

# Ādhipateyya Sutta

## The Discourse on Priorities

[On the true priorities that bring liberation]

(Aṅguttara Nikāya 3.40/1:147-150)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2007, 2009

### 1 Introduction

*Ādhipateyya* (often wrongly spelt as *adhipateyya* in European manuscript) comes from *adhi* (prefix meaning “over, above, supreme”) + *pati* (“lord”) + *eyya* (suffix that makes it an abstract noun). The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (BHS) form is *ādhipateya*,<sup>1</sup> and the Sanskrit is approximately *ādhipatya* (BHSD; found, for example, in the *Abhidharma,kośa*). It is related to these Sanskrit words:

- *adhi,pā* (Vedic), “a ruler, king, sovereign”;
- *adhi,pati* (1) = *adhi,pa*; (2) a particular part of the head (where a wound proves instantly fatal).

The psychological sense, as used in this Sutta, is apparently not found in the Sanskrit texts. As a Pali term, *ādhipateyya* is used in the following senses:<sup>2</sup>

(1) (n)

(a) (literal:) sovereignty, lordship, overlordship, supremacy, rule, predominance, authority, control, controlling influence, power: A 1:115,9 ≠ 2:133,7 (AA 3:243,23) ≠ D 3:146,5 ≠ S 4:275,4-18; A 4:76,22; Ap (2) 537,29; DhA 3:293,18; CA 167,9, 331,13; Pm 2:49,12-51,30, PmA 562,14,26; PmA 38,13 (A 4:61,1).

(b) (psychological:) influence, controlling influence, dominant influence, especially the influences (*thāna*) which induce one to follow virtue, prime motivation: D 3:220,7 *tīṇi ~āni*; DA 1005,36 ≠ A 1:147,20; AA 2:243,9.

(2) (mfn) ruling, governing, dominant, powerful, controlling: A 1:148,7, 4:338,13, 339,1, 5:106,16, 107,2; A 2:17,16, AA 3:21,3; AA 3:217,6.

The sense of *ādhipateyya* as used in **the Ādhipateyya Sutta** is that of (1b), that is, the psychological sense. *Ādhipateyya*, as such, refers to a quality that has a strong controlling influence over our actions, speech and thoughts. However, this need not be a conscious influence, even though we are able to cultivate it. For these reasons, I have translated *ādhipateyya* here as “priority.”

### 2 Ādhipateyya as priority

**2.1 THE THREE PRIORITIES.** In a practical sense, the term *ādhipateyya*, as used in **the Ādhipateyya Sutta** (A 3.40),<sup>3</sup> refers to *spiritual priorities*, that is, what we commit ourselves most to in our quest for spiritual liberation. According to the Sutta, we should give proper priorities to three things, that is, *the self, the world and the Dharma*. They can be briefly defined as follows:

- **Self-priority** (*att'ādhipateyya*) is self-respect or self-regard. In a negative sense, this is self-pride. In a positive sense, this is moral shame (*hiri*). In a negative sense, this is motivated by the fear of “losing face.”
- **World-priority** (*lok'ādhipateyya*) is the influence of the world, that is, other-regard, the fear of censure. In a positive sense, this is respect (*gāraṇa*) and moral fear (*ottappa*).
- **Dharma-priority** (*dhamm'ādhipateyya*) is the influence of the Dharma, that is, the love of moral virtue for its own sake. This sense can only be positive.

**Buddhaghosa**, in his *Visuddhi,magga*, explains these priorities or predominances in terms of moral virtue, as follows:

<sup>1</sup> However, there is little evidence of use in these senses in BHS.

<sup>2</sup> These defs have been culled from CPD, DP & BHSD.

<sup>3</sup> A 3.40/1:147-150 = **SD 27.3**; see also **The Teacher or the Teaching?** = SD 3.14(14).

...that which is expressed out of a desire to abandon what is unbecoming to self, out of self-regard by one with self-respect, is the moral virtue *that takes the self as the highest priority*.

That which is expressed out of a desire to ward off the world's censure, out of regard for the world, is the moral virtue *that takes the world as the highest priority*.

That which is expressed out of a desire to honour the Dharma's greatness, out of regard for the Dharma, is the moral virtue *that takes Dharma as the highest priority*. (Vism 1.34/13 f)

According to the three priorities or supremacies (*ādhipateyya*), our first priority is to *ourselves*, that is, to personal development. With at least a wholesome desire and aspiration towards personal development, we are in a healthy position to help *others*, or to face our second priority, *the world*, and better it, so that we create and maintain a wholesome environment wherever we are, or as far as our compassionate wisdom can reach (through our writings, the Internet, etc). When we have truly understood and tasted personal development (self-priority) and the betterment of others (world-priority), we begin to experience our third priority, *the Dharma*, that is, true reality and self-liberation.

Here, we can also take *dhamma* to mean “mental states” or what we understand as *our mind*. When we understand ourselves, we begin to understand others, and when we understand both self and other, we understand what the mind really is and how it works. Now, we understand that the self and the world are not separate entities, but interrelated mental states or events. We create our own world, we create our own God, gods and demons: only we can liberate ourselves from them. For, *we are the world*.

**2.2 THE PRIORITIES AND THE TWO BRIGHT STATES.** The Commentaries sometimes explain the first two priorities—that of the self and the world—in terms of moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*), also known as “the two bright states” (*dve sukka dhamma*). **The Hiri Ottappa Sutta** (A 2.9) is a short sutta defining moral shame and moral fear as “the two bright states that protect the world,”<sup>4</sup> and is quoted here in full:

Bhikshus, there are two bright states that protect the world. What are the two?

Moral shame and moral fear.

Bhikshus, if these two bright states were not to protect the world, then there would be no mothers nor mothers' sisters nor uncles' wives nor teachers' wives nor guru's wives. Instead, the world would come to confusion such as there is amongst goats and sheep and fowl and pigs and dogs and jackals.

But, bhikshus, since these two bright states do protect the world, therefore there are seen mothers, mothers' sisters, uncles' wives, teachers' wives and gurus' wives. (A 2.9/1:51) = SD 2.5

Moral shame (*hiri*) is a sense of revulsion with wrong-doing and evil. The Abhidhamma defines moral shame as “to be ashamed of what one ought to be ashamed of, to be ashamed of performing evil and unwholesome deeds” (Pug 24).<sup>5</sup> It is one of the seven noble treasures (*ariya, dhana*),<sup>6</sup> that is, faith, moral conduct, moral shame, moral fear, learning, generosity, and wisdom. Moral shame is often paired with moral fear (*ottappa*),<sup>7</sup> and, together as the foundation for morality, they are called “the world-protectors” (*loka, pāla*, A 2.9/1:51), since they are the preconditions for a functional and productive society.

According to **the 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

<sup>4</sup> *Dve sukkā dhammā lokam pārenti*. “Bright states,” *sukka dhamma*, that is, wholesome conditions. See (**Vitthāra**) **Kamma S** (A 4.232) = SD 4.13 Intro (2.1).

<sup>5</sup> *Yam hiriyati hiriyitabbena hiriyati pāpakānam akusalānam dhammānam samāpattiyā, ayam vuccati hiri* (Pug 24; cf Vism 14.142/464; J 1:129 f). Cf Dhs:R 18 f.

<sup>6</sup> D 3:163, 251; A 4:5; VvA 113; DA 2:34; ThaA 240. Cf A 3:53; Sn 77, 462 (= D 1:168), 719.

<sup>7</sup> Eg M 1:271; S 2:220; A 2:78; It 34; Tikap 61; J 1:127; Vism 221; DhA 3:73. The term *ottappa* is derived from *apa* + √TRAP (to be abashed) [Skt \**āpatrapya* > *apatrapā* (Trenckner)]. Andersen suggests that this etym must be preferred to that of Childers: \**autappya* > *uttāpa*, *ut* + √TAP (heat) (PG 62). Edgerton (BHSD) has *apatrāpya* and the cpd *hrīr-apatrāpya* (P *hiri, ottappa*).

courtesan, rejects evil-doing through moral fear (Vism 14.142/464 f).<sup>8</sup> 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 repercussions). As such, these two actions are known as *the two bright states that protect the world*.

**The Attha,sālinī**, the commentary to the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī (the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka) gives a similar explanation of the first two priorities (DhsA 124-128). It explains in some detail how moral shame arises on account of self-priority (*attādhipati hiri nāma*), and how moral fear arises on account of world-priority (*lokādhipati ottappam nāma*). Moral shame has a personal or psychological origin (*ajjhata,samuṭṭhāna*), namely, class (*jāti*), age (*vaya*), courage (*sūra,bhāva*) and learning (*bāhu,-sacca*), reflecting on these, we, out of moral shame, should not break any precept or do any evil.<sup>9</sup>

How is moral shame called self-priority? (*Katham attā'dhipati hiri nāma.*) Here a certain son of family having taken the self as supreme, the highest priority, refrains from evil, thinking, “It is not proper that such a one as I, who have renounced the world out of faith, possessed of wide learning, devoted to the ascetic practices [dhutanga], should do evil.” Thus, moral shame is called self-priority.

As such, the Blessed One said: “He, having made only the self as his priority, his foremost, abandons the unwholesome, cultivates the wholesome, abandons the blameworthy, cultivates the blameless—he keeps himself pure.” [≠ A 3.40.1c/1:148] (DhsA 126 f)<sup>10</sup>

How is moral fear called world-priority? (*Katham lokādhipati ottappam nāma.*) Here, the practitioner reflects that this world is very extensive and has those with supernormal abilities of clairvoyance (able to see what is beyond normal human sight) and mind-reading. Such people would know if he were not really living the holy life or when he does evil. In this way, his moral fear is called world-priority. Similarly, he does no evil out of respect for others who are respectable, and for fear of falling in suffering states.

The two moral qualities can be illustrated by the simile of two iron balls, one cold and smeared with dung, and the other red-hot and fiery. A wise man would not touch either of them. Not touching the cold ball fearing being smeared with dung is like refraining from evil due to moral shame. Not touching the burning ball out of fear of being burnt is like refraining from evil due to moral fear, such as creating karma that would bring him to a suffering state. (DhsA 127)

### 3 Making moral judgments in spiritual cultivation

**3.1 SELF-MASTERY.** The singularly remarkable, even unique, characteristic of early Buddhism is that the Buddha teaches that we are all capable of spiritual liberation through self-effort (*atta,kāra*), without relying on any external agency (be it God, god, destiny, karma, or nature). Indeed, there is no salvation beyond self-effort. Any talk of one saving another is likely to be, wittingly or unwittingly, politically motivated (the power mode) on the part of “saviour.” Our true quest should be about *self-mastery*.

*Attā hi attano nātho  
ko hi nātho paro siyā  
attanā'va sudantena  
nātham labhati dullabham*

The self is the master of the self,  
for, who else could the master be?  
with a self that is well-tamed, indeed,  
one gains a master that is hard to find.

(Dh 160; cf 380)

<sup>8</sup> In his tr, Ñānamoli renders *hiri* as “conscience,” but apparently mistranslates *ottappati* as “is ashamed” and *ottappa* as “shame,” Vism:Ñ 524 f.

<sup>9</sup> *Evam tāva jātim paccavekkhitvā vayan paccavekkhitvā sūra,bhāvam paccavekkhitvā bāhu,saccam paccavekkhitvā...pānātipāt'ādi,pāpam akaronto hirim samuṭṭhāpeti* (DhsA 125).

<sup>10</sup> *Katham attādhipati hiri nāma. Idh'ekacco kula,putto attānam adhipatim jeṭṭhakam katvā mādisassa saddhā,-pabbajitassa bahu-s,tasa dhutaṅga,dharassa na yuttam pāpa,kammam katun ti pāpam na karoti. Evam attā'dhipati hiri nāma hoti. Ten'āha bhagavā: so attānam yeva adhipatim jeṭṭhakam karitvā akusalam pajahati kusalam bhāveti, sāvajjam pajahati anavajjam bhāveti, suddham attānam pariharati ti.* (DhsA 126). Note that the Dhs quote varies slightly from the Sutta text.

The most significant quality about self-effort is that we are able to test the truth for ourselves, and not blindly rely on others to lead our lives. Once we accept that self-effort is possible, then we have a number of guidelines for building up our moral and mental strengths leading to the insight into true reality and liberation.

The first guideline is that of self-comparison (*attūpama*), which is an effort we make to put ourselves in the place of another, which is succinctly put by this Dhammapada verse:

<i>Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa sabbe bhāyanti maccuno attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghāteyya</i>	All tremble at the rod [violence], all fear death: making oneself the example, <sup>11</sup> one should neither kill nor cause to kill. (Dh 129)
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**The Dhammika Sutta** (Sn 2.14) reflects the same sentiment:

<i>Pāṇaṃ na hane, na ca ghātayeyya na cānujaññā hanataṃ paresaṃ sabbesu bhūtesu nidhāya daṇḍaṃ ye thāvarā ye ca tasanti loke</i>	Let one not destroy life, nor cause to kill, nor approve of killing by others, Laying aside the rod [violence] toward all beings, both the still and the moving in the world. (Sn 394)
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The most detailed explanation of the golden rule (as it is called), is found in **the Veḷu, dvāreyya Sutta** (S 55.7), in the case of the precept against killing (which applies mutatis mutandis to the other precepts):

“Here, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus:

‘I am one who wishes to live, who does not wish to die. I desire happiness and dislike suffering. Since I am one who wishes to live... and dislike suffering, if someone were to take my life, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me

Now, if I were to take the life of another—of one who wishes to live, who does not wish to die, who desires happiness and dislikes suffering—that would not be desirable and agreeable to him, too.

What is undesirable and disagreeable to me is undesirable and disagreeable to others, too. How can I inflict upon another what is undesirable and disagreeable to me?’

Having reflected thus, he himself refrains from harming life, exhorts others to refrain from harming life, and speaks in praise of refraining from harming life.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, his bodily conduct is purified in three respects.<sup>13</sup> (S 55.7.6/5:353 f) = SD 1.5

**3.2 THE THREE PRIORITIES.** A second set of guidelines for moral action is **the three priorities** (*ādhipateyya*), by which we examine the moral quality of an act from three different viewpoints: those of oneself, of other, and of the Dharma. In the first priority, that is, self-priority (*attādhipateyya*), we examine whether an act we are going to commit would result in self-blame or remorse. This seems to suggest the concept of “conscience,” but such a concept is alien to early Buddhism.<sup>14</sup> In this first guideline, we take ourself as the priority.

The second moral priority is that given to “the world” (*lok’ādhipateyya*), that is, an other-priority, which requires us to examine whether our act will be approved or disapproved by the wise (*viññū*). Here, we would take the wisdom of those in their special fields, and who are morally upright, as our yardstick.

<sup>11</sup> Ie, taking ourself to be the other person or being, putting ourself in the place of another.

<sup>12</sup> “[H]e himself refrains from harming life, exhorts others to refrain from harming life,” that is, one keeps the precepts oneself and encourages others to do the same: this is “one who lives both for his own good and for the good of others” (**Atta,hita S**, A 4.96/2:96 f; **Sikkhā S**, A 4.99/2:98 f). “[He] speaks in praise of refraining from harming life” refers to spiritual friendship and the practice of altruistic joy (*muditā*).

<sup>13</sup> Ie he does not kill, nor cause to kill, nor approve of killing.

<sup>14</sup> Loosely used, the word “conscience” may apply here, but technically it is either a theistic concept (related to the God-idea) or psychological (a learned response), both of which are alien to early Buddhism.

We may regard this guideline is “public opinion,” but it is not as most of us understand it today, that is, as the opinion of the majority (which is usually wrong). It is the opinion of the *informed* public, that is, those *other* than ourselves, who are well informed on the subject and are morally upright—that is, the *viññū, -purisa* (“wise persons”). This is the guideline we should adopt when we deal with public issues or when confronted by others’ opinions. Hence, what is morally acceptable is referred to as being “praised by the wise” (*viññū-p, pasattha*) and, conversely, what is morally reprehensible is said to be “censured by the wise” (*viññū, garahita*).<sup>15</sup>

The third moral guideline with which to examine our acts is that of taking the Dharma as priority (*dhamm’ādhipateyya*), that is, whether our premeditated action conforms to the Dharma. This sort of examination is useful as a check so that we refrain from what is unwholesome, and to act on what is wholesome.

**3.4 FOR THE GOOD OF SELF AND OTHER.** Although Buddhism exhorts us to work out our own salvation (just as a sick person must take the medicine), we should also help heal others when we have the ability and occasion to do so. In terms of working for our own good and that of others, reflecting a tension between egotism and altruism. **The Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33.1), for example, lists these four types of persons:

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|---|---|
| (1) one who benefits himself but not others <sup>16</sup>     | ( <i>atta, hitāya paṭipanno hoti no para, hitāya</i> );       |
| (2) one who benefits others but not himself <sup>17</sup>     | ( <i>para, hitāya paṭipanno hoti no atta, hitāya</i> );       |
| (3) one who benefits neither himself nor others <sup>18</sup> | ( <i>n’eva atta, hitāya paṭipanno hoti no parahitāya</i> );   |
| (4) one who benefits both himself and others <sup>19</sup>    | ( <i>atta, hitāya c’eva paṭipanno hoti para, hitāya ca</i> ). |

Here is a list of discourses that variously treat the four types of persons in terms of cultivating personal good and the good of others:

<b>Saṅgīti Sutta</b>	(D 33.1.11(48)/3:233)	Basic list of 4 types of persons;
<b>Atta,hita Sutta 1</b>	(A 4.95/2:95 f)	Similes of the firebrand & cow’s products;
<b>Atta,hita Sutta 2</b>	(A 4.96/2:96 f)	Restraint towards the three unwholesome roots;
<b>Atta,hita Sutta 3</b>	(A 4.97/2:97 f)	Learning and teaching the Dharma;
<b>Atta,hita Sutta 4</b>	(A 4.98/2:98)	Basic list of 4 types of persons;
<b>Atta,hita Sutta 5<sup>20</sup></b>	(A 4.99/2:98 f)	Practice of the five precepts;
<b>Hita Sutta 1</b>	(A 5.17/3:12 f)	One has 5 qualities but does not benefit others;
<b>Hita Sutta 2</b>	(A 5.18/3:13)	One set on other’s good but not his own;
<b>Hita Sutta 3</b>	(A 5.19/3:13 f)	One strives to perfect oneself and others, too;
<b>Hita Sutta 4</b>	(A 5.20/3:14)	One has 5 qualities and benefits others, too.

These discourses deal with four types of individuals in terms of self-cultivation and other-concern. In the basic list (D 33.11; A 4.98), the first person strives for his own wellbeing (*atta,hita*) but not for that of others (*para,hita*). The second individual is one who strives for the well-being of others but fails to strive for his own. The third person is one who neither strives for his own well-being nor for that of others. The fourth individual is one who strives for his own well-being as well as for the well-being of others.

It should be noted that not all the discourses list these four kinds of person in the same sequence. The priority, however, is always given *personal wellbeing*. It is important to note here that in all these dis-

<sup>15</sup> Containing both *viññū-p, pasattha* and *viññū, garahita*: **Aggañña S** (D 27.5/3:82 f), **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65/-1:190×2, 191×3, 193, 196×3), **Bhaddiya S** (A 4.194/2:190, 191, 193×2). Containing only *viññū-p, pasattha*: **Pañca,vera,bhaya S** (S 12.41/2:70), **Sakka S** (S 40.10/4:272, 279), **Cakka,vatti,rāja S** (S 55.1/5:343); **Puññābhisanda S 2** (A 4.52/2:57), **Gīhi S** (A 5.179/3:213), **Vera S 1** (A 9.27/4:407), **Vera S 2** (A 9.408/4:407).

<sup>16</sup> Such as the monk Vakkali, who is morally virtuous but does not exhort others to be so (DA 3:1025).

<sup>17</sup> Such as Upananda, whose is immoral, but exhorts others to be morally virtuous (DA 3:1025).

<sup>18</sup> Such as Devadatta, who is immoral, and exhorts others in the same way (DA 3:1025).

<sup>19</sup> Such as Mahā Kassapa, who is morally virtuous, and exhorts others to be so, too (DA 3:1025).

<sup>20</sup> Also called **Atta,hita Sikkhāpada S**.

courses, “well-being” (*hita*) refers to moral wellbeing and spiritual liberation (the Dharma), and not material or worldly happiness. Two out of four types of persons have personal wellbeing; one has only other-concern; and the last has neither. It is obvious here that the one who has personal wellbeing and strives for the wellbeing of others is the best.

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## The Discourse on Priorities

(A 3.40/1:147-150)

**1a** Bhikshus, there are these three priorities [supremacies].<sup>21</sup>

What are the three?

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| (1) Self-priority [the supremacy of self]          | ( <i>att'ādhipateyya</i> ),     |
| (2) World-priority [the supremacy for the world]   | ( <i>lok'ādhipateyya</i> ), and |
| (3) Dharma-priority [the supremacy for the Dhamma] | ( <i>dhamm'ādhipateyya</i> ).   |

**1b** And what is self-priority (*att'ādhipateyya*)?

Here, bhikshus, a monk, having gone into a forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house, reflects thus:

“It is not for the sake of *robes* that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness;

nor is it for the sake of *almsfood*;

nor is it for the sake of *lodgings*;

nor for the sake of *this or that state of existence* that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness.

But indeed I am pierced [beset]<sup>22</sup> by birth, decay, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, despair; pierced by suffering, overcome with suffering—

Surely the end of this whole mass of suffering might be known!

**1c** Now, if I were [148] to seek the kind of sense-pleasures that I abandoned through going forth from home into homelessness, or indeed, were to seek a worse kind<sup>23</sup>—that would not be proper for me!”

So he reflects thus:

“Effort shall be roused by me; I will not be lax, but be one with mindfulness established, unconfused; my body stilled, unruffled; the mind focussed, unified.”<sup>24</sup>

**1d** *Giving the highest priority to the self*, he abandons the unwholesome, cultivates the wholesome, abandons the blameworthy, cultivates the blameless, and looks after his own purity.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> “Priorities” (*ādhipateyya*): for meaning, see Intro (1); for 3 kinds, see Intro (2).

<sup>22</sup> **Otiṇṇo**, pp of *otarati* (cf *avatiṇṇa*; Skt & BHS *avatīrṇa*); here meaning “pierced by (with instr)”: *~o'mhi jātiyā jarā, maraṇena sokehi... upāyāsehi, dukkho, tiṇṇo dukkha, pareto* (M 1:192,6 f), (*yassa jāti anto pavitthā so jātiyā ~o nāma*, MA 2:231,17) = 460,5 f = 3:93,9 (-'amhi; vll in Ee ~'amha; *okinnāmhi*; *anto anupavittḥo*, SA 2:302,6) = A 1:147,27 f (**anupavittḥo**, “immersed in,” AA 2:243,17) = It 89,15 (-'amhā; = *otiṇṇā amhā*, ItA 2:113,20); *~o sātārūpena*, A 4:290,13\* qu Nc 63,8\* (*madhura, sabhāvena rāgena ~o ogāhito*, Nc 2:133,19); *issāya ~ā maraṇam upesi*, J 5:98,12' (ad 98,8\* “*issāvatiṇṇā*”). Also possibly “fixed upon (in a psychological sense,” ie infatuated, obsessed with. (CPD sv)

<sup>23</sup> “Of a worse kind,” Comy: **pāpiṭṭhatareti lāmakatāre**, “*pāpiṭṭhāyate* means ‘of a worse kind,’ ie more evil, base, etc” (AA 2:243).

<sup>24</sup> *So iti paṭisañcikkhati—āraddham kho pana me vīriyam bhavissati asallīnam, upaṭṭhitā sati asammutṭhā, passaddho kāyo asāraddho, samāhitam cittam ekaggan'ti.*

<sup>25</sup> *So attānam yeva ādhipateyyam karitvā akusalam pajahati kusalam bhāveti savajjam pajahati anavajjam bhāveti suddham attānam pariharati. Suddham attānam pariharati*, lit “he looks after the self’s purity.” Here, esp mental purity is meant, since purity of body and speech has previously (even temporarily) been achieved before

This is called the self-priority.<sup>26</sup>

**2a** And what is world-priority (*lok'ādhipateyya*)?

Here, bhikshus, a monk, having gone into a forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house, reflects thus:

“It is not for the sake of *robes* that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness; nor is it for the sake of *almsfood*; nor is it for the sake of *lodgings*; nor for the sake of *this or that state of existence* that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness.

But indeed I am pierced [beset] by birth, decay, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, despair; pierced by suffering, overcome with suffering—

Surely the end of this whole mass of suffering might be known!

**2b** Now, if I, having thus gone forth, were to have sensual thoughts, or to have thoughts of ill will, or were to have thoughts of violence<sup>27</sup>—

Great indeed is this society in the world!<sup>28</sup>—

Surely, in this great society, there are recluses and brahmins with psychic powers, with the divine eye, with the power to read the minds of others. Even from afar, they can see me; though close by, they may be invisible, and they know my mind, too!

They would know me thus:

“Look, sirs, at this son of family, gone forth from the home life into homelessness, but he dwells drenched in evil, unwholesome states!”

**2c** There are devas, too, with psychic powers, with the divine eye, with the power to read the minds of others. Even from afar, they can see me; though close by, they may be invisible, and they know my mind, too!

They, too, would know me thus:

“Look, sirs, at this son of family, gone forth from the home life into homelessness, but he dwells drenched in evil, unwholesome states!”

So he reflects thus:

“Effort shall be will be roused by me; **[149]** I will not be lax, but be one with mindfulness established, unconfused; my body stilled, unruffled; the mind focussed, unified.”

**2d** *Giving the highest priority to the world*, he abandons the unwholesome, cultivates the wholesome, abandons the blameworthy, cultivates the blameless, and looks after his own purity.

This is called the world-priority.<sup>29</sup>

meditating. Comy says that this specifically” (*pariyāyena*) refers to the fruit of arhathood, and “generally” (*nippariyāyena*), refers to the attaining of any of the fruits (*phala*) (AA 2:244). On meaning of *pariyāyena* and *nippariyāyena*, see *Pariyāya Nippariyāya* = SD 68.2.

<sup>26</sup> See Intro (3).

<sup>27</sup> This line apparently is an **anacoluthon**, ie, a abrupt break (ie an ellipse) in a thought-flow or syntax, and going into another idea or grammatical construction, often for rhetorical effect, eg, “Had ye been there—for what could that have done?” (John Milton in *Lycidas*, 1638), or more simply, “You really ought to—well, do it your way!” Or, from Shakespeare: “I will have such revenges on you both | That all the world shall—I will do such things,” (*King Lear* II.iv.271-272); “It came even from the heart of—O! she’s dead.” (*King Lear* V.iii.224). Scholars are not agreed on where the line should be drawn between anacoluthon and aposiopesis. According to Patrick Galloway (of San Francisco State Univ), while both figures involve an abrupt break in a line, ending in a dash and followed by a new sentence or fragment which tends to redirect the narrative flow, in an **aposiopesis** the reader understands what would have followed had the break not occurred, while in anacoluthon the break and redirect are so radical and abrupt that the result is ambiguity. Here is a good example of aposiopesis from Voltaire: “Once win upon your justice, to forgive— | I am distracted—“ (*Volpone* x.4-5). Here, we know that he meant to say “forgive me,” the line is not ambiguous and is, therefore, an aposiopesis. See <http://www.cyberpat.com/shakes/rhet.html>. For another example, see **Mahā Kamma,vibhaṅga S** (M 136) = SD 4.16 Intro (3).

<sup>28</sup> *Mahā kho panāyāṃ loka,sannivāso.*

**3a** And what is Dharma-priority (*dharm'ādhipateyya*)?

Here, bhikshus, a monk, having gone into a forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house, reflects thus:

“It is not for the sake of *robes* that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness; nor is it for the sake of *almsfood*; nor is it for the sake of *lodgings*; nor for the sake of *this or that state of existence* that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness.

But indeed I am pierced [beset] by birth, decay, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, despair; pierced by suffering, overcome with suffering—

Surely the end of this whole mass of suffering might be known!

**3b** Well-taught<sup>30</sup> is the True Teaching of the Blessed One, visible here and now, immediate [having nothing to do with time], inviting one to come and see, accessible [leading up to the goal], to be personally known by the wise.

Now, there are co-brahmacharis [colleagues in the holy life] who dwell, knowing and seeing.

Now, if I, having thus gone forth in this Dharma that is well-proclaimed, were to dwell lazily and heedlessly, it would not be proper for me.

So he reflects thus:

“Effort shall be roused by me; I will not be lax, but be one with mindfulness established, unconfused; my body stilled, unruffled; the mind focussed, unified.”

**3c** *Giving the highest priority to the Dharma*, he abandons the unwholesome, cultivates the wholesome, abandons the blameworthy, cultivates the blameless, and looks after his own purity.

This is called the Dharma-priority.<sup>31</sup>

These, bhikshus, are the three priorities [supremacies].

**4** *N'atthi loke raho nāma,  
Pāpa,kammaṃ pakubbato  
Attā te purisa jānāti  
saccaṃ vā yadi vā musā*

There is in the world no secret  
of one who does an evil deed.<sup>32</sup>  
You yourself, O man,  
know what is true or what is false!

**5** *Kalyāṇaṃ vata bho sakkhi  
attānaṃ atimaññasi  
Yo santaṃ attani pāpaṃ  
attānaṃ parigūhasi*

Alas! Sir, you, the witness,  
look down upon your own self!  
How can you hide the evil that there is  
in the self from the self? **[150]**

**6** *Passanti devā ca tathāgatā ca  
lokasmim bālaṃ visamaṃ carantaṃ  
Attādhipako sako care<sup>33</sup>  
lokādhipo ca nipako ca jhāyī*

The devas and the Tathagatas [Buddhas thus come]  
see the fool living falsely in the world.  
The one who lives with self as supreme,  
and the one for whom the world is supreme, should  
be wise and engaged in meditation.

**7** *Dharm'ādhipo ca anudhamma,cārī  
na hīyati sacca,parakkamo muni  
Pasayha māraṃ abhibhuyya antakaṃ*

For whom the Dharma is supreme, keeping to the Dharma,  
let him not give up being a sage striving for the truth.  
Having strived and conquered Māra the end-maker,

<sup>29</sup> See Intro (3).

<sup>30</sup> Here begins the 6 qualities of the Dharma (*cha dhamma,guṇa*) (M 1:37; A 3:285), which are commented on at Vism 7.68-88/213-218. See **Dharmānussati** = SD 15.9.

<sup>31</sup> See Intro (3).

<sup>32</sup> These 2 lines are esp well known: J 3:19; VA 1:215, 238.

<sup>33</sup> Be Ce Ee Ke Se; Ce *Tasmā hi attādhipateyyako ca*, “Therefore the one who gives priority to self and.”

*yo ca phusī jāti-k, khayam padhānavā* that striver who has touched the end of birth,  
*So tādiso loka, vidū sumedho* such a one is wise, knower of worlds:  
*sabbesu dhammesu atammayo muni ti.* a silent sage, unshaped by anything in anyway.<sup>34</sup>

(A 1:149 f; cf A 1:213 f, 4:252; Dh 178; J 3:19; VA 1:215, 238)

— evam —

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<sup>34</sup> See Nāṇānanda, *Concept and Reality*, 1971:29 & Santikāro Bhikkhu, “Atammayatā: The rebirth of a lost word.” *Crossroads* 4,2 1989:87-90. See *Atammayatā* = SD 19.13 ; also **Dependent Arising** = SD 5.15.