

Poṭṭhapāda Sutta

The Discourse About Poṭṭhapāda

[On the nature of consciousness and the self]

(Dīgha Nikāya 9/1:178-203)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003

Introduction

1 Poṭṭhapāda

The Poṭṭhapāda Sutta relates the story of the spiritual progress of two persons, Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer¹ and Citta the elephant trainer's son. Poṭṭhapāda is a great admirer of the Buddha as a teacher, and is a man of goodwill, as evident in his initiative in bringing Citta along to see the Buddha. Citta has joined and left the Order for six times [2], and through Poṭṭhapāda's effort, finally rejoins the Order and attains spiritual liberation. Poṭṭhapāda himself takes refuge in the Three Jewels.

The Sutta opens with the Buddha visiting Poṭṭhapāda in Mallikā's Park "with the tinduka-encircled single hall for public debates" [§§1-5]. Poṭṭhapāda warmly welcomes the Buddha and asks him questions about the higher states of meditation, beginning with the question "**How does the cessation of consciousness occur?**" [§6]. The Buddha goes on to explain to Poṭṭhapāda that "It is with causes, with conditions, that a person's consciousness arises or passes away" and hints at how this "cessation" can occur: "Some consciousness arise through training; some consciousness pass away through training" [7a]. So begins Poṭṭhapāda's spiritual journey.

The Sutta then recounts the *sāmañña,phala* stages of spiritual training.² The Buddha begins by describing how one renounces the world [§7bcd]. Then follows the well known Moralities (*sīlā*), the stock passages found in first 13 suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya [§§7e-8];³ the passages on mental development [§§9-10a] and the four form dhyanas [§§10b-13]; the three formless attainments [14-16],⁴ and the cessation of consciousness itself [§§17-19].

The Sāmañña,phala S (D 2) does not have the section of the formless attainments, going straight into "insight knowledge" (D 2.83-84/1:76) and so on. Understandably, the Buddha goes on to describe the first three of the four formless attainments here [§§14-16] to culminate in the cessation of consciousness [§17], in answer to Poṭṭhapāda's question. In instructions to meditation practitioners within the Buddhist fold, the texts as a rule end with the four form dhyanas, without going into the four formless attainments. Here the Buddha is instructing one who is familiar with the traditional system.

Poṭṭhapāda then questions the Buddha about "the peak of consciousness" [§§19-20] and the nature of the self [§§21-24]. At this crucial point, however, Poṭṭhapāda admits that he finds it difficult to under-

¹ "Wanderer," *paribbājaka*, ie a wandering ascetic. Poṭṭhapāda was a clothed wanderer (*channa,paribbājaka*) (DA 2:365). Rhys Davids says that Poṭṭhapādā is probably his clan (*gotta*) name, since it was common in the Buddha's day that recluses (*samaṇa*) were addressed by their clan name. For details, see D:RD 1:195, 244 n1.

² This scheme of the "fruits of recluseship" (*sāmañña,phala*) follows the threefold training of moral conduct (*sīlā,sikkhā*), mental concentration (*samādhi sikkhā*) and insight wisdom (*paññā sikkhā*). See Gethin 2001:207-212.

³ These two sections [7-8] (comprising 13 items or groups) on moral virtue occur verbatim (in whole or with some omissions) in all of the first 13 suttas and may once have formed a separate "tract" (D:RD 1:3 n1). From here on begins what has been called "the fruit of recluseship" sequence, ie the *sāmañña,phala* stages (Gethin (2001:207-212), comprising of "moral conduct" (*sīlā*) [7-8], "mental development" (*samādhi*) [9-16] and "wisdom" (*paññā*) [32-53]. Cf **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1.8-27/1:4-11).

⁴ The last of the 4 formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*), "the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception" (*n'eva saññā nāsaññ'āyatana*), is omitted evidently because consciousness there is simply too subtle for consideration. In terms of "consciousness" (here called *saññā* by Poṭṭhapāda) the "peak of consciousness" is the 3rd formless attainment, the sphere of nothingness (*ākāṅkāññ'āyatana*).

stand what has been taught to him, and the Buddha's answer in effect points out that an outsider, that is, a non-practitioner, would face such a difficulty [§25].

It is clear at this point that Poṭṭhapāda's association with the indisciplined and quarrelsome wanderers is a hindrance to his spiritual development, despite his admiration of the Buddha's fame and wisdom.⁵ Understandably, Poṭṭhapāda goes on to question the Buddha on **the ten undeclared questions** [§25-27]. The Buddha explains why he does not entertain the undeclared questions and the purpose of the spiritual life [§28-30]. The dialogue ends here, the Buddha leaves and the other wanderers then swarm around Poṭṭhapāda, chiding him for siding with the Buddha, but Poṭṭhapāda is adamant in his faith in the Buddha [§31].

Two or three days later, Poṭṭhapāda again meets the Buddha, this time bringing along Citta, the elephant trainer's son [§32]. Away from the gaze of the contentious wanderers, the Buddha praises Poṭṭhapāda as being the only sighted one amongst the spiritually blind wanderers and reminds him (also for the benefit of Citta) that he (the Buddha) does not entertain the ten undeclared questions and of the purpose of the spiritual life [§33abc]. The Buddha goes on to point out the wrong views regarding the self and the afterlife [§34], illustrating it with by two well known similes [§§35-38].

Aware that Poṭṭhapāda still clings to the wrong view of a self, the Buddha discourses on the three kinds of **"acquired self"** (*atta,paṭilābha*) [§39]. In this remarkable sequence we see the Buddha giving a series of unprompted teachings, where the Buddha answers, reflecting, as it were, Poṭṭhapāda's unasked questions, reflecting the latter's mental state, that is, his falling back on the self-view, by explaining how the acquired selves are to be abandoned [§40-42]. The Buddha points out that these selves can be abandoned "right here," that is, not in the hereafter [§§43-45], illustrating it with the simile of the staircase [§§46-47].

Citta then asks the Buddha on the acquired selves [§48] and the Buddha explains to him which one is "the real self" [§49-52], followed by the simile of the milk products [§52], and then makes the famous declaration: "For, Citta, these are merely common names, common expressions, common usages, common designations in the world that the Tathāgata uses without attachment to them [without misapprehending them]." [§53]. At this point, Poṭṭhapāda is convinced and takes refuge [§54]. Citta, on the other hand, spiritually uplifted, joins the Order for the final time [§55] and wins liberation [§56].

This remarkable sutta is, in **Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda's** words,

a detailed exposition of the gradual elimination of concepts... [Here] one finds the carpenter-like operation for the deconceptualisation of the mind, whereby each successive 'peg' is being replaced by a sharper one until at last he is able to pull out with ease the sharpest of them all... The Poṭṭhapāda Sutta thus vividly portrays how one can "step out," as it were, from the ambit of the centripetal forces of *papañca* [mental proliferation], having gradually forced one's way through the peripheral layers of the whirling maze of *papañca*, where those forces are at their weakest.

(Ñāṇananda 1971:24 f)

The last of these pegs, onto which consciousness hangs, is the passage on the removal of mental proliferation (*papañca*) [§17], the turning-point of the Sutta leading to Poṭṭhapāda's refuge-taking and Citta's renunciation.

2 Citta

Citta,⁶ the son of the elephant trainer, an intelligent man, having joined the order (the first time), studied under the Buddha and gained special skill in distinguishing subtle differences in the meaning of words. Six times, he left the Order and six times returned. His last quarrel was with Mahā Koṭṭhita, who objected to his constant interruption of the elder's discussions on the Dharma (*abhidhamma,kathā*)⁷ with

⁵ See Collins 1982:137 f.

⁶ For a list of other "Cittas" in the Canon, see **Citta Hatthi,sāriputta S** (A 6.60/3:392-399) = SD 7.14 Intro.

⁷ On the canonical usage of the prefix *abhi-*, see n on *abhisañña,nirodha* [6a].

Mahā Moggallāna (**Citta Hatthi,sāri,putta Sutta**).⁸ After his quarrel with Mahā Koṭṭhita, Citta seeks refuge with his friend Poṭṭhapāda, who, according to Buddhaghosa, brings him along to meet the Buddha [32], with the express purpose of reconciling him with the monks (DA 2:379).

Citta's final renunciation is recorded both in **Citta Hatthi,sāri,putta Sutta** (A 60.60.9/3:399) and the **Poṭṭhapāda Sutta** (D 9.56/1:203). The Commentaries recount the story of why Citta went forth seven times. In the time of Kassapa Buddha, he and another friend were monks. When his companion was dissatisfied with monkhood, Citta, coveting his companion monk's requisites, actually spoke in praise of the householder's life to a monk inducing him to leave the Order. As a result, in his last life, he left the Order six times before his last ordination whereby he gained spiritual liberation (MA 2:378 f; AA 3:402).⁹

3 The 10 indeterminable statements

The well known ten "unexplained or undeclared (*avyākata*) theses or speculative views "set aside" (*thapanīya*) by the Buddha due to their indeterminable nature and being questions wrongly put,¹⁰ are discussed in the following suttas:¹¹

Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta (M 63 *passim*/1:426-437) = SD 5.8,

Aggi Vaccha,gotta Sutta (M 72 *passim*/1:483-489),¹²

Vacchagotta Saṃyutta (S 33/3:257-263),

Abyākata Saṃyutta (S 10/4:374-403),

Āhu Sutta (U 6.4/66-69), and

Titthā Sutta (U 6.5/69 f).

and also listed in a number of other places in the Pāli Canon, such as:

Brahma,jāla Sutta (D 1.1.29-31/1:12-39) [most detailed explanation of "the world"],

Mahāli Sutta (D 6.16-19/157 f) [only on "the self" (*jīva*)],¹³ and

Pāsādikā Sutta (D 29.30-33/3:135-138) [only on the Tathāgata's state].

A different list of speculative views are given in the **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38).¹⁴

It is likely that these questions or statements formed a sort of questionnaire amongst the ancient Indian wanderers to determine a person's position. The Buddha left these questions aside, declaring that they have nothing to do with spiritual development. [§§25-26]

Walshe notes that this is only possible "if the word *Tathāgata* had a pre-Buddhist meaning, which may well be the case" (D:RD 555.219). The *avyākata* theses in the context of the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta are also discussed by Ñāṇananda in his *Concept and Reality* (1971:95-99).¹⁵

4 The two levels of language

Section 53 contains this important statement by the Buddha:

For, Citta, these are merely common names, common expressions, common usages, common designations in the world that the Tathāgata [Thus Come] uses without attachment to them.

⁸ A 6.60/3:392-399; DA 2:378.

⁹ For details of Citta's first renunciation, see **Kuddāla Jātaka** (J 70/1:311-315) and **Citta,hattha Vatthu** in the Dhammapada Comy (DhA 3.4/1:305-313).

¹⁰ Cf U 66. **Readings:** (1) Jayatilleke 1963:226-228, 242 ff, 334 f, 350-352, 473 ff; (2) Collins 1982:131-138 (§4.2); (3) Harvey 1995: 83-88 (*avyākata* questions), 239-245 (on propositions 7-10 on the Tathāgata); (4) Gethin 1998:66-68 (on **Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta S**, M 63). See also: (1) Intro to **Mahāli S** (D 6) in D:RD 1:186-190; (2) Intro to **Abhaya Rāja,kumāra S** (M 58) tr in SD 7.11.

¹¹ For a detailed analysis of the 10 points, see **Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 63) = SD 5.8 Intro (2).

¹² For details, see **Aggi Vaccha,gotta S** (M 72) = SD 6.15 Intro (2-3) (2004).

¹³ Where see T W Rhys Davids' Intro to his tr (D:RD 1:186 -188).

¹⁴ M 38.23/1:264 f = SD 7.10.

¹⁵ For more detailed discussion on *avyākata*, see **Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 63) = SD 5.8 Intro (2-3).

Loka,samaññā loka,niruttiyo loka,vohārā loka,paññattiyo yāhi Tathāgato voharati aparāmasan ti.
(D 9.53/1:202)

This important reference to the two truths is mentioned in **the Sumaṅgala,vilāsinī**, the Dīgha Commentary, as “conventional speech” (*sammuti,kathā*) and “speech of ultimate meaning” (*param’attha, kathā*). In **the Neyy’attha Nīt’attha Sutta** (A 2.3.5), the Buddha declares:

There are these two who misrepresent the Tathāgata. Which two?
One who represents a sutta of indirect meaning (*neyy’attha*) as a sutta of direct meaning (*nīt’attha*), and one who represents a sutta of direct meaning as a sutta of indirect meaning.
(A 2.3.5/1:60)

In this connection, Franklin Edgerton remarks that “In Pali neither is *ipso facto* preferred to the other; one errs only in interpreting one as if it were the other” but he adds that “in BHS, a *nītārtha* text...is recommended as a guide in preference to one that is *neyārtha*” (BHSD: *nītārtha*-).

In the Suttas, the Buddha is often recorded as speaking in terms of the conventional or relative truth (*sammuti,sacca* or *vohāra,sacca*), on the level of the idiom and wisdom of the world, by way of analogies, figures of speech, stories, object lessons and other literary devices. Although the Canon (as we have it) does not give examples of the two types of suttas mention in **the Neyy’attha Nīt’attha Sutta** (A 2.3.5), its commentary provides a very useful explanation. When the Buddha says that “There is an individual, O monks,” or “There are two individuals, O monks,” and so on, these are teaching of an indirect nature since in reality there are no individuals. Where the Buddha declares “This is impermanent, suffering and without a self,” this is a direct teaching. (AA 2:118, cf 1:94)¹⁶

Where his audience is capable of higher understanding, the Buddha would speak in terms of the ultimate truth (*param’attha,sacca*), according to which “existence is a mere process of physical and mental phenomena within which, or beyond which, no real ego-entity nor any abiding substance can ever be found.”¹⁷ The Abhidhamma texts employ only the language of ultimate truth. In modern times, the language of ultimate truth might be compared to the technical lingo of science, medicine and technology, where the terms have specific meanings and usage within a particular field.

The commentary on **the Anaṅgana Sutta** (M 5), quotes this untraced verse which is also found in the Aṅguttara Commentary and other Commentaries, with slight variations in the fourth line in each case:

The Self-awakened Buddha, best of all speakers, spoke two truths,
The conventional and the ultimate, no third is found.
A conventional statement is true because of the world’s common usage;
An ultimate statement is true by [the characteristic of] the nature of things.¹⁸
Thus the Blessed One, the Teacher, skilled in this world’s speech,
Uses the common convention and yet is not one who speaks falsehood.
(MA 1:138; cf DA 2:383 = SA 2:77; AA 1:95 = ItA 1:82; KvuA 34)

5 Nibbidā

At the height of the sutta, the Buddha states that he has not declared the ten points [25]

Because it [their declaration] is unbeneficial [not connected to the goal]; it is not connected to the Dharma; it does not belong to the fundamentals of the holy life; it does not lead to revulsion [dis-illusionment], to dispassion, to cessation [of suffering], to inner peace, to direct knowledge, to awakening, to nirvana. [28]

¹⁶ See Walshe D:RD 31-33; Jayatilleke 1963:361-368; Collins 1982:153-156.

¹⁷ BDict: paramattha.

¹⁸ “By [the characteristic of] the nature of things,” *dhammānaṃ bhūta,lakkhaṇaṃ* (MA 1:138 = AA 1:95 = ItA 1:82); *bhūta,lakkhaṇaṃ* (DA 2:383); *tatha,lakkhaṇaṃ* (KvuA 34). Only MA reading has lines ef, omitted in the others.

And that he has declared the four noble truths [29]

Because it [their declaration] is beneficial [connected to the goal]; it is connected to the Dharma; it belongs to the fundamentals of the holy life; it leads to revulsion [disillusionment], to dispassion, to cessation [of suffering], to inner peace, to direct knowledge, to awakening, to nirvana. [30]

The first key term here is of course “disillusionment [revulsion],” *nibbindā* (Skt & BHS *nirvid* or *nirveda*): “weariness, disgust with worldly life, tedium, aversion, indifference, disenchantment” (PED). Its verb, *nibbindati*, is resolved as *nis* + *vindati*, “he knows; he finds.” The root is √VID, to know (clearly and truly), as in *vijjā*, “religious knowledge, spiritual wisdom.” Both as a verb and as a noun, it forms the first of a well known series of words describing the spiritual turning-point to sainthood: *nibbidā*, *virāga*, *vimutti* and *nibbāna*, as in the formula: *etaṃ ekanta, nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya na upasamāya na abhismāya na abhisaññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattati*.¹⁹

As shown in suttas like **the Alaggadūpama Sutta** (M 22), this disillusionment (*nibbidā*) marks the culmination of insight, just before the attainment of the supramundane path.²⁰ The “*nibbidā* pericope” runs thus:

Seeing thus [their true nature], bhikshus, an instructed noble disciple becomes disillusioned²¹ with form, disillusioned with feeling, disillusioned with perception, disillusioned with formations, disillusioned with consciousness.

Being disillusioned, lust fades away. Through the fading away of lust [that is, dispassion], (the mind) is liberated. When it is liberated, there comes the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’

He knows: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done what had to be done, there is no more of this state of being.’
(M 22.28-28/1:138)

The Vibhaṅga, in its analysis of knowledge (*ñāṇā, vatthuni*), succinctly describes how disillusionment forms the basis for seeing true reality: “When there are perception and attention accompanied by dispassion and directed to fading away of lust [dispassion], it is the wisdom that partakes of penetration (into reality).” (Vbh 330)²² This is spoken of each of the four dhyanas and the four formless attainments (Vbh 330 f).

In the closing paragraph of “the *nibbidā* pericope,” the sentence “his lust fades away” (*virajjati*) marks the attainment of the supramundane path (*magga*), that is, sainthood, when the fetters are finally eliminated. “It (the mind) is liberated” (*vimuttan ti*) refers to the attainment of the supramundane fruition (*phala*). The arhat’s subsequent reviewing knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa, ñāṇa*) is shown by the phrase “there comes the knowledge” and “he understands: ‘Birth is destroyed...’.”

6 Other terms

The Poṭṭhapāda Sutta contains two interesting terms, one of which is unique to the Sutta, that is, the word *saññā*, which, as used by Poṭṭhapāda, means “consciousness” [§6a]. The term forms part of the compound *abhisaññā, nirodha* [§6a]. Here *abhi* prefixes the whole phrase and not just *saññā*, and simply means “concerning” (*ettha abhī ti upasagga, mattam*, DA 2:369), translated as “concerning,” and not as “higher” (as in post-canonical usage). Here *saññā* does not mean “perception” in the Buddhist sense, but

¹⁹ D 1:189; S 5:82, 179, 255, 361; A 3:83, 4:143, 5:216. For other connections, see PED: *nibbidā*.

²⁰ M 22.26-29/1:138 f. See Vism 21.43-44/650 f & *Nibbidā* = SD 17.15.

²¹ “He becomes disillusioned” (*nibbindati*). Comy: He is dissatisfied, disgusted, feels revolted towards. This disillusionment marks the culmination of insight, just before the attainment of the supramundane path (Vism 21.43-44/650 f). “His lust fades away” (*virajjati*) marks the attainment of the supramundane path (*magga*), when the fetters are finally eliminated. “It (the mind) is liberated” (*vimuttan ti*) refers to the attainment of the supramundane fruition (*phala*). The arhat’s subsequent reviewing knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa, ñāṇa*) is shown by the phrase “there comes the knowledge” and “he understands: ‘Birth is destroyed...’,” in the following paragraph.

²² *Nibbidā, saḥgaṭā saññā, manasikārā samudācaranti virāgūpasamhitā nibbedha, bhāginī paññā*.

as used by certain wanderers to mean “consciousness.” The Commentary says that the term *abhisaññā-nirodha* means “the cessation of consciousness, a momentary cessation” (*citta,nirodhe khaṇika,nirodhe*) (DA 2:369).

The other interesting term used in the Sutta is the abstract noun, *atta,paṭilābha* (“acquired self”),²³ which the Commentaries gloss as *atta,bhāva.paṭilābha* (DhsA 308), and which the Dīgha Commentary says refers to the three realms of existence (the sense-realm, the form realm and the formless realm) (DA 2:380). In **Sevitabbāsevitabba Sutta** (M 114.11/3:52), *atta,bhāva.paṭilābha* refers to the acquisition of individuality, that is, a mode of rebirth. The same Sutta describes two kinds of *atta,bhāva.paṭilābha*, one that increases unwholesome states and the other decreasing unwholesome states (id). **The Atta,bhāva.-paṭilābha Sutta** (A 4.172/2:159 f) mentions four types of individualities, acquired through one’s own volition, through another’s volition, through both, or through neither. These four are also listed in **Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 1.11(38)/3:231).

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²³ Collins 1982:156-160=§5.2.1-5.2.2.

The Discourse to Poṭṭhapāda

(D 9/1:178-203)

[178]

1 Thus have I heard.

Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's park in Jeta's grove²⁴ near Sāvattthī.²⁵ At that time the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda, was staying in the tinduka-encircled single hall in Mallikā's Park for public debates.²⁶ And there was with him a great following of wanderers, some three hundred.²⁷

2 ²⁸Then, the Blessed One, having dressed himself in the morning, and taking robe and bowl, entered Sāvattthī for alms.

Then the Blessed One thought:

“It is too early to go into Sāvattthī for alms. What if I were to go Mallikā's Park with the tinduka-encircled single hall for public debates, and meet the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda?”

Then the Blessed One went to Mallikā's Park with the tinduka-encircled single hall for public debates.

3 Now at that time the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda was sitting with a large crowd of wanderers who were all talking loudly, shouting, making loud noises, and indulging in various **low talk**,²⁹ such as these: talk about kings, robbers, ministers of state; about armies, dangers, and wars; about food and drink; about clothing, furniture, garlands, and scents; about relatives; about vehicles; about villages, towns, cities, the countryside; about women and heroes; the gossips of the street and at the well; tales of the dead; tales of diversity [philosophical discussions of the past and future], talk about the creation of the world and of the sea, and talk of whether things exist or not [or, talk about gain and loss].³⁰ [179]

²⁴ *Jeta, vana*, so called, says Comy, because it is “grown, maintained and guarded by prince Jeta” (*tañ hi Jetena rāja, kumārena ropitaṃ saṃvaddhitaṃ paripālitaṃ*) (MA 1:60; KhpA 111; PmA 3:533). As such, it is not an ordinary wild forest, but a cultivated grove.

²⁵ On *tr sāvattthiyaṃ* as “near (*samīpe*) Sāvattthī,” rather than “*in* Sāvattthī,” see Comys, eg SA 1:13; AA 1:15; KhpA 112; UA 57; PmA 3:534.

²⁶ *Tena kho pana samayena uggāha, māno paribbājako samaṇa, maṇḍikā, putto samayappavādake tindukācīre eka, sālake Mallikāya ārāme paṭivasati*. Parallel passage is found only once again (in the Canon) in **Samaṇa, maṇḍikā S** (M 78.1/2:22) = SD 18.9. The park was built by queen Mallikā, the chief consort of rajah Pasenadi of Kosala. It had beautiful flower plants and fruit trees. At first only one hall was built, which accounts for its name, but later many halls named for various teachers of great merit, such as Poṭṭhapāda, but the name “the single hall” was retained (MA 3:266). Comy adds that *samaya-p, pavādaka* (“for the debating of the masses”) refers to the park (*ārāma*) where various groups of brahmins (*brāhmaṇa*), Jains (*nigaṇṭha*), naked ascetics (*acela*), wanderers (*paribbājaka*) and other teachers would assemble here to expound and discuss their ideas and beliefs (DA 2:365; MA 3:266); see J 3:405, 4:437. Hence, *samaya-p, pavādake* refers to the park, not the debating hall. TW Rhys Davids notes that “the very fact that there is the erection of such a place is another proof of the freedom of thought prevalent in the Eastern valley of the Ganges in the 6th century BC.” (D:RD 1:245 n2). Such a hall is probably generically known as a *kutūhala, sālā* (lit “commotion hall”), ie a debating hall: see **Kutūhala, sālā S** (S 44.9/4:398-400) = SD 23.15. “Tinduka,” *tindukā*, ie *Diospyros embryopteris*. “The single hall” or “the one hall,” *eka, sālaka* (D 1:178 = M 2:22 f; SA 1:10 = MA 1:8 = DA 32 = AA 1:11 = KhA 1:105 = UA 19).

²⁷ This number is also given in **Samaṇa, maṇḍikā S** (M 78.1/2:22) = SD 18.9, but *wil vll*.

²⁸ §§2-6 is stock and appears almost verbatim at M 1:513, 2:1, 2; S 4:398.

²⁹ *Tiracchāna, kathā*, lit “animal talk.” As animals mostly walk parallel to the earth, so this kind of talk does not lead on upwards. This section occurs *mutatis mutandis* in **Udumbarikā Sihanāda S** (D 25.2/3:36 f). Cf **Lohicca S**, where it is stated that “wrong view leads to one of two destinies: hell or an animal birth” (D 12.10/1:228). For a fuller list, called “the moralities” (*sīla*), see **Brahmajāla S** (D 1.43-62/1:4-12) = SD 25.2 & Intro (3), & **Sāmañña-phala S** (D 2.43-63/ 1:63-70) = SD 8.10 & Intro (3).

³⁰ *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 Ñāṇamoli translations of **Sandaka S**, M 76) is preferable.

4 Then the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda saw the Blessed One approaching from a distance, and he called his own company of followers to order, saying:

“Good sirs, be quiet please! Don’t make a noise, good sirs! The recluse Gotama is approaching. He is one of those good folks who are fond of quiet; who speaks in praise of quiet. If he sees that this company is quiet, he will most likely want to come and visit us.”

When this was said, the wanderers fell silent.

5 Then the Blessed One approached the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda. Then the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda said this to the Blessed One:

“Let bhante³¹ Blessed One come! Welcome,³² bhante Blessed One! It has been a long time since bhante Blessed One has made this exception [gone out of his way], that is, in coming here.³³ Let bhante Blessed One take a seat. Here is a seat that has been prepared.”

The Blessed One sat down on the prepared seat, and the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda, taking a low seat, sat down at one side.

Poṭṭhapāda’s question

Then the Blessed One said to him:

“Poṭṭhapāda, what was the subject of your conversation just now? What talk have I interrupted?”³⁴

6a When the Blessed One had said this, the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda said:

“Bhante, never mind the subject that those assembled (here) have been discussing just now. It would not difficult for the venerable Blessed One to hear about it later.

But, bhante, on several occasions, when various teachers, recluses and brahmins had met and were seated in the debating hall, the talk concerning the cessation of consciousness³⁵ arose thus, [180]

‘How does the cessation of consciousness occur?’

6b (1) In this regard, some say: ‘A person’s consciousness arises or passes away without reason or cause. At the time when it arises within him, he becomes conscious; when it passes away, he becomes unconscious.’³⁶

Thus some explain the cessation of consciousness.

³¹ *Bhante* or “venerable sir,” here used with *Bhagavato*, but more commonly by itself. It is interesting that he addresses the Buddha not as “Gotama,” as wanderers usually would, but as *bhante*, reflecting his deep respect for the Buddha: see eg §6f. In *Nakula, pitā S* (S 22.1), Nakula, pita addresses the Buddha in the same way (S 22.1.3/3:1-5). However, the Magadha high ministers Vassakāra and Sunīdha address the Buddha as *bho Gotamo* (D 16.1.3/2:73).

³² “Let...Welcome!” *etu kho bhante Bhagavā, sāgataṃ*. Poṭṭhapāda uses the 3rd imp sg *etu* (“Let ...come!”) as a polite formality. As in *Udumbarikā Sīha, nāda S* (D 25.7/3:39).

³³ “Please come,...to come here,” *etu kho bhante Bhagavā svagataṃ bhante Bhagavato, cirassam kho marisā imam pariāyam akāsi yadidaṃ idh’āgamanāya*, using the 3rd imp sg *etu* (“Let ...come!”) as a polite formality (D 25.7a/3:39): so too in *Poṭṭhapāda S* (D 9.5/1:179). In the phrase, *pariāyam akāsi*, “made this exception,” Comy glosses *pariāya* as *vāra* (“occasion, opportunity”) (UA 115). This is stock: **D** 1:90 (DA 2:369), 179 (see D:RD 1:245 n2), 2:270, 3:2, 39; **M** 1:252 (MA 2:300 f), 326, 481, 2:2, 30, 3:7; **S** 1:142; **A** 3:332 (AA 3:363), 4:76; **U** 13 (UA 115); **J** 3:359. In *Brahma Nimantanika S* (M 49), Baka Brahmā says: *ehi kho marisā, sāgataṃ marisā, cirassam kho marisā imam pariāyam akāsi yadidaṃ idh’āgamanāya*, which is cold formality.

³⁴ This episode of the Buddha “interrupting” a conversation is stock, eg, D 1.1.4/1:2, M 119.2/3:89, U 2.2/11.

³⁵ *Abhisaññā, nirodha*. Here *abhi* prefixes the whole phrase and not just *saññā*, and simply means “concerning” (*ettha abhī ti upasagga, mattam*, DA 2:369), tr as “concerning,” and not as “higher.” Here the *saññā* does not mean “perception” in the Buddhist sense, but as used by certain wanderers to mean “consciousness.” Comy says that the term *abhisaññā, nirodha* means “the cessation of consciousness, a momentary cessation” (*citta, nirodhe khaṇika, nirodhe*) (DA 2:369).

³⁶ In these two preceding sentences, “consciousness” is given in the plural (*saññā*), which sounds awkward in English, where it is rendered as the collective singular. This statement and the others that follow are consistently given in the present simple (reflecting opinions) even though the main verb (*āhamisu*, “they said”) is in the past tense.

6c (2) Another says thus:³⁷ ‘No, sir, that is not how it is! It should be like this: sir, the consciousness is the person’s self. It comes and goes: when it comes, he is conscious; when it goes, he is unconscious.’³⁸ Thus some explain the cessation of consciousness.

Thus some explain the cessation of consciousness.

6d (3) Another says thus: ‘No, sir, that is not how it is! It should be like this: now, sir, there are recluses and brahmins of great power, of great influence. They draw consciousness into the person, or they draw it out of him.’³⁹ When they draw consciousness into the person, he is thereby conscious; when they draw it out of him, he is thereby unconscious.’⁴⁰

Thus some explain the cessation of consciousness.

6e (4) Another says thus: ‘No, sir, that is not how it is! It should be like this: now, sir, there are deities of great power, of great influence. They draw consciousness into the person, or they draw it out of him.’⁴¹ When they draw consciousness into the person, he is thereby conscious; when they draw it out of him, he is thereby unconscious.’⁴²

Thus some explain the cessation of consciousness.

6f It is in this connection that the thought of the venerable Blessed One arises in me: ‘Ah, the Blessed One, the Well-farer, he is very skilled in these matters! The Blessed One understands the cessation of consciousness.’

How then, bhante, does the cessation of consciousness occur?”

The spiritual training

7a “Poṭṭhapāda, in this matter, those recluses and brahmins who say, ‘A person’s consciousness arises or passes away without reason or cause’—they are wrong from the start. Why is that?

Poṭṭhapāda, **it is with causes, with conditions, that a person’s [181] consciousness arises or passes away**. Some consciousness arise through training; some consciousness pass away through training.”

7b “And what is that training?” the Blessed One said.⁴³

Here, Poṭṭhapāda, there arises in the world the Tathāgata [Thus Come], an Arhat, fully self-awakened, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, well-gone, knower of the worlds, unexcelled trainer of tamable persons, teacher of beings human and divine, awakened, blessed.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras [evil ones], and its Brahmās [high gods], this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers⁴⁴ and people, he makes it

³⁷ *Tam añño evam āha*, lit “regarding this, others say thus.”

³⁸ Comy explains that they came to this conclusion in reference to such instances as that of the rishi Miga,siṅga, who, through love for the celestial nymph Alambusā, fell into a trance (*asaññaka, bhāva*), ie fell into a coma, that lasted for three years (DA 2:369). Rhys Davids remarks that this must be a different tale from that of the rishi Isi,siṅga of J 523, whom Alambusā tries in vain to seduce. Cf Vv 18.11, 50.26.

³⁹ *Te imassa purisassa saññam upakaḍḍhanti pi apakaḍḍhanti pi*, lit “They draw in the person’s consciousness or they draw it out.”

⁴⁰ Comy says that this view was based on the way in which priests of the Atharva Veda work charms (*athabbanikā athabbanam payojenti*), making a person appear as if he has been beheaded, or dismembered, or dead, and then bring him back to his normal state (DA 2:370). However, during the Buddha’s time, only the first 3 Vedas (Ṛg Veda, Sāma Veda and Yajur Veda). See **Tevijja S** (D 13) SD 1.8 Intro (2).

⁴¹ *Te imassa purisassa saññam upakaḍḍhanti pi apakaḍḍhanti pi*, lit “They draw in the person’s consciousness or they draw it out.”

⁴² Comy curiously relates the story of a female temple slave (*yakkha, dāsī*), having performed her religious duties (incl taking intoxicants) throughout the night, falls into a drunken sleep. On rising, she forms the notion, “During sleep, the consciousness ceases; at the time of waking, one emerges from the cessation (of consciousness)” (*sutta, kāle nirodham samāpannā, pabuddha, kāle nirodhā vuṭṭhitā ti*) (DA 2:370). Rhys Davids (D:RD 1:246) does not have this para.

⁴³ For the answer to this question, see §§10-16.

⁴⁴ *deva*, here in the sense of “devas by convention” (*sammatti, deva*), ie kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are “gods by rebirth” (*upapatti, deva*) and “gods by purification” (*visuddhi, deva*), ie the Buddhas, Pratyeka Buddhas and Arhats (Nc 307 KhA 123).

known to others. He teaches the Dharma, good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, endowed with meaning and phrasing. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

7c ⁴⁵A householder or householder's son, hearing the Dharma, gains faith⁴⁶ in the Tathāgata 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 abandons all his wealth and relatives, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

7d When he has thus gone forth, he lives restrained by the rules of the monastic code [Pāṭimokkha], possessed of proper conduct and resort.⁴⁷ 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.

(A) MORAL CONDUCT⁴⁸

THE LESSER SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

[The Moralities §7-8⁴⁹ = Sāmañña,phala Sutta (D 2.43-63/1:65-70)]

Sāmañera,sikkhā 1-3

[D 1:63]

7e [D 2.43] **And how, Poṭṭhapāda, is a monk accomplished in moral virtue?**

(1) Here, Poṭṭhapāda, having abandoned the destruction of life, he abstains from destroying life. He dwells with rod and sword laid down [with neither fear nor force], conscientious,⁵⁰ merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

This is part of his moral virtue.⁵¹

⁴⁵ From hereon for the rest of the section as at **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.41-62/1:40-68).

⁴⁶ “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlaka,saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (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). *Amūlaka* = “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 in 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).

⁴⁷ Resort (*go,cara*), lit “the cow’s routine path or pasture”. Here it refers to two aspects of the renunciant’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 renunciants 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” means “accomplished in proper conduct of body and of mind”.

⁴⁸ For a summary of this whole section on moral virtue, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2) = SD 8.10 Intro (3).

⁴⁹ These two sections [7-8] (comprising 13 items or groups) on moral virtue occur verbatim (in whole or with some omissions) in all of the first 13 suttas and may once have formed a separate “tract” (D:RD 1:3 n1). From here on begins what has been called “the fruit of recluseship” sequence, ie the *samañña,phala* stages (Gethin (2001:207-212), comprising of “moral conduct” (*sīla*) [7-8], “mental development” (*samādhi*) [9-16] and “wisdom” (*paññā*) [32-53]. Cf **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1.8-27/1:4-11).

⁵⁰ *lajjī*, “feel shame, modest”, explained in the Comy on S 1:73 as “one who has moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*).” Opp *alajjī*, shameless.

(2) Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a pure mind.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(3) Having abandoned incelibacy, he lives a celibate life, living apart, refraining from the sexual act,⁵² the way of the village.⁵³

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

Right Speech

[D 2.44] (4) Having abandoned false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds 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. [I:64] What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there.

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

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(6) Having abandoned harsh speech, he abstains from harsh 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 in accordance with the goal [or, what is beneficial].⁵⁴ He speaks on the Doctrine and the Discipline. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, backed by reason, measured, connected with the goal.⁵⁵

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

General

[D 2.45] (8) He abstains from damaging seeds and plant life.⁵⁶

Sāmaṇera, sikkhā 6-10

(9) He eats only once a day, refraining from the evening meal and from food at improper times.⁵⁷

(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

(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].⁵⁸

⁵¹ **Brahmajāla S** refrain: *Thus the ordinary person would praise the Tathāgata* (D 1.8).

⁵² *Brahma, cariya* is the supreme conduct or holy life, ie celibacy. DA points out that it involves refraining from other forms of erotic behaviour besides intercourse.

⁵³ *gāma, dhamma*, ie the way of the householder, vulgar (in the sense of being associated with the masses).

⁵⁴ *attha, vādī*.

⁵⁵ *attha, samhitam*.

⁵⁶ Curiously, this replaces the precept against intoxicants which is omitted.

⁵⁷ “Improper times” here means between noon and the following dawn (V 1:83).

- (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 virtue.

THE INTERMEDIATE SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

7f [D 2.46] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are addicted to damaging seeds and plant life such as these: plants propagated from roots, stems, joints, buddings, and seeds—he abstains from damaging seeds and plant life [I:65] such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 2.47] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are addicted to 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.

[D 2.48] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are addicted to watching shows such as these: dancing, singing, music, plays, ballad recitations, hand-clapping, cymbals and drums, painted scenes,⁵⁹ acrobatic and conjuring tricks,⁶⁰ 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.

[D 2.49] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are addicted to 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, 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, guessing thoughts, mimicking deformities—he abstains from heedless and idle games such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 2.50] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are addicted to 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 fringe, 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—[I:66] he abstains from using high and luxurious furnishings such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 2.51] 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

⁵⁸ 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.

⁵⁹ *Sobha, nagarakaṃ*, “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”.

⁶⁰ *Caṇḍālaṃ vaṃsaṃ dhopanaṃ*, 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.

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.

[D 2.52] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are addicted to low chatter,⁶¹ 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 and heroes; the gossip of the street and the well; tales of the dead; tales of diversity [philosophical discussions of the past and future], the creation of the world and of the sea, and talk of whether things exist or not [or, talk about gain and loss]⁶²—he abstains from talking about low topics such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 2.53] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are addicted to debates such as these—

‘You understand this doctrine and discipline? I’m the one who understands this doctrine and discipline. How could you understand this doctrine and discipline? You’re practising wrongly. I’m practising rightly. I’m being consistent. You’re not. What should be said first you said last. What should be said last you said first. What you took so long to think out has been refuted. Your doctrine has been overthrown. You are defeated. Go and try to salvage your doctrine; extricate yourself if you can!’⁶³—he abstains from debates such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

[D 2.54] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are addicted to relaying messages [1:67] and running errands for people such as these: kings, ministers of state, nobles [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.

[D 2.55] 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.⁶⁴

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

THE GREAT SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

7g [D 2.56] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as forecasting by:

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;

⁶¹ *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).

⁶² *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 Ñāṇamoli translations of **Sandaka S**, M 76) is preferable.

⁶³ Also in **Mahā Sakuludāyī S** (M 77) and **Uppāda S** (S 46.9). See **Brahmajāla S**, D 1:2 f.

⁶⁴ For details, see Vism 1.61-82.

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 knowledge of 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.

[D 2.57] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as forecasting:

determining lucky and unlucky gems, garments, staffs, swords, spears, arrows, bows, and other weapons;
 determining lucky and unlucky women, 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,⁶⁵ tortoises, and other animals
 — he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.

[D 2.58] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts such as forecasting, thus: [1:68]

the rulers⁶⁶ will march forth;
 the rulers will march forth and return;
 our rulers will attack, and their rulers will retreat;
 their rulers will attack, and our rulers will retreat;
 there will be triumph for our rulers and defeat for their rulers;
 there will be triumph for their rulers and defeat for our rulers;
 thus there will be triumph, thus there will be defeat

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

[D 2.59] 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.

⁶⁵ *Kaṇṇika, lakkhaṇaṃ*, 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.

⁶⁶ *Raṇṇāṃ* (gen pl), ie the joint leaders (rajah) of a republican state in ancient India.

[D 2.60] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by wrong livelihood through the low arts [1:69] such 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

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

[D 2.61] 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];⁶⁷
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.

[D 2.62] 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-medicines;
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.⁶⁸

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

Confidence through practising the above precepts

8 [D 2.63] Poṭṭhapāda, a monk thus accomplished in moral virtue sees no danger anywhere owing to his restraint through moral virtue.

Just as a head-anointed kshatriya who has defeated his enemies sees no danger anywhere from his enemies, [1:70] in the same way the monk thus accomplished in moral virtue sees no danger owing to his restraint through moral virtue.

Possessed this aggregate of noble moral virtue, he experiences within himself a joy that is blameless.

This, Poṭṭhapāda, is how a monk is accomplished in moral virtue.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Viruddha, gabbha, karaṇaṃ.*

⁶⁸ *D 1.27 ends here.* It is the practice of medicine for gain that is here condemned. (Walshe)

(B) MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Sense-restraint (Custody of the senses)**9a [D 2.64] And how, Poṭṭhapāda, does a monk guard the sense-doors?**

Here, Poṭṭhapāda, on seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at any sign or detail by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful qualities such as covetousness and displeasure⁷⁰ might assail him. [182]

On hearing a sound with the ear...

On smelling a smell with the nose...

On tasting a taste with the tongue...

On feeling a touch with the body...

On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he does not grasp at any sign or detail by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the mind—evil, unskillful qualities such as covetousness or grief might assail him.

Possessing this noble sense-restraint over the sense-faculties, he experiences within himself a joy that is blameless.

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

Mindfulness & full awareness**9b [D 2.65] And how, Poṭṭhapāda, is a monk possessed of mindfulness and full awareness?**

Here, Poṭṭhapāda, when going forward and returning, he acts with full awareness.

When looking toward and looking away...

When bending and extending his limbs...

When carrying his outer robe, his upper robe, and his bowl...

When eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting...

When urinating and defaecating...

When walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and remaining silent, he acts with full awareness.

This, Poṭṭhapāda, is how [1:71] a monk is possessed of mindfulness and full awareness.

Contentment**9c [D 2.66] And how is a monk content?**

⁶⁹ For a summary of this whole section on moral virtue, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2) = SD 8.10 Intro (3).

⁷⁰ “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā,domanassam*, 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 the **Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S**: “Monks, 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 (*ādinava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world’.” (A 1:258/3.101, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

Here, Poṭṭhapāda, he is content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to maintain 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 maintain his belly, and wherever he goes, he takes only these with him.

This, Poṭṭhapāda, is how a monk is content.

Abandoning the mental hindrances

9d [D 2.67] Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue and this aggregate of noble sense-restraint and this aggregate of noble mindfulness and full awareness and this aggregate of 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.

Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.⁷¹

9e [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 worry**, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and worry.

(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 the hindrances

9f [D 2.69] (1) Suppose, Poṭṭhapāda, 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 maintaining his wife. The thought would occur to him, *[I:72]*

‘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 maintaining my wife.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

[D 2.70] (2) Suppose, Poṭṭhapāda, 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.

[D 2.71] (3) Suppose, Poṭṭhapāda, 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.

[D 2.72] (4) Suppose, Poṭṭhapāda, 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... Now I am released from that slavery, subject to myself, not subject to others, freed, able to go where I like.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness. *[I:73]*

⁷¹ 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.

[D 2.73] (5) Suppose, Poṭṭhapāda, that a man, carrying money and goods, is journeying on a road through the wilderness. As time passes, he eventually emerges from the wilderness, safe and sound, with no loss of property. The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, carrying money and goods, I was journey on a road through the wilderness. Now I have emerged from the wilderness, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’ Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

[D 2.74] In the same way, Poṭṭhapāda, when these five hindrances are not abandoned in himself, the monk regards it as a debt, a sickness, a prison, slavery, a journey on a road through the wilderness.⁷²

10a [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.

Resultant joy and peace

10b 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.⁷³

THE FOUR FORM DHYANAS⁷⁴

10c (1) “Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, the monk enters and dwells in the **first dhyana**, accompanied by applied thought and sustained thought, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude.⁷⁵

And if he has any previous sense-desires, it disappears.⁷⁶

At that time there arises a subtle but true perception⁷⁷ of zest and joy born of seclusion, and he becomes conscious of this zest and joy.

Thus it is through training that a state of consciousness⁷⁸ arises, and through training a state of consciousness passes away.

This is the training,” said the Blessed One.

11 (2) “Furthermore, Poṭṭhapāda, with the stilling of applied thought and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he attains and dwells in **the second dhyana**, free from applied thought and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness *born of concentration*.⁷⁹

⁷² MA 2:318-321 explains this section in some detail: see Appendix to **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39) tr in Sutta Discovery 7.16.

⁷³ *Tass’ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīṇe attani samanupassato pāmojjaṃ jāyati. Pamuditassa pīti jāyati. Pītimanassa 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.

⁷⁴ This section is identical to that in **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.75-82/1:73-76) except for the similes.

⁷⁵ On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see **The Laity and Dhyana** = SD 8 (2005).

⁷⁶ *Tassa yā purimā kāma,saññā sā nirujjhati*, lit “And any previous sense desire of his disappears.”

⁷⁷ Comy explains “a subtle but true perception,” *sukhuma,sacca,saññā*, as *vivekajehi pīti,sukhehi sampayutta*, “conjoined with zest and joy born of seclusion” (DA 2:372). This is a stock description of the 1st dhyana with the additional phrase, *sukhuma,sacca,saññā*. *Sukhuma*, meaning “subtle,” here refers to the form dhyana, while its opp *oḷārika*, “gross” refers to the consciousness of the sense-world. On the usage of *sacca* here, see Harvey 1995:24 f. On *viveka*, see Gethin 2001:166-168.

⁷⁸ “A state of consciousness,” *ekā sannā*, lit “one consciousness.” This applies to §§10-16.

⁷⁹ *Idha Poṭṭhapāda vitakka,vicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodi,bhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhījaṃ pīti,sukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.* The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuñhī,bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking 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

His former subtle but true perception of zest and joy born of seclusion disappears.

At that time [183] there arises a subtle but true perception of zest and joy born of concentration, and he becomes conscious of that zest and joy.

Thus it is through training that a state of consciousness arises, and through training a state of consciousness passes away.

This is the training,” said the Blessed One.

12 (3) “Furthermore, Poṭṭhapāda, with the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’⁸⁰

His former subtle but true perception of zest and joy born of concentration disappears.

At that time there arises a subtle but true perception of joy arising from equanimity,⁸¹ and he becomes conscious of that subtle but true perception of joy arising from equanimity.

Thus it is through training that a state of consciousness arises, and through training a state of consciousness passes away.

This is the training,” said the Blessed One.

13 (4) Furthermore, Poṭṭhapāda, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of happiness and displeasure—he attains and dwells in **the fourth dhyana**, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.⁸²

His former subtle but true perception of equanimity and happiness disappears.

And when there arises a subtle but true perception of neutral feeling [one that is neither pleasant nor painful], he becomes conscious of subtle but true perception of neutral feeling.

Thus it is through training that a state of consciousness arises, and through training a state of consciousness passes away.

This is the training,” said the Blessed One.

THE FOUR FORMLESS ATTAINMENTS⁸³

14 (5) “Furthermore, Poṭṭhapāda, by completely transcending the perceptions of form, with the disappearance the perceptions of sense-reaction,⁸⁴ with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘Space is infinite,’ he enters upon and abides in **the sphere of infinite space**.⁸⁵

His former subtle but true perception of neutral feeling disappears.

At that time there arises a subtle but true perception of infinite space, and he becomes conscious of infinite space.

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).

⁸⁰ *Idha Poṭṭhapāda pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti, yaṃ taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti, “upekkhako satimā sukha, vihāri” ti tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

⁸¹ “A subtle but true perception of joy arising from equanimity,” *upekkhā, sukha, sukuma, sacca, saññā.*

⁸² *Idha Poṭṭhapāda sukhasa ca pahānā dukkhasa ca pahānā pubb’eva somanassa, domanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkham-asukhaṃ upekkhā, sati, pārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

⁸³ **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2) does not have this section, going straight into “insight knowledge” (D 2.83-84/1:76) and so on. Understandably, the Buddha goes on to describe the first three of the four formless attainments here [§§14-16] to culminate in the cessation of consciousness [§17], in answer to Poṭṭhapāda’s question. In instructions to meditation practitioners within the Buddhist fold, the texts as a rule end with the four form dhyanas, without going into the four formless attainments. Here the Buddha is instructing one who is familiar with the traditional system, and one who is spiritually mature. See D:RD 1:59 n1.

⁸⁴ “Perceptions of sense-reaction,” *paṭigha, saññā*, also “sensory impact” (M:ÑB 267), “resistance-perception, reflex-perception” (BDict), said to be absent in the formless dhyanas. This is one of those terms that are only used contextually. See Vibh 245, §262; Vism 10.12-16.

⁸⁵ *Idha Poṭṭhapāda sabbaso rūpa, saññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭigha, saññānaṃ atthaṅgamā nānatta, saññānaṃ amanasikārā ananto ākāso’ ti ākāsañācāyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

Thus it is through training that a state of consciousness arises, and through training a state of consciousness passes away.

This is the training,” said the Blessed One. [184]

15 (6) “Furthermore, Poṭṭhapāda, by completely transcending the sphere of infinite space, aware that ‘Consciousness is infinite,’ he enters upon and abides in **the sphere of infinite consciousness**.⁸⁶

His former subtle but true perception of infinite space disappears.

At that time there arises a subtle but true perception of infinite consciousness, and he becomes conscious of infinite consciousness.

Thus it is through training that a state of consciousness arises, and through training a state of consciousness passes away.

This is the training,” said the Blessed One.

16 (7) “Furthermore, Poṭṭhapāda, by completely transcending the sphere of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘There is nothing,’ he enters upon and abides in **the sphere of nothingness**.

His former subtle but true perception of infinite consciousness disappears.

At that time there arises a subtle but true perception of nothingness, and he becomes one who is conscious of nothingness.

Thus it is through training that a state of consciousness arises, and through training a state of consciousness passes away.

This is the training,” said the Blessed One.⁸⁷

THE CESSATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

17 (8) “So, Poṭṭhapāda, from the time that the monk is one who masters his own consciousness⁸⁸ here [the 1st dhyana], he goes from one state to another in stages⁸⁹ until he reaches the peak of consciousness.⁹⁰

And when he is established at the peak of consciousness, it occurs to him: ‘Mental activity is bad for me. It would better for me not to be thinking. Were I to go on thinking and planning, these states of consciousness I have reached, would pass away, and other coarser ones, might arise. So let me neither think nor plan any more.’ And so he neither thinks nor plans.

And to him, neither thinking nor planning, the states of consciousness he has, passes away; and no other gross consciousnesses⁹¹ arise (in him).⁹²

So he attains cessation.

This is how, Poṭṭhapāda, that the attainment of the cessation of consciousness occurs step by step.

18 Now what do you think, Poṭṭhapāda. Have you ever heard of this step-by-step attainment of the cessation of consciousness before?”⁹³

⁸⁶ *Idha bhikkhu sabbaso ākāsaṇaṇe ’āyatanaṃ samatikkamma anantaṃ viññāṇaṇ ti viññāṇaṇe ’āyatanaṃ upa-sampajja viharati.*

⁸⁷ The last of the 4 formless attainments (*ārūpa* or *arūpa samāpatti*)—the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*n’eva saññā nāsaññ’āyatana*)—is omitted evidently because consciousness there is simply too subtle for consideration. In terms of “consciousness” (here called *saññā* by Poṭṭhapāda) the “peak of consciousness” is the 3rd formless attainment, the sphere of nothingness (*ākāsaññ’āyatana*).

⁸⁸ “Is one who masters his own consciousness,” *saka,saññī hoti*, lit “becomes own-perceiving.” From the 1st dhyana onwards, one has some control over one’s perceptions.

⁸⁹ “He goes from one state to another in stages,” *so tato amutra tato amutra anupubbena*.

⁹⁰ “Peak of consciousness,” *saññ’aggāṇ*, here refers to the sphere of nothingness (*ākāsaññ’āyatana*) (DA 2:373). Whichever mental state or dhyanas that one turns towards spiritual liberation, that state is called *saññ’agga*, ie, it is a name for liberating insight here: see Intro (5).

⁹¹ “Gross consciousnesses,” *olārikā saññā*, ie he is beyond worldly, material consciousness.

⁹² This section describes the climax of the gradual elimination of concepts and mental proliferations (*papañca*) that began with the Buddha’s answering Poṭṭhapāda’s question, “How does the cessation of consciousness occur?” [6a]. See Intro (1) above.

“No, bhante, I have not. But I understand what venerable Blessed One has said thus:

‘So, Poṭṭhapāda, from the time that the monk has by himself gained consciousness (of the first dhyana) here, he goes from one state to another in stages until he reaches the peak of consciousness.

And when he is established at the peak it occurs to him: [185] ‘Mental activity is bad for me. It would be better for me not to be thinking. Were I to go on thinking and planning, these states of consciousness I have reached, would pass away, and other coarser ones, might arise. So let me neither think nor plan any more.’ And so he neither thinks nor plans.

And to him, neither thinking nor planning, the states of consciousness he has, passes away; but no other states, coarser than those, arise.

So he attains *cessation*.

This is how, Poṭṭhapāda, that the attainment of the cessation of conscious occurs step by step.”

“That is right, Poṭṭhapāda.”

19 “And does the venerable Blessed One teach that there is one peak of consciousness, or that there are many?”

“Poṭṭhapāda, I teach that there is the one peak of consciousness and that there are many peaks of consciousness.”

“But how can the venerable Blessed One teach that there is the one peak of consciousness and that there are many peaks of consciousness?”

“Poṭṭhapāda, I declare that just as he attains to cessation, even so I declare that he reaches a peak of consciousness following it, one after another.⁹⁴ So, Poṭṭhapāda, I teach that there is one peak and that there are many peaks.”

20 “Bhante, does consciousness arise first, and then knowledge; or does knowledge arise first, and then consciousness; or do both arise simultaneously?”

“It is consciousness, Poṭṭhapāda, that arises first, and then knowledge.⁹⁵ And the arising of knowledge is dependent on the arising of consciousness.⁹⁶

And this, Poṭṭhapāda, may be understood from the fact that a man understands: ‘It is from this condition that knowledge has arisen to me.’”⁹⁷

Questions about the self

21 “Then, bhante, is the consciousness identical with a man’s self, or is consciousness one thing and the self another?”⁹⁸

⁹³ This discussion on the cessation is evidently the earliest we know in Indian literature. See D:RD 1:251 n2.

⁹⁴ *Yathā yathā kho Poṭṭhapāda nirodham phusati, tathā tathā ‘ham saññaggam paññāpemi.*

⁹⁵ Comy offers alternative explanations: (1) “Consciousness” (here *saññā*) = dhyana-consciousness (*jhāna-saññā*), “knowledge” = insight knowledge (*vipassanā ñāṇa*); (2) “Consciousness” = insight consciousness (*vipassana-saññā*), “knowledge” = path knowledge (*magga,ñāṇa*); (3) “Consciousness” = path consciousness (*magga-saññā*), “knowledge” = fruition knowledge (*phala,ñāṇa*). Buddhaghosa then quotes Tipiṭaka Mahāsiva Thera as saying, “Consciousness” is the consciousness of the fruition of arhathood, and “knowledge” the proximate “reviewing knowledge” (*paccavekkhāna ñāṇa*) (DA 2:375). Cf Vism 1.32/13, 22.19/676. Walshe remarks, “But in fact ‘reviewing-knowledge’ is said also to occur at lower stages on the enlightenment path. It is, however, this ‘reviewing-knowledge’ which best seems to explain just how one is supposed to know that perception [consciousness] arises first and then knowledge.” (D:RD 554 n213). In keeping with the pre-Buddhist usage of the term *saññā*, I have consistently rendered it as “consciousness” here rather than the Buddhist “perception.” Cf **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18.16/1:111 f) & **Saññā** = SD 17.4 esp (9.4).

⁹⁶ *Saññ’uppādā ca pana ñāṇ’uppādo hoti.*

⁹⁷ *Idap,paccayā kira me ñāṇam udapādi ti.* “From this condition,” *idap,paccayā*.

⁹⁸ On Poṭṭhapāda’s return to discussing the self, Comy pointedly remarks that even if one were to bathe a village pig in scented water, anoint it with perfumes, deck it with garlands, and lay it down on a glorious bed, will not feel happy, it will return straight to the dung-heap for comfort. Even so, Poṭṭhapāda, despite having been anointed and decked with fine and precise teaching of the three characteristics and set down on the glorious bed of cessation, nevertheless returns to the dung-heap of the notion of a self! (DA 2:376).

“Poṭṭhapāda, do you postulate a self?”⁹⁹ [186]

“Bhante, I postulate a material self, having form, comprising the four elements, nourished by solid food.”¹⁰⁰

“And, Poṭṭhapāda, if there were such a self, then your consciousness would be one thing, and your self another.

Poṭṭhapāda, in this way you can know by considering the following: if there is a material self, having form, comprising the four elements, nourished by solid food, some consciousness or other would arise in the man, and some consciousness or other would pass away.

In this way, Poṭṭhapāda, you can know how consciousness must be one thing, and self another.”¹⁰¹

22 “Then, bhante, I postulate a mind-made self, with all its major and minor parts complete, without defect in any faculty.”¹⁰²

“And, Poṭṭhapāda, if there were such a self, then your consciousness would be one thing, and your self another, *and, Poṭṭhapāda, the same argument would apply.*” [187]

23 “Then, bhante, I postulate a formless self, made of consciousness.”¹⁰³

“And, Poṭṭhapāda, if there were such a self, then your consciousness would be one thing, and your self another, *and, Poṭṭhapāda, the same argument would still apply.*”¹⁰⁴

24 “But is it possible, bhante, for me to understand whether consciousness is the same or different from a person’s self?”

“Potthapāda, it is hard for one, holding a different view, keeping different priorities, having different likes, following a different practice, following a different teaching,¹⁰⁵ to understand the doctrine that I teach my disciples (regarding the self).”

The 10 undeclared questions¹⁰⁶

25 “Then, bhante, if it is hard for one, holding a different view, keeping different priorities, having different likes, following a different practice, following a different teaching, to understand the doctrine that you teach your disciples regarding whether the consciousness is identical with a man’s self, or is consciousness one thing, and the self another, could you (at least) tell me:

(1) What then, bhante, is the world eternal? Is this alone the truth and all else false?”

“That the world is eternal, that this alone is the truth and all else false, Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(2) “What then, bhante, is the world not eternal...?” ...

⁹⁹ “Postulate,” *paccesi*, lit “fall back on, revert to”; alt tr “believe in.” See D:RD 252 n3.

¹⁰⁰ Comy says that this is not Poṭṭhapāda’s own true opinion (which is set out in §23 below). He makes this simple statement just to see how the Buddha would respond (DA 2:376). This view is nearly the same as the first of the seven propositions of the Annihilationists about the soul mentioned in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.3.10-17/1:34-36).

¹⁰¹ Cf **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.3.11/1:35), ie wrong view 52.

¹⁰² This sort of self or soul is an exact copy of the body, but of such a subtle matter that it is said to be “mind-made.” This view is nearly the same as that mentioned in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.3.12/1:34), ie wrong view 53, and in **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.85/1:77). “Without defect in any faculty,” *ahīn-indriya*: D 2:13,17 (DA 2:436,8-10) = M 3:121,20 (MA 4:181,11-13); D 1:77,11 ≠ M 2:17,26 (MA = AA); 18,6; Nm 340,15; Nc 209,21; D 1:34,24 (= *paripuṇṇ’-indriyo*, AA), 186,14 f, 195,26.

¹⁰³ Cf **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.3.13/1:35), ie wrong view 54. Comy says that this represents Poṭṭhapāda’s real view (DA 2:377).

¹⁰⁴ This section repeats *mutatis mutandis* the answer given in §21. The supposition in §23 is qu at DhsA 360. “The argument is of course that, even if Poṭṭhapāda had any one of these three sorts of souls, then he would regard each of them, in the given case, as a permanent entity. But the consciousness is not an entity. It is (a) ‘becoming’ only; subject, as he must (and would) admit, to constant change. On his own showing then, it is not ‘soul.’” (D:RD 1:253 n3)

¹⁰⁵ “Holding a differing view...following different teachings”, *añña, diṭṭhikena añña, khantikena añña, rucikena aññatr’āyogena aññatr’ācariyakena*. D:W has “one of different views, a different inclinations, under different influences, with different teacher, and a different training,” apparently missing *aññatr’āyogena*.

¹⁰⁶ These 10 undeclared questions or theses are discussed in Intro (3) above.

“That the world is not eternal, ... Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(3) “...is the world finite...?” ...

“That the world is finite, ... Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(4) “...is the world infinite...?” ... [188]

“That the world is infinite, ... Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(5) 26 “...is the self the same as the body...?” ...

“That the self is the same as the body, ... Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(6) “...is the self one thing and the body another...?” ...

“That the self is one thing and the body another, ... Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(7) 27 “...does the Tathagata exists after death...?” ...

“That the Tathāgata exists after death, ... Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(8) “...does the Tathagata not exist after death...?” ...

“That the Tathāgata does not exist after death, ... Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(9) “...does the Tathagata both exist and not exist after death...?” ...

“That the Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death, ... Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.”

(10) “What then, bhante, does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after death? Is this alone the truth and all else false?”

“That the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after death, that this alone is the truth and all else false, Poṭṭhapāda, I have left undeclared.

The purpose of the holy life

28 “Why, bhante, has the Blessed One left them [the 10 indeterminable points]¹⁰⁷ undeclared?”

Because it [their declaration] is unbeneficial [not connected to the goal];

it is not connected to the Dharma;

it does not belong to the fundamentals of the holy life,

it does not lead to revulsion [disillusionment], to dispassion [fading away of defilement], to cessation (of suffering), to inner peace [the stilling of defilements], to direct knowledge (of the four noble truths), to awakening, to nirvana.

That is why I have left them undeclared.” [189]

29 “But what has the venerable Blessed One declared?”

“‘This is suffering,’¹⁰⁸ Poṭṭhapāda, I have declared;

‘This is the arising of suffering,’ Poṭṭhapāda, I have declared;

‘This is the ending of suffering,’ Poṭṭhapāda, I have declared;

‘This is the path leading to the ending of suffering,’ Poṭṭhapāda, I have declared.”

30 “And why has the venerable Blessed One declared them?”

“Because it [their declaration] is beneficial [connected to the goal];

it is connected to the Dharma;

it belongs to the fundamentals of the holy life,

it leads to revulsion, to dispassion, to cessation (of suffering), to inner peace, to direct knowledge, to awakening, to nirvana.

That is why I have declared them.”

“That is so, venerable Blessed One. That is so, Wellfarer. And now let the venerable Blessed One do what seems fit to him.”

And the Blessed One rose from his seat and departed.

¹⁰⁷ The Pali text uses *tam*, “that” or idiomatically “it,” ie the 10 indeterminable points. For a detailed analysis of these 10 points, see **Māluṅkya,putta S** (M 63) = SD 5.8 Intro (2).

¹⁰⁸ “Suffering,” *dukkha*. Here Rhys Davids proposes an interesting tr: “dis-ease,” ie as the opp of “ease” (*sukha*) (D:RD 1:249 n1).

The wanderers criticize Poṭṭhapāda

31a Then not long after the Blessed One had gone away the wanderers crowded around Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer, raining him with a torrent of jeers and taunts.¹⁰⁹

“This Poṭṭhapāda approves of whatever the recluse Gotama says with his saying: ‘That is so, venerable Blessed One. That is so, Wellfarer.’ Now we, on the other hand, fail to see that the recluse Gotama has shown any certain [determinable] teaching at all with regard to:

- (1) ...is the world eternal?
- (2) ...is the world not eternal?
- (3) ...is the world finite?
- (4) ...is the world infinite?
- (5) ...is the self the same as the body?
- (6) ...is the self one thing and the body another?
- (7) ...does the Tathāgata [Thus Come] exist after death?
- (9) ...does the Tathāgata both exist and not exist after death...?
- (10) ...does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after death?” [190]

31b When the wanderers had said that, Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer said this:

“Sirs, I too fail to see that the recluse Gotama has shown any certain [determinable] teaching at all with regard to *the ten points*.

But the recluse Gotama teaches a path that is true, real and actual, based on the Dharma and fixed on the Dharma.¹¹⁰ So how could I refuse to approve of a path that is true, real and actual, based on the Dharma and fixed on the Dharma, that is so well said by the recluse Gotama?”

Indeterminable notions and determinable teachings

32 Then after two or three days, Citta, the son of the elephant trainer,¹¹¹ and Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer approached the Blessed One. Having approached, Citta, the son of the elephant trainer, saluted the Blessed One and sat down at one side. Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer, exchanged greetings and courtesies with the Blessed One, and then sat down at one side. Seated thus as one side, he told the Blessed One *how the wanderers had rained him with jeers and abuses*. [191]

33a “All those wanderers, Poṭṭhapāda, are blind and sightless. You are the only one amongst them who have eyes to see.

Some things, Poṭṭhapāda, I have taught to be certain [determinable],¹¹² other things I have declared to be indeterminable.

And what, Poṭṭhapāda, are **the things that have been declared by me to be indeterminable?**

- (1) ‘The world is eternal.’—This I have declared to be indeterminable.
- (2) ‘The world is not eternal.’—This I have declared to be indeterminable.
- (3) ‘The world is finite.’—This I have declared to be indeterminable.
- (4) ‘The world is infinite.’—This I have declared to be indeterminable.
- (5) ‘The self is the same as the body.’—This I have declared to be indeterminable.
- (6) ‘The self is one thing and the body another.’—This I have declared to be indeterminable.
- (7) ‘The Tathagata exists after death.’—This I have declared to be indeterminable.
- (8) ‘The Tathagata does not exist after death.’—This I have declared to be indeterminable.

¹⁰⁹ “Raining him with a torrent of jeers and taunts,” *vācāya sannitodakena sañjambharim akaṃsu*. As at S 2:282; A 1:187.

¹¹⁰ *Api ca kho Samaṇo Gotamo bhūtaṃ tacchaṃ tathaṃ paṭipadaṃ paññāpeti dhamma-t,ḥhitaṃ dhamma, niyāmakam*. “True, real and actual” (*bhūtaṃ tacchaṃ tathaṃ*) are syns.

¹¹¹ Citta has fallen out with Mahā Koṭṭhita and left the Order. Poṭṭhapāda here brings him to meet the Buddha with the express purpose of reconciling him with the monks. See Intro (2) above.

¹¹² “Certain [determinable],” *ekaṃsika*, that is, “certain, determinable”; opp “indefinite, uncertain, undetermined, indeterminable,” *anekaṃsika*.

(9) ‘The Tathagata both exists and does not exist after death.’—This I have declared to be indeterminate.

(10) ‘The Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after death.’—This I have declared to be indeterminate.

33b And why, Poṭṭhapāda, have they been declared by me to be indeterminate?

Because it [their declaration] is unbeneficial [not connected to the goal];

it is not connected to the Dharma;

it does not belong to the fundamentals of the holy life,

it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation [of suffering], to inner peace, to direct knowledge, to awakening, to nirvana.

That is why I have left them undeclared.

33c And what, Poṭṭhapāda, are the things that have been declared by me to be certain [determinable]?

‘This is suffering,’ Poṭṭhapāda, I have [192] declared this as a certain teaching;

‘This is the arising of suffering,’ Poṭṭhapāda, I have declared this as a certain teaching;

‘This is the ending of suffering,’ Poṭṭhapāda, I have declared this as a certain teaching;

‘This is the path leading to the ending of suffering,’ Poṭṭhapāda, I have declared this as a certain teaching.

And why, Poṭṭhapāda, have I declared them to be certain teachings?

Because they are beneficial [connected to the goal];

they are connected to the Dharma;

they belong to the fundamentals of the holy life,

they lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation (of suffering), to inner peace, to direct knowledge, to awakening, to nirvana.

That is why I have declared them to be certain (determinable) teachings.

The hereafter

34 There are some recluses and brahmins, Poṭṭhapāda, who hold such an opinion and view:

‘The self [soul] is totally happy and healthy after death.’

I went to them and asked them: ‘Is it true, venerables, that you hold such an opinion and view: “The self [soul] is totally happy and healthy after death?”’ And they admit that it was so.¹¹³

Then I asked them thus: ‘So far as you have known and seen, is there such a place in the world that is totally happy?’

When asked thus, they answered: ‘No.’

Then I asked them thus: ‘Further, venerables, have you yourselves ever been totally happy for a whole night, or for a whole day, or even for half a night or for half a day?’

When asked thus, they answered: ‘No.’

Then I asked them thus: ‘Venerables, do you know a path or a way by which you can realize a state that is totally happy?’

When asked thus, they answered: ‘No.’

Then I asked them thus: ‘Have you, venerables, ever heard the voices of gods who had realized rebirth in a totally happy world, saying: “Be right in conduct, sirs, be upright in conduct, sirs, for the sake of realizing [rebirth in] a world of total happiness. For we, sirs, as a result of such effort, have been reborn in such a world of total happiness.”?’

When asked thus, they answered: ‘No.’ [193]

Now what think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being the case, does not what these recluses and brahmins declare turn out to be groundless?¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Cf **Brahmajāla S**, where some recluses and brahmins hold the notion that after death, the soul is unconscious in eight ways (D 1.3.1-17/32-36).

¹¹⁴ “Turn out to be groundless,” *appāṭihīra, kataṃ*, ie “made unreliable.” The question here is a rhetorical one.

The most beautiful girl¹¹⁵

35 Poṭṭhapāda, it is just as if a man were to say, ‘I desire and love the most beautiful girl of the country.’

And if people were to ask him, ‘All right, then, do you know whether this most beautiful girl is a kshatriya lady, a brahminee, a vaishya or a shudra?’¹¹⁶ he would answer, ‘No.’

And if people were to ask him, ‘All right, then, do you know the name or the family name of this most beautiful woman? Is she tall or short or medium in height. Is her complexion black, dark or clear?’¹¹⁷ Is she from a village, town or city?’ he would answer, ‘No.’

And if people were to ask him, ‘All right, then, do you desire and love for someone whom you neither know nor have seen?’ he would answer, ‘Yes!’

Now what do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being the case, does not what these recluses and brahmins declare turn out to be groundless?”

“Indeed, bhante, that being the case, what these recluses and brahmins declare do turn out to be groundless!”

36 “Even so, too, it is, Poṭṭhapāda, with the recluses and brahmins who talk about the self [soul] being totally happy and healthy after death. [194] *For they admit that they know no such state in this world. They admit that they cannot say their own selves have been happy here even for half a day. And they admit that they know no way of gaining such a result. And they admit that they have not heard from any gods who have realized rebirth in a totally happy world.*¹¹⁸

Now what do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being the case, does not what these recluses and brahmins declare turn out to be groundless?”

“Indeed, bhante, that being the case, what these recluses and brahmins declare do turn out to be groundless!”

The stairway to nowhere

37 “Poṭṭhapāda, it is just as if a man were to build a stairway to a mansion at a crossroads.¹¹⁹

People might ask, ‘Hey there, this stairway to a mansion—do you know whether the mansion will face east, west, north or south, or whether it will be high, low or medium in height?’ and he would say, ‘No!’ And they might say, ‘You mean you neither know nor see what kind of mansion you are building this stairway for?’ and he would say, ‘No!’

What do you think, Vāsetṭha, such being the case, does not what this man declare turn out to be groundless?”

“Indeed, bhante, that being the case, what this man declares do turn out to be groundless!”

38 “And so it is, too, Poṭṭhapāda, with the recluses and brahmins who talk about the self being totally happy and healthy after death. [195] *For they admit that they know no such state in this world. They admit that they cannot say their own selves have been happy here even for half a day. And they admit that they know no way of gaining such a result. And they admit that they have not heard from any gods who have realized rebirth in a totally happy world.*¹²⁰

“Now what do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being the case, would not what these recluses and brahmins declare turn out to be groundless?”

¹¹⁵ As in **Tevijja S** (D 13.19/1:241 f) & **Cūḷa Sakul’udāyī S** (M 79.20/2:33). “The most beautiful girl of the country,” *janapada, kalyāṇī*, alt tr “the beauty queen of the country,” Jayatilleke 1963:326 f. See **Tevijja S**, SD 1.8 Intro (3).

¹¹⁶ These four were the castes (*vaṇṇa*) of ancient India: generally the kshatriya was a noble (ruling class and civil servants); the brahmin a priest (religious elite and teaching class); the vaishya a merchant (commercial and business class); the shudra a menial worker (working class).

¹¹⁷ “Clear[-complexioned]”, *maṅgura-c, chavī*, lit “golden-skinned.”

¹¹⁸ This italicized section is a repeat of §34.

¹¹⁹ As in **Tevijja S** (D 13.21/1:244). For a positive version of this simile, see §46.

¹²⁰ This italicized section is a repeat of §34.

“Indeed, bhante, that being the case, what these recluses and brahmins declare would turn out to be groundless!”

The three kinds of acquired self

39 “Poṭṭhapāda, there are three kinds of acquired self:¹²¹ the material acquired self, the mind-made acquired self and the formless acquired self.¹²²

(1) And what, Poṭṭhapāda, is the material acquired self?

It has form, is made up of the four elements, and is nourished by solid food.

This is the material acquired self.

(2) And what, Poṭṭhapāda, is the mind-made acquired self?

It has form, is made by the mind, and all its limbs and organs are without defect in any faculty.¹²³

This is the mind-made acquired self.

(3) And what, Poṭṭhapāda, is the formless acquired self?

It is without form, made up of consciousness.

This is the formless acquired self.

Abandoning the acquired self

40a (1) Now, Poṭṭhapāda, I teach a doctrine that leads to the abandoning of the material acquired self, whereby you would abandon the defiling mental states¹²⁴ and would develop the states conducive to purification,¹²⁵ and having realized wisdom in its fullness and abundance right here and now for yourself through direct knowledge, after attaining, would dwell (therein).

40b Now, Poṭṭhapāda, it might be that you think, ‘Perhaps one would abandon the defiling mental states and develop the states conducive to purification, and bringing wisdom into abundance right here and now for oneself through direct knowledge, after attaining, would dwell (therein)—but one would still dwell in suffering!’¹²⁶

But, Poṭṭhapāda, that is not how it should be seen.

40c For when you would abandon the defiling mental states and develop the states conducive to purification, and having realized wisdom in its fullness and abundance right here and now for yourself through direct knowledge, after attaining, would dwell (therein)—there will only be joy¹²⁷ and zest¹²⁸ and tranquillity and mindfulness and full awareness—and that is a happy abode!

¹²¹ “Acquired self,” *atta,paṭilābhā* = *atta,bhāva.paṭilābhā* (DhsA 308), where Comy says it refers to the 3 realms of existence (DA 2:380). In **Sevitabbāsevitabba S** (M 114.11/3:52), *atta,bhāva.paṭilābhā* refers to the acquisition of individuality, ie a mode of rebirth. The same Sutta describes two kinds of *atta,bhāva.paṭilābhā*, one that increases unwholesome states and the other decreasing unwholesome states (id). Cf **Atta,bhāva.paṭilābhā S** (A 4.172/2:159 f) for 4 types of individualities are acquired through one’s own volition, through another’s volition, through both, or through neither; also listed in **Saṅgīti S** (D 1.11(38)/3:231).

¹²² *Oḷāriko atta,paṭilābho, mano,mayo atta,paṭilābho, arūpo atta,paṭilābho* respectively. These three kinds of selves correspond to the nature of being in each the three planes, respectively, viz: the sense world, the form world and the formless world. See Collins 1982:138, 158.

¹²³ “Without defect in any faculty,” *ahīn-indriyo* (for wr *abhinidriyo*): D 2:13,17 (DA 2:436,8-10) = M 3:121,20 (MA 4:181,11-13); D 1:77,11 ≠ M 2:17,26 (MA = AA); 18,6; Nm 340,15; Nc 209,21; D 1:34,24 (= *paripuṇṇ’indriyo*, AA), 186,14 f, 195,26.

¹²⁴ Comy says these “defiling mental states” (*saṅkilesika dhammā*) are the 12 unwholesome consciousnesses of the sense sphere (*kāmvācāra akusala citt’uppādā*) in connection with the three unwholesome roots (greed, hate, delusion) (DA 2:381; Dhs 365-430). For details, see Abhs:BRS 27-39. Cf D:RD 1:260 n2.

¹²⁵ Comy says that “the states conducive to purification” (*vodāniyā dhammā*) are the two qualities of calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) (DA 2:381).

¹²⁶ Walshe: “Doubtless alluding to the well-known fact that higher states tend to appear very boring to the worldling who has not experienced them.” (D:RD 555 n221)

¹²⁷ “Joy” (*pamujja*). Comy glosses as “tender zest” (*taruṇa,pīti*) (DA 2:380). See foll.

¹²⁸ “Zest” (*pīti*). Comy glosses as “strong joy” (*balava,tuṭṭhi*) (DA 2:380). See prec n.

41a (2) Now, Poṭṭhapāda, I teach a doctrine that leads to the abandoning of the mind-made acquired self, and...you would dwell, having realized and won it [abundant wisdom] by your own direct knowledge.

41b Now, Poṭṭhapāda, it might be that you think, ‘...but one would still dwell in suffering!’

But, Poṭṭhapāda, that is not how it should be seen.

41c ...there will only be joy and zest and tranquillity and mindfulness and full awareness—and that is a happy abode!

42a (3) Now, Poṭṭhapāda, I teach a doctrine that leads to the abandoning of the formless acquired self,... [196]

42b Now, Poṭṭhapāda, it might be that you think, ‘...but one would still dwell in suffering!’

But, Poṭṭhapāda, that is not how it should be seen.

42c ...there will only be joy and zest and tranquillity and mindfulness and full awareness—and that is a happy abode! [197]

This self right here

43 (1) Poṭṭhapāda, others might question us thus: ‘What then, friends, is that material acquired self, for which you teach a doctrine that leads to its abandoning, whereby you would abandon the defiling mental states and develop the states conducive to purification, and having realized wisdom in its fullness and abundance right here and now for yourself through direct knowledge, after attaining, would dwell (therein)?’

When we are questioned thus, we should reply thus: ‘Why, it is this very one that you see before you!’¹²⁹ This is that material acquired self, for which we teach a doctrine that leads to its abandoning,...by our own direct knowledge’

44 (2) Poṭṭhapāda, others might question us thus: ‘What then, friends, is that mind-made acquired self for which you teach a doctrine that leads to its abandoning...’

When we are questioned thus, we should reply thus: ‘Why, it is this very one that you see before you! This is that mind-made acquired self, for which we teach a doctrine that leads to its abandoning,... [198] by our own direct knowledge’

45 (3) Poṭṭhapāda, others might question us¹³⁰ thus: ‘What then, friends, is that formless acquired self for which you teach a doctrine that leads to its abandoning...’

When we are questioned thus, we should reply thus: ‘Why, it is this very one that you see before you! This is that formless acquired self, for which we teach a doctrine that leads to its abandoning,...by our own direct knowledge’

Now what think you, Poṭṭhapāda, that being the case, would not the talk turn out to be well grounded?”

“Indeed, bhante, that being the case, the talk would turn out to be well grounded.”

Parable of the staircase

46 “Poṭṭhapāda, it is just as if a man were to build a stairway on the ground floor for going up a mansion.¹³¹

¹²⁹ This statement [43] and the cognate ones in the following two sections [44-45] reflect the statements of §§39-42, that is, “whatever the mode of existence, of temporary individuality, there is happiness obtainable; but only in one way, by getting rid, namely, of certain evil dispositions, and by the increase of certain good dispositions. Buddhaghosa [DA 2:381 f] thinks this is said in protest against those who, seeking for happiness beyond the grave, do not admit that happiness can be reached here (as above, in §34)” (D:RD 1:261 n1).

¹³⁰ “Us,” *amhe*. This is the only place [43-45] where the Buddha uses the plural 1st person to address Poṭṭhapāda. This reflects the urgency of the accompanying statements.

¹³¹ A similar simile—in a negative application—is found in §37 & **Tevijja S** (D 13.21/1:243). Here it is used in a positive sense.

One might about it ask thus: ‘Hey there, this stairway going up a mansion—do you know whether the mansion will face east, west, north or south, or whether it will be high, low or medium in height?’

And he would say, ‘Well, friend, this is that very mansion, and to which I am building a stairway on the ground floor for going up that mansion.’¹³²

What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda, such being the case, does not what this man say turn out to be well grounded?”

“Indeed, bhante, that being the case, the talk would turn out to be well grounded.” [199]

47 “In just the same way, Poṭṭhapāda, others might question us thus: ‘What then, friends, is that material acquired self,...that mind-made acquired self,...that formless acquired self for which you teach a doctrine that leads to its abandoning, whereby you would abandon the defiling mental states and develop the states conducive to purification, and having realized wisdom in its fullness and abundance right here and now for yourself through direct knowledge, after attaining, would dwell (therein)?’

When we are questioned thus, we should reply thus: ‘Why, it is this very one that you see before you! This is that material acquired self,...that mind-made acquired self,...that formless acquired self for which we teach a doctrine that leads to its abandoning, whereby you would abandon the defiling mental states and develop the states conducive to purification, and having realized wisdom in its fullness and abundance right here and now for yourself through direct knowledge, after attaining, would dwell (therein)’

What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda, such being the case, does not what this man say turn out to be well grounded?”

“Indeed, bhante, that being the case, the talk does turn out to be well grounded.”

CITTA, THE ELEPHANT TRAINER’S SON

Citta’s question on the three kinds of self

48 When this was said, Citta, the son of the elephant trainer,¹³³ said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, at the time when there is a material acquired self, would the mind-made acquired self and the formless self be non-existent?¹³⁴

Is the material acquired self the only one that is real at that time?

And if there is the mind-made self, then at that time is the material acquired self non-existent, is the formless acquired self non-existent?

And if there is the formless acquired self, then at that time is the material acquired self non-existent, is the mind-made acquired self non-existent?”

49a “At the time, Citta, when there is the material acquired self, it is reckoned¹³⁵ that there is no mind-made acquired self, [200] it is reckoned that there is no formless acquired self—there is only the material acquired self.

At the time, Citta, when there is the mind-made acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no material acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no formless acquired self—there is only the mind-made acquired self.

At the time, Citta, when there is the formless acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no material acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no mind-made acquired self—there is only the formless acquired self.

Which is the real self?

49b Citta, what if you were asked thus: ‘**Did you exist in the past or not? Will you exist in the future or not? Do you exist now or not?**’—How would you answer?”

¹³² For this reply, D:W 168 has only “This staircase is right under the palace.”

¹³³ On Citta, see Intro (2) above.

¹³⁴ “Would...be non-existent?” *mogh’assa*, lit “would it be empty?” Comy glosses *mogha* as *tuccho hoti, n’atthi so tasmim samaye* (DA 2:381).

¹³⁵ “It is reckoned,” *saṅkham gacchati*, lit “it goes as reckoned.” See **Language & Discourse** = SD 7.14 (2).

“Bhante, if I were ask *thus*, I would reply as follows:

‘I existed in the past—that I did not exist then is not the case; that I shall exist in the future—that I will not exist then is not the case; that I do exist now—that I do not exist now is not the case.’¹³⁶

50a “Now, Citta, what if then they were to ask *thus*.¹³⁷

‘That past acquired self that you had, is that your real acquired self—and that the future acquired self is non-existent, and the present acquired self non-existent?’

Or the future acquired self that you will have, is that your real acquired self—and that the past acquired self is non-existent, and the present acquired self non-existent?’

Or the acquired self that you now have, is that your real acquired self—and that the past acquired self is non-existent, and the future acquired self non-existent?’

—When asked *thus*, Citta, how would you answer?’

50b “Bhante, when asked *thus*, I would reply as follows:

‘When there was [201] my past acquired self, only that is real; and the future one does not exist, the present one does not exist.¹³⁸

When there is my present acquired self, only that is real; and the past one does not exist, the future one does not exist.

When there will be my future acquired self, only that is real; and the present one does not exist, the past one does not exist.

Bhante, when asked I would answer *thus*.’¹³⁹

51 “Yes indeed, Citta, at the time when there is the material acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no mind-made acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no formless acquired self—there is only the material acquired self.

At the time, Citta, when there is the mind-made acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no material acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no formless acquired self—there is only the mind-made acquired self.

At the time, Citta, when there is the formless acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no material acquired self, it is reckoned that there is no mind-made acquired self—there is only the formless acquired self.

Simile of the milk products

52 Citta, just as from a cow comes milk, and from the milk comes curds, and from the curds come butter, and from the butter comes ghee, and from the ghee comes cream.

But when it is milk it is not reckoned as curds, or butter, or ghee, or cream;

and when it is curds it is not reckoned as milk, or butter, or ghee, or cream;

and when it is butter it is not reckoned as milk, or curds, or ghee, or cream;

and when it is ghee it is not reckoned as milk, or curds, or butter, or cream;

and when it is cream it is not reckoned as milk, or curds, or butter, or ghee.¹⁴⁰ [202]

¹³⁶ *Ahos ’aham atītam addhānam nāham nāhosim, bhavissām ’aham anāgataṃ addhānam nāham na bhavissāmi, atthāham etarahi nāham n’atthi ti*, lit “I existed in the past, I did not exist then; I shall exist in the future, I will not not exist then; I do exist now, I do not not exist now.” The answer is clear enough: whichever time period we are referring, the acquired self exists then, but not at the other two times. This may be construed as a statement of the *identity* of the acquired self by way of diversity (*nānatta, naya*): see SD SD 25.3 (49.2).

¹³⁷ Paraphrased, the three questions simply read: “Which one is your real self: the past, the future, or the present one?”

¹³⁸ *Yo me ahosi atīto atta, paṭilābho sveva me atta, paṭilābho tasmim samaye sacco ahosi, mogho anāgato mogho paccupanno.*

¹³⁹ Citta’s clear enough: whichever time period we are referring, the acquired self exists in then, but not at the other two times. This may be construed as a statement of the *identity* of the acquired self by way of unity (*ekatta, naya*): see SD 25.3 (49.2)..

¹⁴⁰ These are 5 products from a cow. The traditional “5 tastes of a cow” (*pañca go, rasa*), however, are milk (*khīra*), cream (*dadhi*), buttermilk (*takka*), butter (*navanīta*), ghee (*sappi*) (V 1:244; Dhā 1:158, 323, 397; SnA 322;

53 Even so, Citta, when any one of the three acquired selves—the material, the mind-made, or the formless—is present, then we reckon that the other two are not present.¹⁴¹

For, Citta, these are merely common names, common expressions, common usages, common designations in the world that the Tathāgata [Thus Come] uses without attachment to them [without misapprehending them].¹⁴²

Poṭṭhapāda takes refuge

54 And this had been spoken, Poṭṭhapāda the wanderer said this to the Blessed One:

“Excellent, bhante! Excellent, bhante! 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 the Blessed One has, in numerous ways, made the Dharma clear.

I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.

May the Blessed One remember me as a layman who has gone for refuge from this day forth for life.”

Citta joins the Order

55 Citta, the son of the elephant trainer, on the other hand, said this to the Blessed One:

“Excellent, bhante! Excellent, bhante! 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 One.

I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.

May I, bhante, receive the going-forth before the Blessed One; may I receive the ordination.” [203]

56a And Citta, the son of the elephant trainer, received the going-forth before the Blessed One and received the ordination.

56b Then Citta, the son of the elephant trainer, delighted, rejoiced in the Blessed One’s word, rose from his seat and, after paying homage to the Blessed One, keeping him on his right, departed.

56c¹⁴³ Soon, not long after being ordained, Citta, the son of the elephant trainer, dwelling alone, aloof, diligent, exertive, and resolute,¹⁴⁴

VvA 147). The point is that just as there is no “essence” in the cow, but only the different bovine products, so too in a human being there is no self, soul or permanent entity. The qualities that constitute us are constantly changing. “When the change has reached a certain point, it is convenient to change the designation, the name by which the personality is known—just as in the case of the products of the cow. But the abstract term is only a convenient *form of expression*. There never was any personality, *as a separate entity*, all the time.” (D:RD 1:263 n1). The simile is interesting in that it contains both the ideas of identity (the key names) and of continuity (the set of names in each sentence).

¹⁴¹ Essentially, this is the philosophical stand of the “everything exists” (*sarvam asti*) of the Sarvāstī, vāda. See for example Paul Williams, *Buddhist Thought*, 2000:112-118.

¹⁴² *Loka, samaññā loka, niruttiyo loka, vohārā loka, paññattiyo yāhi Tathāgato voharati aparāmasan ti*, lit “These are names of the world, expressions of the world, usages in the world, designations in the world...” See prec n & Miln 25, 27. For details, see Intro (1) above.

¹⁴³ §56c is stock: **Mahā Siha, nāda S** (D 8.24/1:176 f, Acela Kassapa), **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.56/1:203, Citta Hatthi, sāri,putta), **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.5.30/2:153, Subhadda), **Cakka, vatti Siha, nāda S** (D 26.26/3:77, Saṅkha); **Vatthūpama S** (M 7.22/1:40, Sundarika Bhāra, dvāja), **Kukkura, vatika S** (M 57.15/1:391 f, Seniya Kukkura, vatika), **Mahā Vaccha, gotta S** (M 73.26/1:496, Vaccha, gotta), **Māgandiya S** (M 75.28/1:513), **Ratṭha, pāla S** (M 82.14/2:61), **Aṅguli, māla S** (M 86.16/2:103), **Sela S** (M 92.27/2:146 = Sn p112), **Bakkula S** (M 124.39/3:127); **S 1**:140 (Brahma, deva), 161 (one Bhāra, dvāja), 163 (Akkosaka Bhāra, dvāja), 170 (Sundarika Bhāra, dvāja), **2**:22 (Acela Kassapa), **3**:35 (a monk), 74 (a monk), **4**:38 (Miga, jāla), 64 (Bāhiya), 76 (Māluṅkyā, putta), 302 (Acela Kassapa), **5**:144 (a monk), 166 (Bāhiya), 187 f (a monk); **A 1**:282 (Anuruddha), **2**:249 (Māluṅkyā, putta), **3**:70 (a monk), 217 (Gavesī), 376 (Soṇa), 399 (Citta Hatthi, sāri,putta), **4**:235 (Anuruddha), 301 (a monk); **U 23** (Nanda); **Sn p16**

having right here and now realized it for himself through his own direct knowledge, entered and dwelled in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life for the sake of which sons of family¹⁴⁵ rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

He directly knew:¹⁴⁶ “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done what had to be done, there is no more for this state of being.”

And the venerable Citta, the son of the elephant trainer, became one of the arhats.

— evaṃ —

(Kasi Bhāra,dvāja), p112 (Sela = M 92): see S:B 433 n376. See also **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145.2/3:267); **S 2:244, 3:35, 36, 73, 187, 198, 199, 4:37, 48, 54, 60, 63, 72, 145, 5:143, 165, 166 (×2), 187, 188; A 2:248, 4:143, 299.**

¹⁴⁴ *Eko vūpakaṭṭho appamatto ātāpī pahit’atto viharanto.* This is stock: V 2:258; M 1:177; A 2:258, 3:218; U 24. The first word, “**alone**” (*eka*) refers to bodily aloneness and physical solitude; “**aloof**” (*vūpakaṭṭha*) is mental solitude; both body and mind are aloof from the objects of sense-pleasures; often this word alone refers to a practitioner’s effort to rid the mind of sense-desire (M 36/1:246f = 85/2:93); “**diligent**” (*appamatta*), keeping to his meditative mindfulness; “**exertive**” (*ātāpī*) is putting forth both physical and effort; “**resolute**” (*pahit’atta*), “mentally resolute” by absence of longing regarding the body or life itself (DA 2:363; MA 1:180). Also as *ekā vūpakaṭṭhā appamattā ātāpīno pahit’attā vihareyya* (V 2:258; A 3:218 (Ke Se ekeka...), 4:280). Sometimes the initial *eka* is omitted in the pericope.

¹⁴⁵ *Kula,puttā* are of 2 kinds: those who are born so (*jāti kula,putta*), and those who are so by conduct (*ācāra kula,putta*). Either the second (which is all inclusive) is meant (DA 2:363), or both is meant (MA 1:180).

¹⁴⁶ He knows all this by “review knowledge” (*paccavekkhaṇa,ñāṇa*). “**Birth is destroyed**” (*khīṇā jāti*) ie, he knows if he had not fully cultivated the path, that one, four, or five of the aggregates would arise (ie he would be reborn, respectively, as a non-conscious being, or a formless being, or a form being, or a sense-world being); “**the holy life has been lived**” (*vusitaṃ brahma,cariyam*): the 7 learners (*sekha*) and the good worldling are said to “be living the holy life,” but he has *lived* it because he has destroyed his influxes; “**done what had to be done**” (*kataṃ karaṇīyam*): he has understood the noble truths in all their 16 aspects, ie, their full understanding, abandonment, realization, and cultivation by the four paths; “**there is no more for this state of being**” (*nāparaṃ ithattāya*): he does not have to complete his understanding of the truths any more, and beyond the present aggregates, there are none, for they are like fire without fuel (DA 1:225 in detail; MA 1:180 f in brief). For a full tr of Comy and Subcomy here, see Bodhi (tr), *The Discourse on the Fruits of Recluseship*, 1989: 165-168.

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