- 62 Kuṇḍadhāna,
63 Bāhiya Dārucīriya,
64 Yasoja,
65-80 (The 16 youths) Ajita, Tissa Metteyya, Puṇṇaka, Mettagū, Dhotaka, Upasiva, Nanda
(Māṇava), Hemaka, Todeyya, Kappa, Jatukaṇṇi, Bbhadrāvudha, Udaya, Posāla, Mogha,rājā,
Piṅgiya, (ThaA 3:205)

These eight great elders are awakened during the Buddha's life-time, and serve as inspirational models for the reflection on the Noble Sangha. However, there is no similar list of nun elders.

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The First Discourse on the Eight Individuals (A 8.59/4:292)

- 1** Bhikshus, these eight individuals are
 worthy of worthy of offerings,
 worthy of hospitality,
 worthy of gifts,
 worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms,
 a supreme field of merit for the world.

What are the eight?

- 2a** (1) The streamwinner,
 (2) the one practising for the realization of the fruit of streamwinning,
 (3) the once-returner,
 (4) the one practising for the realization of the fruit of once-return,
 (5) the non-returner,
 (6) the one practising for the realization of the fruit of non-return,
 (7) the arhat,
 (8) the one practising for the realization of the fruit of arhathood.

- 2b** Bhikshus, these eight individuals are
 worthy of worthy of offerings,
 worthy of hospitality,
 worthy of gifts,
 worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms,
 a supreme field of merit for the world.

- 2c** The four who are practising and the four standing in the fruit:
 This Sangha is upright, the mind settled in wisdom and moral virtue.⁴²
 For those people making offerings, those living beings seeking merit,
 Making material gifts for merit, giving to the Sangha is of great fruit.⁴³

— evaṃ —

060228; 060612; 071106; 080208; 090622

⁴² “Endowed with wisdom and moral virtue,” *paññā,sīla,samāhito*. Here *–samāhito* means “having attained” (eg S 1:48). Alt tr “mentally concentrated” (D 1:13; S 1:169; A 2:6, 3:312, 343 f, 5:3, 39 f, 329 f, Sn 212, 225, 972; Dh 362; It 119; Pug 35; V 3:4).

⁴³ *Cattāro ca paṭipannā cattāro ca phale ṭhitā | esa saṅgho uju,bhūto paññā,sīla,samāhito | yajamānānaṃ manussānaṃ puñña,pekkhāna,pāṇinaṃ | karotaṃ opadhikaṃ puññaṃ saṅghe dinnāṃ maha-p,phalan ti*. This verse is very similar to the 2 verses spoken by Shakra to the Buddha in **Yajamāna S** (S 1.11.2.5/1:233).