

THE WORD OF THE BUDDHA

KNOWING

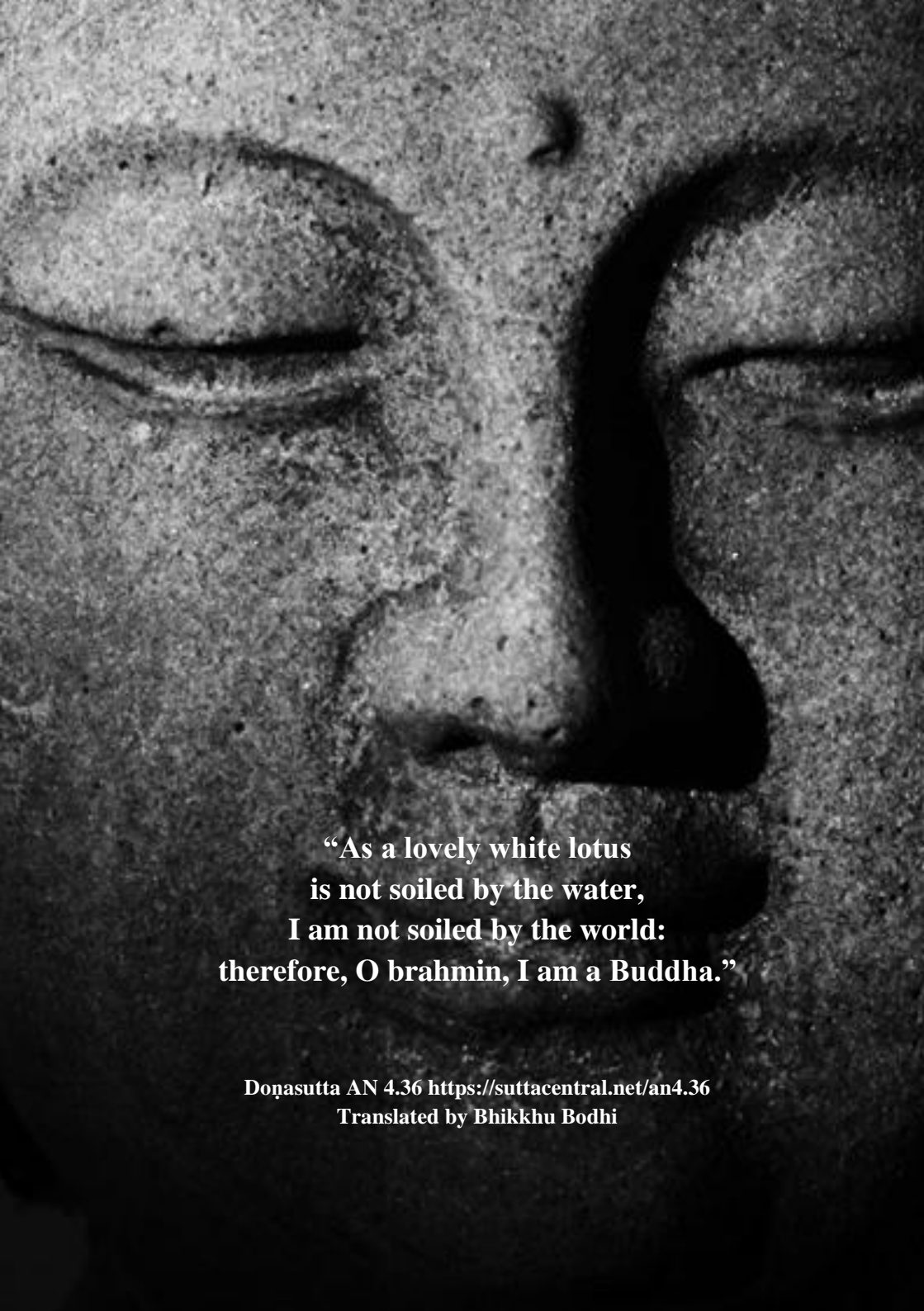
THE

BUDDHA

BY

HIS WORDS

THE
BUDDHA



**“As a lovely white lotus
is not soiled by the water,
I am not soiled by the world:
therefore, O brahmin, I am a Buddha.”**

**Doṇasutta AN 4.36 <https://suttacentral.net/an4.36>
Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi**

THE FIRST CHAPTER

On one occasion the Blessed One was traveling along the highway between Ukkatṭhā and Setavya. The brahmin Doṇa was also traveling along the highway between Ukkatṭhā and Setavya. The brahmin Doṇa then saw the thousand-spoked wheels of the Blessed One's footprints, with their rims and hubs, complete in all respects, and thought: "It is astounding and amazing! These surely could not be the footprints of a human being!"

Then the Blessed One left the highway and sat down at the foot of a tree, folding his legs crosswise, straightening his body, and establishing mindfulness in front of him. Tracking the Blessed One's footprints, the brahmin Doṇa saw the Blessed One sitting at the foot of the tree—graceful, inspiring confidence, with peaceful faculties and peaceful mind, one who had attained to the highest taming and serenity, like a tamed and guarded bull elephant with controlled faculties. He then approached the Blessed One and said to him:

(1) “Could you be a deva, sir?”

“I will not be a deva, brahmin.”

(2) “Could you be a gandhabba, sir?”

“I will not be a gandhabba, brahmin.”

(3) “Could you be a yakkha, sir?”

“I will not be a yakkha, brahmin.”

(4) “Could you be a human being, sir?”

“I will not be a human being, brahmin.”

“When you are asked: ‘Could you be a deva, sir?’ you say: ‘I will not be a deva, brahmin.’ When you are asked: ‘Could you be a gandhabba, sir?’ you say: ‘I will not be a gandhabba, brahmin.’ When you are asked: ‘Could you be a yakkha, sir?’ you say: ‘I will not be a yakkha, brahmin.’ When you are asked: ‘Could you be a human being, sir?’ you say: ‘I will not be a human being, brahmin.’ What, then, could you be, sir?”

“Brahmin, I have abandoned those taints because of which I might have become a deva; I have cut them off at the root, made them like palm stumps, obliterated them so that they are no longer subject to future arising.

I have abandoned those taints because of which I might have become a gandhabba; I have cut them off at the root, made them like palm stumps,

obliterated them so that they are no longer subject to future arising.

I have abandoned those taints because of which I might have become a yakkha; I have cut them off at the root, made them like palm stumps, obliterated them so that they are no longer subject to future arising.

I have abandoned those taints because of which I might have become a human being; I have cut them off at the root, made them like palm stumps, obliterated them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Just as a blue, red, or white lotus flower, though born in the water and grown up in the water, rises above the water and stands unsoiled by the water, even so, though born in the world and grown up in the world, I have overcome the world and dwell unsoiled by the world. **Remember me, brahmin, as a Buddha.**

“I have destroyed those taints by which I might have been reborn as a deva or as a gandhabba that travels through the sky;

by which I might have reached the state of a
yakkha,
or arrived back at the human state:
I have dispelled and cut down these taints.

“As a lovely white lotus
is not soiled by the water,
I am not soiled by the world:
therefore, O brahmin, I am a Buddha.”

Doṇasutta AN 4.36 <https://suttacentral.net/an4.36>

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi



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**“In this life, my father was King
Suddhodana, my birth mother
was Queen Māyā, and our capital
city was Kapilavatthu.”**

Mahāpadānasutta DN 14
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

Dhamma That Should Be Known First

1. On Past Lives

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery, in the hut by the kari tree.

Then after the meal, on return from almsround, several senior mendicants sat together in the pavilion by the kari tree and this Dhamma talk on

the subject of past lives came up among them, “So it was in a past life; such it was in a past life.”

With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, the Buddha heard that discussion among the mendicants. So he got up from his seat and went to the pavilion, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was unfinished?”

The mendicants told him what had happened, adding, “This is the conversation that was unfinished when the Buddha arrived.”

“Would you like to hear a Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives?”

“Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the Buddha give a Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives. The mendicants will listen and remember it.”

“Well then, mendicants, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Ninety-one eons ago, the Buddha Vipassī arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. Thirty-one eons ago, the Buddha Sikhī arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. In the same thirty-first eon, the Buddha Vessabhū arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. In the present fortunate eon, the Buddhas Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. And in the present fortunate eon, I have arisen in the world, perfected and fully awakened.

The Buddhas Vipassī, Sikhī, and Vessabhū were born as aristocrats into aristocrat families. The Buddhas Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa were born as brahmins into brahmin families. I was born as an aristocrat into an aristocrat family.

Koṇḍañña was the clan of Vipassī, Sikhī, and Vessabhū. Kassapa was the clan of Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa. Gotama is my clan.

Vipassī lived for 80,000 years. Sikhī lived for 70,000 years. Vessabhū lived for 60,000 years. Kakusandha lived for 40,000 years. Koṇāgamana lived for 30,000 years. Kassapa lived for 20,000 years. For me these days the life-span is short, brief, and fleeting. A long-lived person lives for a century or a little more.

Vipassī was awakened at the root of a trumpet flower tree. Sikhī was awakened at the root of a white-mango tree. Vessabhū was awakened at the root of a sal tree. Kakusandha was awakened at the root of an acacia tree. Koṇāgamana was awakened at the root of a cluster fig tree. Kassapa was awakened at the root of a banyan tree. I was awakened at the root of a peepul tree.

Vipassī had a fine pair of chief disciples named Khaṇḍa and Tissa. Sikhī had a fine pair of chief disciples named Abhibhū and Sambhava.

Vessabhū had a fine pair of chief disciples named Soṇa and Uttara. Kakusandha had a fine pair of chief disciples named Vidhura and Sañjīva. Koṇāgamana had a fine pair of chief disciples named Bhiyyosa and Uttara. Kassapa had a fine pair of chief disciples named Tissa and Bhāradvāja. I have a fine pair of chief disciples named Sāriputta and Moggallāna.

Vipassī had three gatherings of disciples—one of 6,800,000, one of 100,000, and one of 80,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Sikhī had three gatherings of disciples—one of 100,000, one of 80,000, and one of 70,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Vessabhū had three gatherings of disciples—one of 80,000, one of 70,000, and one of 60,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Kakusandha had one gathering of disciples—40,000 mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Koṇāgamana had one gathering of disciples—30,000 mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Kassapa had one gathering of disciples—20,000 mendicants who had ended their defilements.

I have had one gathering of disciples—1,250 mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Vipassī had as chief attendant a mendicant named Asoka. Sikhī had as chief attendant a mendicant named Khemaṅkara. Vessabhū had as chief attendant a mendicant named Upasanta. Kakusandha had as chief attendant a mendicant named Buddhija. Koṇāgamana had as chief attendant a mendicant named Sothhija. Kassapa had as chief attendant a mendicant named Sabbamitta. I have as chief attendant a mendicant named Ānanda.

Vipassī's father was King Bandhuma, his birth mother was Queen Bandhumatī, and their capital city was named Bandhumatī.

Sikhī's father was King Aruṇa, his birth mother was Queen Pabhāvatī, and their capital city was named Aruṇavatī.

Vessabhū's father was King Suppatīta, his birth mother was Queen Vassavatī, and their capital city was named Anoma.

Kakusandha's father was the brahmin Aggidatta, and his birth mother was the brahmin lady Visākhā. At that time the king was Khema, whose capital city was named Khemavatī.

Koṇāgamana's father was the brahmin Yaññadatta, and his birth mother was the brahmin lady Uttarā. At that time the king was Sobha, whose capital city was named Sobhavatī.

Kassapa's father was the brahmin Brahmadata, and his birth mother was the brahmin lady

Dhanavatī. At that time the king was Kikī, whose capital city was named Benares.

In this life, my father was King Suddhodana, my birth mother was Queen Māyā, and our capital city was Kapilavatthu.”

That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One got up from his seat and entered his dwelling.

Soon after the Buddha left, those mendicants discussed among themselves:

“It’s incredible, reverends, it’s amazing, the power and might of a Realized One! For he is able to recollect the caste, names, clans, life-span, chief disciples, and gatherings of disciples of the Buddhas of the past who have become completely extinguished, cut off proliferation, cut off the track, finished off the cycle, and transcended suffering. He knows the caste they were born in, and also their names, clans, conduct, qualities, wisdom, meditation, and freedom.

Is it because the Realized One has clearly comprehended the principle of the teachings that he can recollect all these things? Or did deities tell him?” But this conversation among those mendicants was left unfinished.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and went to the pavilion by the kari tree, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants, “Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was unfinished?”

The mendicants told him what had happened, adding, “This was our conversation that was unfinished when the Buddha arrived.”

“It is because the Realized One has clearly comprehended the principle of the teachings that he can recollect all these things. And the deities also told me.

Would you like to hear a further Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives?”

“Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the Buddha give a further Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives. The mendicants will listen and remember it.”

“Well then, mendicants, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Ninety-one eons ago, the Buddha Vipassī arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. He was born as an aristocrat into an aristocrat family. His clan was Koṇḍañña. He lived for 80,000 years. He was awakened at the root of a trumpet flower tree. He had a fine pair of chief disciples named Khaṇḍa and Tissa. He had three gatherings of disciples—one of 6,800,000, one of 100,000, and one of 80,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements. He had as chief attendant a mendicant named Asoka. His father was King Bandhuma, his birth mother was Queen Bandhumatī, and their capital city was named Bandhumatī.

2. What's Normal for One Intent on Awakening

When Vipassī, the being intent on awakening, passed away from the host of Joyful Gods, he was conceived in his mother's womb, mindful and aware. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening passes away from the host of Joyful Gods, he is conceived in his mother's womb. And then—in this world with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. And the sentient beings reborn there recognize each other by that light: 'So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!' And this galaxy shakes and

rocks and trembles. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appears in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's belly, four gods approach to guard the four directions, so that no human or non-human or anyone at all shall harm the being intent on awakening or his mother. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's belly, she becomes naturally ethical. She refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and alcoholic drinks that cause negligence. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's belly, she no longer feels sexual desire for men, and she cannot be violated by a man of lustful intent. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's belly, she obtains the five kinds of sensual stimulation and amuses herself, supplied and provided with them. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's belly, no afflictions beset her. She's happy and free of bodily fatigue. And she sees the being intent on awakening in her womb, complete with all his various parts, not deficient in any faculty. Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, well-worked, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed with all good qualities. And it was strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown. And someone with good eyesight were to take it in their hand and examine it: 'This beryl gem is naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, well-worked, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed with all good qualities. And it's strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown.'

In the same way, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's belly, no afflictions beset her. She's happy and free of bodily fatigue. And she sees the being intent on awakening in her womb, complete with all his various parts, not deficient in any faculty. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, seven days after the being intent on awakening is born, his mother passes away and is reborn in the host of Joyful Gods. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, while other women carry the infant in the womb for nine or ten months before giving birth, not so the mother of the being intent on awakening. She gives birth after exactly ten months. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, while other women give birth while sitting or lying down, not so the mother of the being intent on awakening. She only gives birth standing up. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, gods receive him first, then humans. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, before he reaches the ground, four gods receive him and place him before his mother, saying: 'Rejoice, O Queen! An illustrious child is born to you.' This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, he emerges already clean, unsoiled by waters, mucus, blood, or any other kind of impurity, pure and clean. Suppose a jewel-treasure was placed on a cloth from Kāsī. The jewel would not soil the cloth, nor would the cloth soil the jewel. Why is that? Because of the cleanliness of them both.

In the same way, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, he emerges already clean, unsoiled by waters,

mucus, blood, or any other kind of impurity, pure and clean. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, two streams of water appear in the sky, one cool, one warm, for bathing the being intent on awakening and his mother. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, as soon as he's born, the being intent on awakening stands firm with his own feet on the ground. Facing north, he takes seven strides with a white parasol held above him, surveys all quarters, and makes this dramatic proclamation: 'I am the foremost in the world! I am the eldest in the world! I am the first in the world! This is my last rebirth. Now there are no more future lives.' This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, then—in this world with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and

brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. And the sentient beings reborn there recognize each other by that light: ‘So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!’ And this galaxy shakes and rocks and trembles. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appears in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods. This is normal in such a case.

3. The Thirty-Two Marks of a Great Man

When Prince Vipassī was born, they announced it to King Bandhuma, ‘Sire, your son is born! Let your majesty examine him!’ When the king had examined the prince, he had the brahmin soothsayers summoned and said to them, ‘Gentlemen, please examine the prince.’ When

they had examined him they said to the king, 'Rejoice, O King! An illustrious son is born to you. You are fortunate, so very fortunate, to have a son such as this born in this family! For the prince has the thirty-two marks of a great man. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world.

And what are the marks which he possesses?
After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns
by principle, without rod or sword.

He has well-planted feet.

On the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked
wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every
detail.

He has projecting heels.

He has long fingers.

His hands and feet are tender.

His hands and feet cling gracefully.

His feet are arched.

His calves are like those of an antelope.

When standing upright and not bending over, the
palms of both hands touch the knees.

His private parts are covered in a foreskin.

He is gold colored; his skin has a golden sheen.

He has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don't stick to his body.

His hairs grow one per pore.

His hairs stand up; they're blue-black and curl clockwise.

His body is as straight as Brahmā's.

He has bulging muscles in seven places.

His chest is like that of a lion.

The gap between the shoulder-blades is filled in.

He has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree: the span of his arms equals the height of his body.

His torso is cylindrical.

He has an excellent sense of taste.

His jaw is like that of a lion.

He has forty teeth.

His teeth are even.

His teeth have no gaps.

His teeth are perfectly white.

He has a large tongue.

He has the voice of Brahmā, like a cuckoo's call.

His eyes are deep blue.

He has eyelashes like a cow's.

Between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft and white like cotton-wool.

His head is shaped like a turban.

These are the thirty-two marks of a great man that the prince has. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world.’

4. How He Came to be Known as Vipassī

Then King Bandhuma had the brahmin soothsayers dressed in fresh clothes and satisfied all their needs. Then the king appointed nurses for Prince Vipassī. Some suckled him, some bathed him, some held him, and some carried him on their hip. From when he was born, a white parasol was held over him night and day, with the thought, ‘Don’t let cold, heat, grass, dust, or damp bother him.’ He was dear and beloved by many people, like a blue water lily, or a pink or white lotus. He was always passed from hip to hip.

From when he was born, his voice was charming, graceful, sweet, and lovely. It was as sweet as the song of a cuckoo-bird found in the Himalayas.

From when he was born, Prince Vipassī had the power of clairvoyance which manifested as a result of past deeds. He could see for a league all around both by day and by night.

And he was unblinkingly watchful, like the gods of the Thirty-Three. And because it was said that he was unblinkingly watchful, he came to be known as ‘Vipassī’.

Then while King Bandhuma was sitting in judgment, he’d sit Prince Vipassī in his lap and explain the case to him. And sitting there in his father’s lap, Vipassī would thoroughly consider the case and draw a conclusion using a logical procedure. So this was all the more reason for him to be known as ‘Vipassī’.

Then King Bandhuma had three stilt longhouses built for him—one for the winter, one for the

summer, and one for the rainy season, and provided him with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. Prince Vipassī stayed in a stilt longhouse without coming downstairs for the four months of the rainy season, where he was entertained by musicians—none of them men.

5. The Old Man

Then, after many thousand years had passed, Prince Vipassī addressed his charioteer, ‘My dear charioteer, harness the finest chariots. We will go to a park and see the scenery.’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied the charioteer. He harnessed the chariots and informed the prince, ‘Sire, the finest chariots are harnessed. Please go at your convenience.’ Then Prince Vipassī mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out for the park.

Along the way he saw an elderly man, bent double, crooked, leaning on a staff, trembling as he walked, ailing, past his prime. He addressed

his charioteer, ‘My dear charioteer, what has that man done? For his hair and his body are unlike those of other men.’

‘That, Your Majesty, is called an old man.’

‘But why is he called an old man?’

‘He’s called an old man because now he has not long to live.’

‘But my dear charioteer, am I liable to grow old? Am I not exempt from old age?’

‘Everyone is liable to grow old, Your Majesty, including you. No-one is exempt from old age.’

‘Well then, my dear charioteer, that’s enough of the park for today. Let’s return to the royal compound.’

‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer and did so.

Back at the royal compound, the prince brooded, miserable and sad: ‘Damn this thing called rebirth, since old age will come to anyone who’s born.’

Then King Bandhuma summoned the charioteer and said, ‘My dear charioteer, I hope the prince enjoyed himself at the park? I hope he was happy there?’

‘No, Your Majesty, the prince didn’t enjoy himself at the park.’

‘But what did he see on the way to the park?’ And the charioteer told the king about seeing the old man and the prince’s reaction.

6. The Sick Man

Then King Bandhuma thought, ‘Prince Vipassī must not renounce the throne. He must not go forth from the lay life to homelessness. And the words of the brahmin soothsayers must not come true.’ To this end he provided the prince with

even more of the five kinds of sensual stimulation, with which the prince amused himself.

Then, after many thousand years had passed, Prince Vipassī had his charioteer drive him to the park once more.

Along the way he saw a man who was ill, suffering, gravely ill, collapsed in his own urine and feces, being picked up by some and put down by others. He addressed his charioteer, ‘My dear charioteer, what has that man done? For his eyes and his voice are unlike those of other men.’

‘That, Your Majesty, is called a sick man.’

‘But why is he called a sick man?’

‘He’s called an sick man; hopefully he will recover from that illness.’

‘But my dear charioteer, am I liable to fall sick? Am I not exempt from sickness?’

‘Everyone is liable to fall sick, Your Majesty, including you. No-one is exempt from sickness.’

‘Well then, my dear charioteer, that’s enough of the park for today. Let’s return to the royal compound.’

‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer and did so.

Back at the royal compound, the prince brooded, miserable and sad: ‘Damn this thing called rebirth, since old age and sickness will come to anyone who’s born.’

Then King Bandhuma summoned the charioteer and said, ‘My dear charioteer, I hope the prince enjoyed himself at the park? I hope he was happy there?’

‘No, Your Majesty, the prince didn’t enjoy himself at the park.’

‘But what did he see on the way to the park?’ And the charioteer told the king about seeing the sick man and the prince’s reaction.

7. The Dead Man

Then King Bandhuma thought, ‘Prince Vipassī must not renounce the throne. He must not go forth from the lay life to homelessness. And the words of the brahmin soothsayers must not come true.’ To this end he provided the prince with even more of the five kinds of sensual stimulation, with which the prince amused himself.

Then, after many thousand years had passed, Prince Vipassī had his charioteer drive him to the park once more.

Along the way he saw a large crowd gathered making a bier out of garments of different colors. He addressed his charioteer, ‘My dear charioteer, why is that crowd making a bier?’

‘That, Your Majesty, is for someone who’s departed.’

‘Well then, drive the chariot up to the departed.’

‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer, and did so.

When the prince saw the corpse of the departed, he addressed the charioteer, ‘But why is he called departed?’

‘He’s called departed because now his mother and father, his relatives and kin shall see him no more, and he shall never again see them.’

‘But my dear charioteer, am I liable to die? Am I not exempt from death? Will the king and queen and my other relatives and kin see me no more? And shall I never again see them?’

‘Everyone is liable to die, Your Majesty, including you. No-one is exempt from death. The king and queen and your other relatives and kin

shall see you no more, and you shall never again see them.’

‘Well then, my dear charioteer, that’s enough of the park for today. Let’s return to the royal compound.’

‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer and did so.

Back at the royal compound, the prince brooded, miserable and sad: ‘Damn this thing called rebirth, since old age, sickness, and death will come to anyone who’s born.’

Then King Bandhuma summoned the charioteer and said, ‘My dear charioteer, I hope the prince enjoyed himself at the park? I hope he was happy there?’

‘No, Your Majesty, the prince didn’t enjoy himself at the park.’

‘But what did he see on the way to the park?’ And the charioteer told the king about seeing the dead man and the prince’s reaction.

8. The Renunciate

Then King Bandhuma thought, ‘Prince Vipassī must not renounce the throne. He must not go forth from the lay life to homelessness. And the words of the brahmin soothsayers must not come true.’ To this end he provided the prince with even more of the five kinds of sensual stimulation, with which the prince amused himself.

Then, after many thousand years had passed, Prince Vipassī had his charioteer drive him to the park once more.

Along the way he saw a man, a renunciate with shaven head, wearing an ochre robe. He addressed his charioteer, ‘My dear charioteer, what has that man done? For his head and his clothes are unlike those of other men.’

‘That, Your Majesty, is called a renunciate.’

‘But why is he called a renunciate?’

‘He is called a renunciate because he celebrates principled and fair conduct, skillful actions, good deeds, harmlessness, and compassion for living creatures.’

‘Then I celebrate the one called a renunciate, who celebrates principled and fair conduct, skillful actions, good deeds, harmlessness, and compassion for living creatures! Well then, drive the chariot up to that renunciate.’

‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer, and did so.

Then Prince Vipassī said to that renunciate, ‘My good man, what have you done? For your head and your clothes are unlike those of other men.’

‘Sire, I am what is called a renunciate.’

‘But why are you called a renunciate?’

‘I am called a renunciate because I celebrate principled and fair conduct, skillful actions, good deeds, harmlessness, and compassion for living creatures.’

‘Then I celebrate the one called a renunciate, who celebrates principled and fair conduct, skillful actions, good deeds, harmlessness, and compassion for living creatures!’

9. The Going Forth

Then the prince addressed the charioteer, ‘Well then, my dear charioteer, take the chariot and return to the royal compound. I shall shave off my hair and beard right here, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.’

‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer and did so.

Then Prince Vipassī shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.

10. A Great Crowd Goes Forth

A large crowd of 84,000 people in the capital of Bandhumatī heard that Vipassī had gone forth. It occurred to them, ‘This must be no ordinary teaching and training, no ordinary going forth in which Prince Vipassī has gone forth. If even the prince goes forth, why don’t we do the same?’

Then that great crowd of 84,000 people shaved off their hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and followed the one intent on awakening, Vipassī, by going forth from the lay life to homelessness. Escorted by that assembly, Vipassī wandered on tour among the villages, towns, and capital cities.

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, ‘It’s not appropriate for me to live in a crowd. Why don’t I live alone, withdrawn from the group?’ After some time he withdrew from the group to live alone. The 84,000 went one way, but Vipassī went another.

11. Vipassī's Reflections

Then as Vipassī, the one intent on awakening, was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, 'Alas, this world has fallen into trouble. It's born, grows old, dies, passes away, and is reborn, yet it doesn't understand how to escape from this suffering, from old age and death. Oh, when will an escape be found from this suffering, from old age and death?'

Then Vipassī thought, 'When what exists is there old age and death? What is a condition for old age and death?' Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, 'When rebirth exists there's old age and death. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death.'

Then Vipassī thought, 'When what exists is there rebirth? What is a condition for rebirth?' Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, 'When continued existence exists there's rebirth. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth.'

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what exists is there continued existence? What is a condition for continued existence?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When grasping exists there’s continued existence. Grasping is a condition for continued existence.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what exists is there grasping? What is a condition for grasping?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When craving exists there’s grasping. Craving is a condition for grasping.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what exists is there craving? What is a condition for craving?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When feeling exists there’s craving. Feeling is a condition for craving.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what exists is there feeling? What is a condition for feeling?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended

with wisdom, ‘When contact exists there’s feeling. Contact is a condition for feeling.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what exists is there contact? What is a condition for contact?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When the six sense fields exist there’s contact. The six sense fields are a condition for contact.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what exists are there the six sense fields? What is a condition for the six sense fields?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When name and form exist there are the six sense fields. Name and form are a condition for the six sense fields.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what exists are there name and form? What is a condition for name and form?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When consciousness exists there are name and form. Consciousness is a condition for name and form.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what exists is there consciousness? What is a condition for consciousness?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When name and form exist there’s consciousness. Name and form are a condition for consciousness.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘This consciousness turns back from name and form, and doesn’t go beyond that.’ It is to this extent that one may be reborn, grow old, die, pass away, or reappear. That is: Name and form are conditions for consciousness. Consciousness is a condition for name and form. Name and form are conditions for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are conditions for contact. Contact is a condition for feeling. Feeling is a condition for craving. Craving is a condition for grasping. Grasping is a condition for continued existence. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.’

‘Origination, origination.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in Vipassī, the one intent on awakening, regarding teachings not learned before from another.

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no old age and death? When what ceases do old age and death cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When rebirth doesn’t exist there’s no old age and death. When rebirth ceases, old age and death cease.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no rebirth? When what ceases does rebirth cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When continued existence doesn’t exist there’s no rebirth. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no continued existence? When what ceases does continued existence cease?’ Then,

through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When grasping doesn’t exist there’s no continued existence. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no grasping? When what ceases does grasping cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When craving doesn’t exist there’s no grasping. When craving ceases, grasping ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no craving? When what ceases does craving cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When feeling doesn’t exist there’s no craving. When feeling ceases, craving ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought, ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no feeling? When what ceases does feeling cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, ‘When

contact doesn't exist there's no feeling. When contact ceases, feeling ceases.'

Then Vipassī thought, 'When what doesn't exist is there no contact? When what ceases does contact cease?' Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, 'When the six sense fields don't exist there's no contact. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases.'

Then Vipassī thought, 'When what doesn't exist are there no six sense fields? When what ceases do the six sense fields cease?' Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, 'When name and form don't exist there are no six sense fields. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease.'

Then Vipassī thought, 'When what doesn't exist are there no name and form? When what ceases do name and form cease?' Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, 'When consciousness doesn't exist there are no

name and form. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease.'

Then Vipassī thought, 'When what doesn't exist is there no consciousness? When what ceases does consciousness cease?' Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom, 'When name and form don't exist there's no consciousness. When name and form cease, consciousness ceases.'

Then Vipassī thought, 'I have discovered the path to awakening. That is: When name and form cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow,

lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.’

‘Cessation, cessation.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in Vipassī, the one intent on awakening, regarding teachings not learned before from another.

Some time later Vipassī meditated observing rise and fall in the five grasping aggregates. ‘Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the ending of form. Such is feeling, such is the origin of feeling, such is the ending of feeling. Such is perception, such is the origin of perception, such is the ending of perception. Such are choices, such is the origin of choices, such is the ending of choices. Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the ending of consciousness.’ Meditating like this his mind was soon freed from defilements by not grasping.

12. The Appeal of Brahmā

Then the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, thought, ‘Why don’t I teach the Dhamma?’

Then he thought, ‘This principle I have discovered is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of logic, subtle, comprehensible to the astute. But people like attachment, they love it and enjoy it. It’s hard for them to see this thing; that is, specific conditionality, dependent origination. It’s also hard for them to see this thing; that is, the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment. And if I were to teach the Dhamma, others might not understand me, which would be wearying and troublesome for me.’

And then these verses, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to him:

‘I’ve struggled hard to realize this,
enough with trying to explain it!
This teaching is not easily understood
by those mired in greed and hate.

Those besotted by greed can’t see
what’s subtle, going against the stream,
deep, hard to see, and very fine,
for they’re shrouded in a mass of darkness.’

So, as the Buddha Vipassī reflected like this, his
mind inclined to remaining passive, not to
teaching the Dhamma.

Then a certain Great Brahmā, knowing what the
Buddha Vipassī was thinking, thought, ‘Oh my
goodness! The world will be lost, the world will
perish! For the mind of the Blessed One Vipassī,
the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha,
inclines to remaining passive, not to teaching the
Dhamma.’ Then, as easily as a strong person
would extend or contract their arm, he vanished
from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in front of
the Buddha Vipassī. He arranged his robe over

one shoulder, knelt on his right knee, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha Vipassī, and said, ‘Sir, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma! Let the Holy One teach the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They’re in decline because they haven’t heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching!’

When he said this, the Buddha Vipassī said to him, ‘I too thought this, Brahmā, “Why don’t I teach the Dhamma?” Then it occurred to me, “If I were to teach the Dhamma, others might not understand me, which would be wearying and troublesome for me.”

So, as I reflected like this, my mind inclined to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.’

For a second time, and a third time that Great Brahmā begged the Buddha to teach.

Then, understanding Brahmā’s invitation, the Buddha Vipassī surveyed the world with the eye of a Buddha, because of his compassion for

sentient beings. And he saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes; with keen faculties and with weak faculties, with good qualities and with bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach. And some of them lived seeing the danger in the fault to do with the next world, while others did not. It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. Some of them sprout and grow in the water reaching the water's surface. And some of them sprout and grow in the water but rise up above the water and stand with no water clinging to them.

In the same way, the Buddha Vipassī saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes.

Then that Great Brahmā, knowing what the Buddha Vipassī was thinking, addressed him in verse:

‘Standing high on a rocky mountain,
you can see the people all around.
In just the same way, all-seer, wise one,
having ascended the Temple of Truth,
rid of sorrow, look upon the people
swamped with sorrow, oppressed by rebirth and
old age.

Rise, hero! Victor in battle, leader of the caravan,
wander the world without obligation.
Let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!
There will be those who understand!’

Then the Buddha Vipassī addressed that Great
Brahmā in verse:

‘Flung open are the doors to the deathless!
Let those with ears to hear commit to faith.
Thinking it would be troublesome, Brahmā, I did
not teach
the sophisticated, sublime Dhamma among
humans.’

Then the Great Brahmā, knowing that his request for the Buddha Vipassī to teach the Dhamma had been granted, bowed and respectfully circled him, keeping him on his right, before vanishing right there.

13. The Chief Disciples

Then the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, thought, ‘Who should I teach first of all? Who will quickly understand this teaching?’ Then he thought, ‘That Khaṇḍa, the king’s son, and Tissa, the high priest’s son, are astute, competent, clever, and have long had little dust in their eyes. Why don’t I teach them first of all? They will quickly understand this teaching.’

Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the tree of awakening and reappeared near the capital city of Bandhumatī, in the deer park named Sanctuary.

Then the Buddha Vipassī addressed the park keeper, ‘My dear park keeper, please enter the city and say this to the king’s son Khaṇḍa and the high priest’s son Tissa: “Sirs, the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, has arrived at Bandhumatī and is staying in the deer park named Sanctuary. He wishes to see you.”’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied the park keeper, and did as he was asked.

Then the king’s son Khaṇḍa and the high priest’s son Tissa had the finest carriages harnessed. Then they mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Bandhumatī for the Sanctuary. They went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha Vipassī on foot. They bowed and sat down to one side.

The Buddha Vipassī taught them step by step, with a talk on giving, ethical conduct, and heaven. He explained the drawbacks of sensual pleasures,

so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of renunciation. And when he knew that their minds were ready, pliable, rid of hindrances, elated, and confident he explained the special teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth rid of stains would properly absorb dye, in that very seat the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in the king's son Khaṇḍa and the high priest's son Tissa: 'Everything that has a beginning has an end.'

They saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. They went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instructions. They said to the Buddha Vipassī, 'Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what's there, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. We go for refuge to the Blessed One and to the teaching. Sir, may we

receive the going forth and ordination in the Buddha's presence?'

And they received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha Vipassī's presence. Then the Buddha Vipassī educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk. He explained the drawbacks of conditioned phenomena, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of extinguishment. Being taught like this their minds were soon freed from defilements by not grasping.

14. The Going Forth of the Large Crowd

A large crowd of 84,000 people in the capital of Bandhumatī heard that the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, had arrived at Bandhumatī and was staying in the deer park named Sanctuary. And they heard that the king's son Khaṇḍa and the high priest's son Tissa had shaved off their hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and gone forth from the lay life to homelessness in the Buddha's presence. It

occurred to them, ‘This must be no ordinary teaching and training, no ordinary going forth in which the king’s son Khaṇḍa and the high priest’s son Tissa have gone forth. If even they go forth, why don’t we do the same?’ Then those 84,000 people left Bandhumatī for the deer park named Sanctuary, where they approached the Buddha Vipassī, bowed and sat down to one side.

The Buddha Vipassī taught them step by step, with a talk on giving, ethical conduct, and heaven. He explained the drawbacks of sensual pleasures, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of renunciation. And when he knew that their minds were ready, pliable, rid of hindrances, elated, and confident he explained the special teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth rid of stains would properly absorb dye, in that very seat the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in those 84,000 people: ‘Everything that has a beginning has an end.’

They saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. They went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instructions. They said to the Buddha Vipassī, 'Excellent, sir! Excellent!' And just like Khaṇḍa and Tissa they asked for and received ordination. Then the Buddha taught them further.

Being taught like this their minds were soon freed from defilements by not grasping.

15. The 84,000 Who Had Gone Forth Previously

The 84,000 people who had gone forth previously also heard: 'It seems the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, has arrived at Bandhumatī and is staying in the deer park named Sanctuary. And he is teaching the Dhamma!' Then they too went to see the Buddha Vipassī, realized the Dhamma, went forth, and became freed from defilements.

16. The Allowance to Wander

Now at that time a large Saṅgha of 6,800,000 mendicants were residing at Bandhumatī. As the Buddha Vipassī was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, ‘The Saṅgha residing at Bandhumatī now is large. What if I was to urge them:

“Wander forth, mendicants, for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. Let not two go by one road. Teach the Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And reveal a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They’re in decline because they haven’t heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching! But when six years have passed, you must all come to Bandhumatī to recite the monastic code.”

Then a certain Great Brahmā, knowing what the Buddha Vipassī was thinking, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in front of the Buddha Vipassī. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha Vipassī, and said, ‘That’s so true, Blessed One! That’s so true, Holy One! The Saṅgha residing at Bandhumatī now is large. Please urge them to wander, as you thought. And sir, I’ll make sure that when six years have passed the mendicants will return to Bandhumatī to recite the monastic code.’

That’s what that Great Brahmā said. Then he bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha Vipassī, keeping him on his right side, before vanishing right there.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha Vipassī came out of retreat and addressed the mendicants, telling them all that had happened. Then he said,

‘Wander forth, mendicants, for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. Let not two go by one road. Teach the Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And reveal a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They’re in decline because they haven’t heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching! But when six years have passed, you must all come to Bandhumatī to recite the monastic code.’

Then most of the mendicants departed to wander the country that very day.

Now at that time there were 84,000 monasteries in India. And when the first year came to an end the deities raised the cry: ‘Good sirs, the first year has ended. Now five years remain. When five years have passed, you must all go to Bandhumatī to recite the monastic code.’

And when the second year ... the third year ... the fourth year ... the fifth year came to an end, the deities raised the cry: ‘Good sirs, the fifth year has ended. Now one year remains. When one year has passed, you must all go to Bandhumatī to recite the monastic code.’

And when the sixth year came to an end the deities raised the cry: ‘Good sirs, the sixth year has ended. Now is the time that you must go to Bandhumatī to recite the monastic code.’ Then that very day the mendicants went to Bandhumatī to recite the monastic code. Some went by their own psychic power, and some by the psychic power of the deities.

And there the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, recited the monastic code thus:

‘Patient acceptance is the ultimate austerity.
Extinguishment is the ultimate, say the Buddhas.
No true renunciate injures another,
nor does an ascetic hurt another.

Not to do any evil;
 to embrace the good;
 to purify one's mind:
 this is the instruction of the Buddhas.

Not speaking ill nor doing harm;
 restraint in the monastic code;
 moderation in eating;
 staying in remote lodgings;
 commitment to the higher mind—
 this is the instruction of the Buddhas.'

17. Being Informed by Deities

At one time, mendicants, I was staying near Ukkatthā, in the Subhaga Forest at the root of a magnificent sal tree. As I was in private retreat this thought came to mind, 'It's not easy to find an abode of sentient beings where I haven't previously abided in all this long time, except for the gods of the pure abodes. Why don't I go to see them?'

Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, I vanished from the Subhaga Forest and reappeared with the Aviha gods.

In that order of gods, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of deities approached me, bowed, stood to one side, and said to me, ‘Ninety-one eons ago, good sir, the Buddha Vipassī arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. He was born as an aristocrat into an aristocrat family. Koṇḍañña was his clan. He lived for 80,000 years. He was awakened at the root of a trumpet flower tree. He had a fine pair of chief disciples named Khaṇḍa and Tissa. He had three gatherings of disciples—one of 6,800,000, one of 100,000, and one of 80,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements. He had as chief attendant a mendicant named Asoka. His father was King Bandhuma, his birth mother was Queen Bandhumatī, and their capital city was named Bandhumatī. And such was his renunciation, such his going forth, such his striving, such his awakening, and such his rolling forth of the wheel

of Dhamma. And good sir, after leading the spiritual life under that Buddha Vipassī we lost our desire for sensual pleasures and were reborn here.’

And other deities came and similarly recounted the details of the Buddhas Sikhī, Vessabhū, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa.

In that order of gods, many hundreds of deities approached me, bowed, stood to one side, and said to me, ‘In the present fortunate eon, good sir, you have arisen in the world, perfected and fully awakened. You were born as an aristocrat into an aristocrat family. Gotama is your clan. For you the life-span is short, brief, and fleeting. A long-lived person lives for a century or a little more. You were awakened at the root of a peepul tree. You have a fine pair of chief disciples named Sāriputta and Moggallāna. You have had one gathering of disciples—1,250 mendicants who had ended their defilements. You have as chief attendant a mendicant named Ānanda. Your father was

King Suddhodana, your birth mother was Queen Māyā, and your capital city was Kapilavatthu. And such was your renunciation, such your going forth, such your striving, such your awakening, and such your rolling forth of the wheel of Dhamma. And good sir, after leading the spiritual life under you we lost our desire for sensual pleasures and were reborn here.'

Then together with the Aviha gods I went to see the Atappa gods ... the Gods Fair to See ... and the Fair Seeing Gods. Then together with all these gods I went to see the Gods of Akaniṭṭha, where we had a similar conversation.

And that is how the Realized One is able to recollect the caste, names, clans, life-span, chief disciples, and gatherings of disciples of the Buddhas of the past who have become completely extinguished, cut off proliferation, cut off the track, finished off the cycle, and transcended suffering. It is both because I have clearly

comprehended the principle of the teachings, and also because the deities told me.”

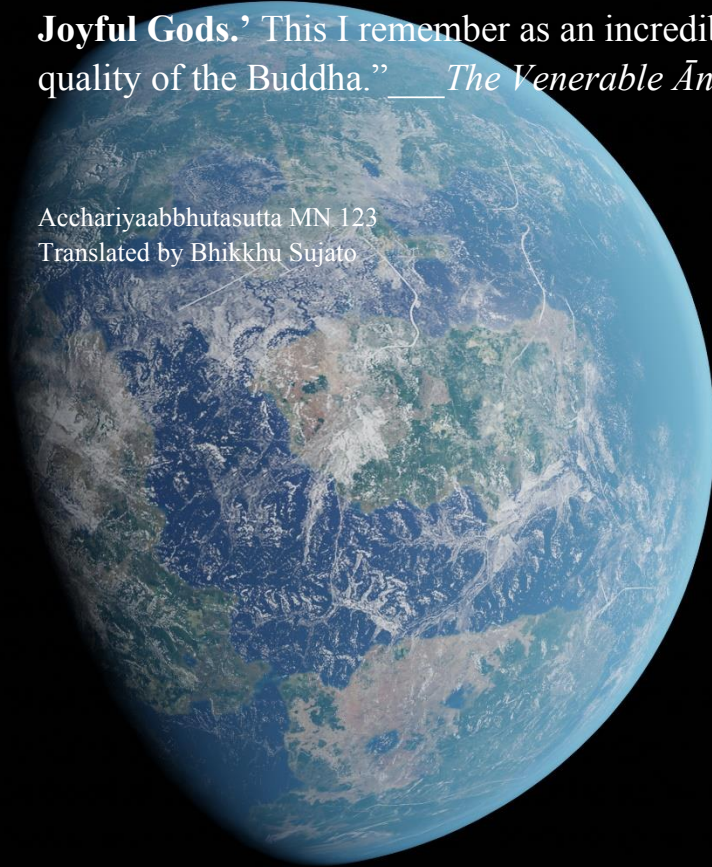
That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said.

Mahāpadānasutta DN 14 <https://suttacentral.net/dn14>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



“Sir, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: **‘Mindful and aware, the being intent on awakening was reborn in the host of Joyful Gods.’** This I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.” — *The Venerable Ānanda*

Acchariyaabbhutasutta MN 123
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



Venerable Ānanda is invited by the Buddha to speak on the Buddha's amazing qualities, and proceeds to list a series of apparently miraculous events accompanying his birth. The Buddha caps it off by explaining what he thinks is really amazing about himself

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then after the meal, on return from almsround, several senior mendicants sat together in the assembly hall and this discussion came up among them:

“It’s incredible, reverends, it’s amazing, the power and might of a Realized One! For he is able to know the Buddhas of the past who have become completely extinguished, cut off proliferation, cut off the track, finished off the cycle, and transcended suffering. He knows the caste they were born in, and also their names, clans, conduct, teaching, wisdom, meditation, and freedom.”

When they said this, Venerable Ānanda said, “The Realized Ones are incredible, reverends, and they have incredible qualities. They’re amazing, and they have amazing qualities.” But this conversation among those mendicants was left unfinished.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat, went to the assembly hall, sat down on

the seat spread out, and addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was unfinished?”

So the mendicants told him what they had been talking about. The Buddha said, “Well then, Ānanda, say some more about the incredible and amazing qualities of the Realized One.”

“Sir, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Mindful and aware, the being intent on awakening was reborn in the host of Joyful Gods.’ This I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Mindful and aware, the being intent on awakening remained in the host of Joyful Gods.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘For the whole of that life, the being intent on awakening remained in the host of Joyful Gods.’

This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Mindful and aware, the being intent on awakening passed away from the host of Joyful Gods and was conceived in his mother’s womb.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening passes away from the host of Joyful Gods, he is conceived in his mother’s womb. And then—in this world with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. And even the sentient beings reborn there

recognize each other by that light: “So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!” And this galaxy shakes and rocks and trembles. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appears in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, four deities approach to guard the four directions, so that no human or non-human or anyone at all shall harm the being intent on awakening or his mother.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, she becomes naturally ethical. She refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and alcoholic drinks that cause negligence.’ This too

I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, she no longer feels sexual desire for men, and she cannot be violated by a man of lustful intent.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, she obtains the five kinds of sensual stimulation and amuses herself, supplied and provided with them.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, no afflictions beset her. She’s happy and free of bodily fatigue. And she sees the being intent on awakening in her womb, complete with all his various parts, not

deficient in any faculty. Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, well-worked. And it was strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown. And someone with good eyesight were to take it in their hand and examine it: “This beryl gem is naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, well-worked. And it’s strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown.”

In the same way, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, no afflictions beset her. She’s happy and free of bodily fatigue. And she sees the being intent on awakening in her womb, complete with all his various parts, not deficient in any faculty.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Seven days after the being intent on awakening is born, his mother passes away and is reborn in the host of Joyful Gods.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Other women carry the infant in the womb for nine or ten months before giving birth. Not so the mother of the being intent on awakening. She gives birth after exactly ten months.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Other women give birth while sitting or lying down. Not so the mother of the being intent on awakening. She only gives birth standing up.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother’s womb, gods receive him first, then humans.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother’s womb, before he reaches the ground, four deities receive him and place him

before his mother, saying: “Rejoice, O Queen! An illustrious son is born to you.” This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother’s womb, he emerges already clean, unsoiled by waters, mucus, blood, or any other kind of impurity, pure and clean. Suppose a jewel-treasure was placed on a cloth from Kāsī. The jewel would not soil the cloth, nor would the cloth soil the jewel. Why is that? Because of the cleanliness of them both.

In the same way, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother’s womb, he emerges already clean, unsoiled by waters, mucus, blood, or any other kind of impurity, pure and clean.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother’s womb, two streams of water

appear in the sky, one cool, one warm, for bathing the being intent on awakening and his mother.’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘As soon as he’s born, the being intent on awakening stands firm with his own feet on the ground. Facing north, he takes seven strides with a white parasol held above him, surveys all quarters, and makes this dramatic proclamation: “I am the foremost in the world! I am the eldest in the world! I am the first in the world! This is my last rebirth. Now there are no more future lives.”’ This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘When the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother’s womb, then—in this world with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in

the boundless desolation of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. And the sentient beings reborn there recognize each other by that light: “So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!” And this galaxy shakes and rocks and trembles. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appears in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods.’ This too I remember as an incredible and amazing quality of the Buddha.”

“Well then, Ānanda, you should also remember this as an incredible and amazing quality of the Realized One. It’s that the Realized One knows feelings as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. He knows perceptions as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. He knows thoughts as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. This too you should remember as an incredible and amazing quality of the Realized One.”

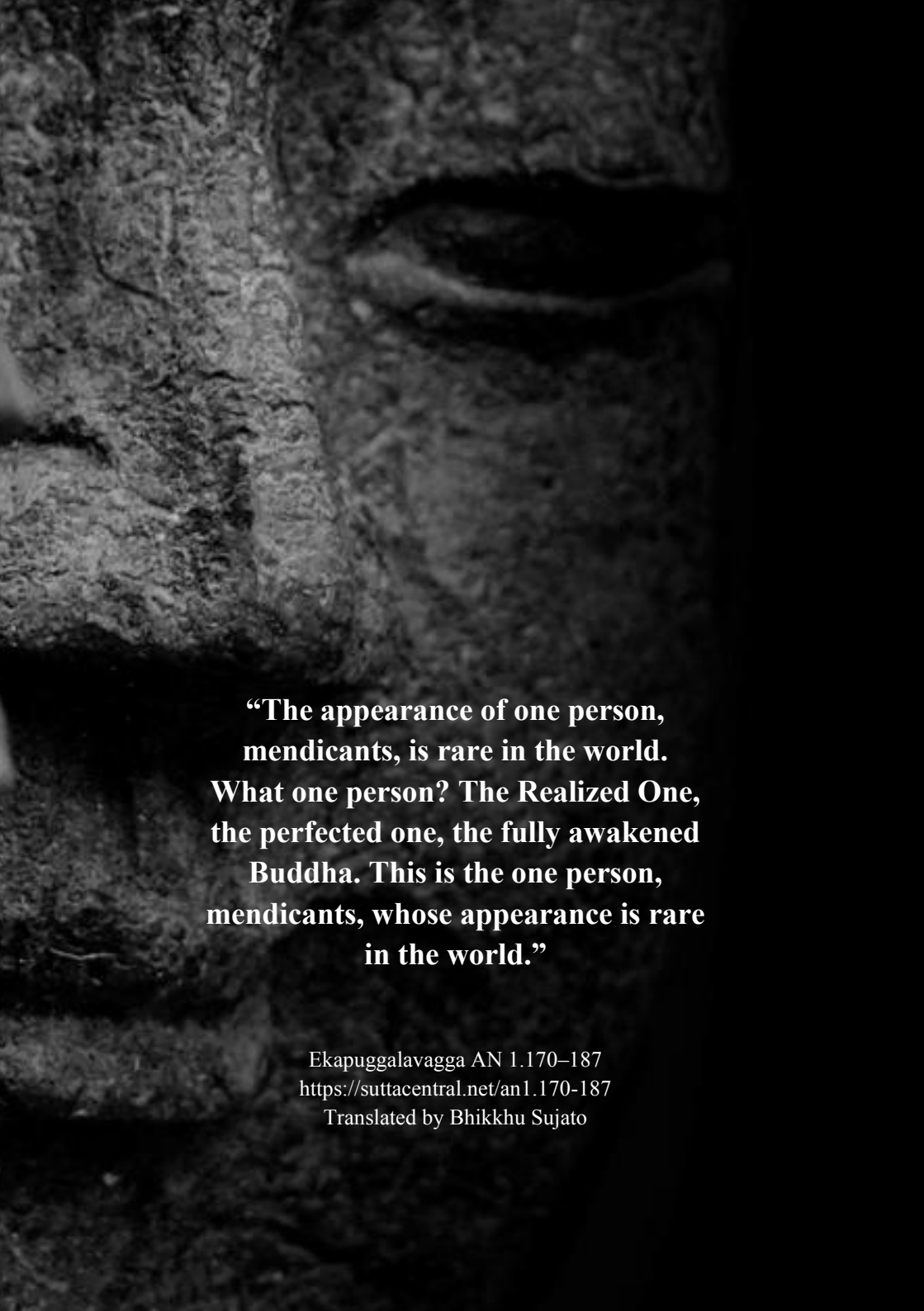
“Sir, the Buddha knows feelings as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. He knows perceptions as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. He knows thoughts as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. This too I remember as an incredible and amazing quality of the Buddha.”

That’s what Ānanda said, and the teacher approved. Satisfied, those mendicants were happy with what Venerable Ānanda said.

Acchariyaabbhutasutta MN 123 <https://suttacentral.net/mn123>

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato





**“The appearance of one person,
mendicants, is rare in the world.
What one person? The Realized One,
the perfected one, the fully awakened
Buddha. This is the one person,
mendicants, whose appearance is rare
in the world.”**

Ekapuggalavagga AN 1.170–187
<https://suttacentral.net/an1.170-187>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

The Marks of a Great Man

At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"There are thirty-two marks of a great man. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he

becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world.

And what are the thirty-two marks?

He has well-planted feet.

On the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every detail.

He has projecting heels.

He has long fingers.

His hands and feet are tender.

His hands and feet cling gracefully.

His feet are arched.

His calves are like those of an antelope.

When standing upright and not bending over, the palms of both hands touch the knees.

His private parts are covered in a foreskin.

He is gold colored; his skin has a golden sheen.

He has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don't stick to his body.

His hairs grow one per pore.

His hairs stand up; they're blue-black and curl clockwise.

His body is as straight as Brahmā's.

He has bulging muscles in seven places.

His chest is like that of a lion.

The gap between the shoulder-blades is filled in.

He has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree: the span of his arms equals the height of his body.

His torso is cylindrical.

He has an excellent sense of taste.

His jaw is like that of a lion.

He has forty teeth.

His teeth are even.

His teeth have no gaps.

His teeth are perfectly white.

He has a large tongue.

He has the voice of Brahmā, like a cuckoo's call.

His eyes are deep blue.

He has eyelashes like a cow's.

Between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft
and white like cotton-wool.

His head is shaped like a turban.

These are the thirty-two marks of a great man. A
great man who possesses these has only two
possible destinies, no other.

Seers who are outsiders remember these marks,
but they do not know the specific deeds
performed in the past to obtain each mark.

1. Well-Planted Feet

In some past lives, past existences, past abodes the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He firmly undertook and persisted in skillful behaviors such as good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, giving and sharing, taking precepts, observing the sabbath, paying due respect to mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, honoring the elders in the family, and various other things pertaining to skillful behaviors. Due to performing, accumulating, heaping up, and amassing those deeds, when his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. There he surpassed the other gods in ten respects: divine life span, beauty, happiness, glory, sovereignty, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. When he passed away from there and came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark of a great man: he has well-planted feet. He places his foot on the ground evenly, raises it evenly, and touches the ground evenly with the whole sole of his foot.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea—free of harassment by bandits, successful and prosperous, safe, blessed, and untroubled—he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. And what does he obtain as king? He can't be stopped by any human foe or enemy. That's what he obtains as king. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He can't be stopped by any foe or enemy whether internal or external; nor by greed, hate, or delusion; nor by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world. That's what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Truth, principle, self-control, and restraint;
purity, precepts, and observing the sabbath;
giving, harmless, delighting in non-
violence—
firmly undertaking these things, he lived
accordingly.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,
where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.
After passing away from there to here,
he steps evenly on this rich earth.

The gathered soothsayers predicted
that there is no stopping one of such even tread,
as householder or renunciate.
That’s the meaning shown by this mark.

While living at home he cannot be stopped,
he defeats his foes, and cannot be beaten.
Due to the fruit of that deed,
he cannot be stopped by any human.

But if he chooses the life gone forth,
 seeing clearly, loving renunciation,
 not even the best can hope to stop him;
 this is the nature of the supreme person.”

2. Wheels on the Feet

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He brought happiness to many people, eliminating threats, terror, and danger, providing just protection and security, and giving gifts with all the trimmings. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: on the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every detail and well divided inside.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a large following of brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers,

guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a fully awakened Buddha. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a large following of monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

"In olden days, in past lives,
 he brought happiness to many people,
 ridding them of fear, terror, and danger,
 eagerly guarding and protecting them.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,
 where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.
 After passing away from there to here,
 wheels on his two feet are found,

all rimmed around and thousand-spoked.
 The gathered soothsayers predicted,

seeing the prince with the hundred-fold mark of
merits,

that he'd have a following, subduing foes,

which is why he has wheels all rimmed around.

If he doesn't choose the life gone forth,

he'll roll the wheel and rule the land.

The aristocrats will be his vassals,

flocking to his glory.

But if he chooses the life gone forth,

seeing clearly, loving renunciation,

the gods, humans, demons, Sakka, and monsters;

fairies and dragons, birds and beasts,

will flock to his glory,

the supreme, honored by gods and humans.”

3–5. Projecting Heels, Etc.

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He gave up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. He was scrupulous and kind, living full of

compassion for all living beings. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these three marks: he has projecting heels, long fingers, and his body is as straight as Brahmā's.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He's long-lived, preserving his life for a long time. No human foe or enemy is able to take his life before his time. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He's long-lived, preserving his life for a long time. No foes or enemies—nor any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world—is able to take his life before his time. That's what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Realizing for himself the horrors of death, he refrained from killing other creatures.

By that good conduct he went to heaven,
where he enjoyed the fruit of deeds well done.

Passing away, on his return to here,
he obtained these three marks:
his projecting heels are full and long,
and he's straight, beautiful, and well-formed,
like Brahmā.

Fair of limb, youthful, of good posture and
breeding,
his fingers are soft and tender and long.
By these three marks of an excellent man,
they indicated that the prince's life would be
long:

‘As a householder he will live long;
longer still if he goes forth, due to
mastery in the development of psychic power.
Thus this is the sign of long life.’”

6. Seven Bulges

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He was a donor of fine and tasty foods and drinks of all kinds, delicious and scrumptious. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: he has bulging muscles in seven places. He has bulges on both hands, both feet, both shoulders, and his chest.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He gets fine and tasty foods and drinks of all kinds, delicious and scrumptious. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He gets fine and tasty foods and drinks of all kinds, delicious and scrumptious. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“He used to give the very best of flavors—
sumptuous foods of every kind.
Because of that good deed,
he rejoiced long in Nandana heaven.

On returning to here, he got seven bulging
muscles
and tender hands and feet are found.
The soothsayers expert in signs declared:
‘He’ll get tasty foods of all sorts

as a householder, that’s what that means.
But even if he goes forth he’ll get the same,
supreme in gaining tasty foods of all sorts,
cutting all bonds of the lay life.’”

7–8. Tender and Clinging Hands

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One
was reborn as a human being. He brought people
together using the four ways of being inclusive:
giving, kindly words, taking care, and equality.
Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a
heavenly realm. When he came back to this state

of existence, he obtained these two marks: his hands and feet are tender, and they cling gracefully.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue is inclusive, cohesive, and well-managed. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue is inclusive, cohesive, and well-managed. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“By giving and helping others,
kindly speech, and equal treatment,

such action and conduct as brought people together,
he went to heaven due to his esteemed virtue.

Passing away, on his return to here,
the young baby prince obtained
hands and feet so tender and clinging,
lovely, graceful, and good-looking.

His retinue is loyal and manageable,
staying agreeably all over this broad land.
Speaking kindly, seeking happiness,
he practices the good qualities he's adopted.

But if he gives up all sensual enjoyments,
as victor he speaks Dhamma to the people.
Devoted, they respond to his words;
after listening, they practice in line with the
teaching.”

9–10. Arched Feet and Upright Hair

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. His speech was

meaningful and principled. He educated many people, bringing welfare and happiness, offering the teaching. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these two marks: his feet are arched and his hairs stand up.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is the foremost, best, chief, highest, and finest of those who enjoy sensual pleasures. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is the foremost, best, chief, highest, and finest of all sentient beings. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“His word was meaningful and principled,
moving the people with his explanations.
He brought welfare and happiness to creatures,
unstintingly offering up teaching.

Because of that good deed,
he advanced to heaven and there rejoiced.
On return to here two marks are found,
of excellence and supremacy.

His hairs stand upright,
and his ankles stand out well.
Swollen with flesh and blood, and wrapped in
skin,
they make it pretty above the feet.

If such a one lives in the home,
he turns into the best of those who enjoy sensual
pleasures.
There'll be none better than him;
he'll proceed having mastered all India.

But going forth the peerless renunciate
turns into the best of all creatures.
There'll be none better than him,
he'll live having mastered the whole world.”

11. Antelope Calves

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He was a thorough teacher of a profession, a branch of knowledge, conduct, or action, thinking: ‘How might they quickly learn and practice, without getting exhausted?’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: his calves are like those of an antelope.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He quickly obtains the things worthy of a king, the factors, supports, and things befitting a king. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He quickly obtains the things worthy of an ascetic, the factors, supports, and things befitting an ascetic. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“In professions, knowledge, conduct, and deeds,
he thought of how they might swiftly learn.
Things that harm no-one at all,
he quickly taught so they would not get tired.

Having done that skillful deed whose outcome is
happiness,
he gains prominent and elegant calves.
Well-formed in graceful spirals,
he’s covered in fine rising hairs.

They say that person has antelope calves,
and that this is the mark of swift success.
If he desires the things of the household life,
not going forth, they’ll quickly be his.

But if he chooses the life gone forth,
seeing clearly, loving renunciation,
the peerless renunciate will quickly find
what is fitting and suitable.”

12. Delicate Skin

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He approached an ascetic or brahmin and asked: ‘Sirs, what is skillful? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? Doing what leads to my lasting harm and suffering? Doing what leads to my lasting welfare and happiness?’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: he has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don’t stick to his body.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has great wisdom. Of those who enjoy sensual pleasures, none is his equal or better in wisdom. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has great wisdom, widespread wisdom, laughing wisdom, swift wisdom, sharp wisdom, and

penetrating wisdom. No sentient being is his equal or better in wisdom. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

"In olden days, in past lives,
eager to understand, he asked questions.
Keen to learn, he waited on renunciates,
heeding their explanation with pure intent.

Due to that deed of acquiring wisdom,
as a human being his skin is delicate.
At his birth the soothsayers expert in signs
prophesied:
'He'll discern delicate matters.'

If he doesn't choose the life gone forth,
he'll roll the wheel and rule the land.
Among those with material possessions who
have been educated,
none equal or better than him is found.

But if he chooses the life gone forth,

seeing clearly, loving renunciation,
gaining wisdom that's supreme and eminent,
the one of superb, vast intelligence attains
awakening.”

13. Golden Skin

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He wasn't irritable or bad-tempered. Even when heavily criticized he didn't lose his temper, become annoyed, hostile, and hard-hearted, or display annoyance, hate, and bitterness. He donated soft and fine mats and blankets, and fine cloths of linen, cotton, silk, and wool. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: he is gold colored; his skin has a golden sheen.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He obtains soft and fine mats and blankets, and fine cloths of linen, cotton, silk, and wool. That's what he obtains as king.

And what does he obtain as Buddha? He obtains soft and fine mats and blankets, and fine cloths of linen, cotton, silk, and wool. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Dedicated to good will, he gave gifts.
In an earlier life he poured forth cloth
fine and soft to touch,
like a god pouring rain on this broad earth.

So doing he passed from here to heaven,
where he enjoyed the fruits of deeds well done.
Here he wins a figure of gold,
like Indra, the finest of gods.

If that man stays in the house, not wishing to go
forth,
he conquers and rules this vast, broad earth.
He obtains abundant excellent cloth,
so fine and soft to touch.

He receives robes, cloth, and the finest garments

if he chooses the life gone forth.
 For he still partakes of past deed's fruit;
 what's been done is never lost.”

14. Privates in Foreskin

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He reunited long-lost and long-separated relatives, friends, loved ones, and companions. He reunited mother with child and child with mother; father with child and child with father; brother with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, and sister with sister, bringing them together with rejoicing. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: his private parts are covered in a foreskin.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has many sons, over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. That's what

he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has many sons, many thousands of sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

"In olden days, in past lives,
he reunited long-lost
and long-separated friends and family,
bringing them together with joy.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,
where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.
After passing away from there to here,
his private parts are covered in a foreskin.

Such a one has many sons,
over a thousand descendants,
valiant and heroic, devastating foes,
a layman's joy, speaking kindly.

But if he lives the renunciate life

he has even more sons following his word.
 As householder or renunciate,
 that's the meaning shown by this mark.”

The first recitation section is finished.

15–16. Equal Proportions and Touching the Knees

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He regarded the gathered population equally. He knew what they had in common and what was their own. He knew each person, and he knew the distinctions between people. In each case, he made appropriate distinctions between people: ‘This one deserves that; that one deserves this.’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these two marks: he has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree; and when standing upright and not bending over, the palms of both hands touch the knees.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, lots of money and grain, and a full treasury and storehouses. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is rich, affluent, and wealthy. He has these kinds of wealth: the wealth of faith, ethical conduct, conscience, prudence, learning, generosity, and wisdom. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Observing the many people in a community, he weighed, evaluated, and judged each case: ‘This one deserves that.’

That's how he used to draw distinctions between people.

Now standing without bending
he can touch his knees with both hands.

With the remaining ripening of the fruit of good deeds,
his circumference was that of a great tree.

Learned experts in the many different signs and marks prophesied:
‘The young prince will obtain many different things that householders deserve.

Here there are many suitable pleasures for the ruler of the land to enjoy as householder. But if he gives up all sensual enjoyments, he will gain the supreme, highest peak of wealth.’”

17–19. A Lion’s Chest, Etc.

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He desired the good, the welfare, the comfort, and sanctuary of the people, thinking: ‘How might they flourish in faith, ethics, learning, generosity, teachings, and wisdom; in wealth and grain, fields and land, birds and beasts, children and partners; in

bondservants, workers, and staff; in family, friends, and kin?’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these three marks: his chest is like that of a lion; the gap between the shoulder-blades is filled in; and his torso is cylindrical.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He’s not liable to decline. He doesn’t decline in wealth and grain, fields and land, birds and beasts, children and partners; in bondservants, workers, and staff; in family, friends, and kin. He doesn’t decline in any of his accomplishments. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He’s not liable to decline. He doesn’t decline in faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. He doesn’t decline in any of his accomplishments. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“His wish was this: ‘How may others not decline
in faith, ethics, learning, and intelligence,
in generosity, teachings, and much good else,
in coin and corn, fields and lands,

in children, partners, and livestock,
in family, friends, and kin,
in health, and both beauty and happiness?’
And so he ever desired their success.

His chest was full like that of a lion,
his shoulder-gap filled in, and torso cylindrical.
Due to the well-done deeds of the past,
he had that portent of non-decline.

Even as layman he grows in corn and coin,
in wives, children, and livestock.
But once gone forth, owning nothing, he attains
the supreme awakening which may never
decline.”

20. Excellent Sense of Taste

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He would never hurt any sentient being with fists, stones, rods, or swords. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: he has an excellent sense of taste. Taste-buds are produced in the throat for the tongue-tip and dispersed evenly.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is rarely ill or unwell. His stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is rarely ill or unwell. His stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and fit for meditation. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Not with fist or rod or stone,
or sword or beating to death,
or by bondage or threats
did he ever harm anyone.

For that very reason he rejoiced in heaven after
passing away,
finding happiness as a fruit of happy deeds.
With taste-buds well formed and even,
on his return here he has an excellent sense of
taste.

That’s why the clever visionaries said:
‘This man will have much happiness
as householder or renunciate.
That’s the meaning shown by this mark.’”

21–22. Deep Blue Eyes

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One
was reborn as a human being. When looking at
others he didn’t glare, look askance, or avert his
eyes. Being straightforward, he reached out to
others with straightforward intentions, looking at

people with kindly eyes. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these two marks: his eyes are deep blue, and he has eyelashes like a cow's.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? The people look on him with kindly eyes. He is dear and beloved to the brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? The people look on him with kindly eyes. He is dear and beloved to the monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“With not a glare or glance askance,

nor averting of the eyes;
straightforward, he reached out
straightforwardly,
looking at people with kindly eyes.

In good rebirths he enjoyed the fruit
and result, rejoicing there.
But here he has a cow's eyelashes,
and eyes deep blue so fair to see.

Many soothsayers, men clever
and learned in prognostic texts,
expert in cow-like lashes, indicated he'd
be looked upon with kindly eyes.

Even as a householder he'd be regarded kindly,
beloved of the people.
But if he becomes an ascetic, not lay,
as destroyer of sorrow he'll be loved by many.”

23. Head Like a Turban

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One
was reborn as a human being. He was the leader

and forerunner of people in skillful behaviors such as good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, giving and sharing, taking precepts, observing the sabbath, paying due respect to mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, honoring the elders in the family, and various other things pertaining to skillful behaviors. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: his head is shaped like a turban.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a large following of brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a large following of monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Among people of good conduct, he was the leader,
devoted to a life of principle among the principled.
The people followed him,
and he experienced the fruit of good deeds in heaven.

Having experienced that fruit,
he acquires a head shaped like a turban.
The experts in omens and signs prophesied:
‘He will be leader of the people.

Among people then, as before,
they will bring presents for him.
If he becomes an aristocrat, ruler of the land,
he’ll gain the service of the people.

But if that man goes forth,
he’ll be sophisticated, proficient in the teachings.
Devoted to the virtues of his instruction,
the people will become his followers.’”

24–25. One Hair Per Pore, and a Tuft

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from lying. He spoke the truth and stuck to the truth. He was honest and trustworthy, and didn’t trick the world with his words. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these two marks: his hairs grow one per pore, and between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft and white like cotton-wool.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has many close adherents among the brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has many close adherents among the monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies.

That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

"In past lives he was true to his promise,
with no forked tongue, he shunned lies.
He never broke his word to anyone,
but spoke what was true, real, and factual.

A tuft so very white like cotton-wool
grew prettily between his eyebrows.
And never two, but only one,
hair grew in each of his pores.

Many soothsayers learned in marks
and expert in signs gathered and prophesied:
'One like this, with tuft and hair so well-formed,
will have many as his close adherents.

Even as householder many people will follow
him,
due to the power of deeds in the past.
But once gone forth, owning nothing,

as Buddha the people will follow him.”

26–27. Forty Gapless Teeth

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from divisive speech. He didn’t repeat in one place what he heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, he reconciled those who were divided, supporting unity, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these two marks: he has forty teeth, and his teeth have no gaps.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue cannot be divided. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries,

and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue cannot be divided. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“He spoke no words divisive causing friends to split,
creating disputes that foster division,
acting improperly by fostering quarrels,
creating division among friends.

He spoke kind words to foster harmony,
uniting those who are divided.
He eliminated quarrels among the people,
rejoicing together with the united.

In good rebirths he enjoyed the fruit
and result, rejoicing there.
Here his teeth are gapless, close together,
forty standing upright in his mouth.

If he becomes an aristocrat, ruler of the land,
 his assembly will be indivisible.
 And as an ascetic, stainless, immaculate,
 his assembly will follow him, unshakable.”

28–29. A Large Tongue and the Voice of Brahmā

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from harsh speech. He spoke in a way that’s mellow, pleasing to the ear, lovely, going to the heart, polite, likable and agreeable to the people. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these two marks: he has a large tongue, and the voice of Brahmā, like a cuckoo’s call.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a persuasive voice. His words are persuasive to brahmins and householders, people of town and country,

treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a persuasive voice. His words are persuasive to monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“He never spoke a loud harsh word,
insulting, quarrelsome,
causing harm, rude, crushing the people.
His speech was sweet, helpful, and kind.

He uttered words dear to the mind,
going to the heart, pleasing to the ear.
He enjoyed the fruit of his good verbal conduct,
experiencing the fruit of good deeds in heaven.

Having experienced that fruit,
on his return to here he acquired the voice of
Brahmā.

His tongue was long and wide,
and his speech was persuasive.

Even as householder his speech brings
prosperity.

But if that man goes forth,
speaking often to the people,
they'll be persuaded by his fair words.”

30. A Lion-Like Jaw

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from talking nonsense. His words were timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. He said things at the right time which were valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained this mark: his jaw is like that of a lion.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what

does he obtain as king? He can't be destroyed by any human foe or enemy. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He can't be destroyed by any foe or enemy whether internal or external; nor by greed, hate, or delusion; nor by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Neither nonsensical nor silly,
 his way of speaking was never loose.
 He eliminated what was useless,
 and spoke for the welfare and happiness of the
 people.

So doing he passed from here to be reborn in
 heaven,
 where he enjoyed the fruit of deeds well done.
 Passing away, on his return to here,
 he gained a jaw like the finest of beasts.

He became a king so very hard to defeat,
 a mighty lord and ruler of men.
 He was equal to the best in the city of the Three
 and Thirty,
 like Indra, the finest of gods.

One such as that is not easily beaten by fairies,
 demons, spirits, monsters, or gods.
 If he becomes of such a kind,
 he illuminates the quarters and in-between.”

31–32. Even and White Teeth

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He gave up wrong livelihood and earned a living by right livelihood. He refrained from falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence. Due to performing, accumulating, heaping up, and amassing those deeds, when his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. There he surpassed the other gods in ten respects: divine life span,

beauty, happiness, glory, sovereignty, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. When he came back to this state of existence, he obtained these two marks: his teeth are even and perfectly white.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea—free of harassment by bandits, successful and prosperous, safe, blessed, and untroubled—he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue is pure. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers,

tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king.

But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue is pure. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“He abandoned wrong livelihood, and created
a way of life that's fair, pure, and just.
He eliminated what was useless,
and lived for the welfare and happiness of the
people.

Having done what's praised by the clever, the
wise, and the good,
that man experienced the fruit in heaven.

Equal to the best in the heaven of Three and
Thirty,
he enjoyed himself with pleasure and play.

From there he passed back to a human life.
With the remaining ripening of the fruit of good
deeds,
he obtained teeth that are even,
gleaming, bright, and white.

Many soothsayers regarded as wise men
gathered and predicted of him:
'With twice-born teeth so even, so white, so
clean and bright
his retinue will be so pure.

As king, his people will also be pure,
when he rules having conquered this earth so
broad.
They won't harm the country,
but will live for the welfare and happiness of the
people.

But if he goes forth he'll be an ascetic free of ill,

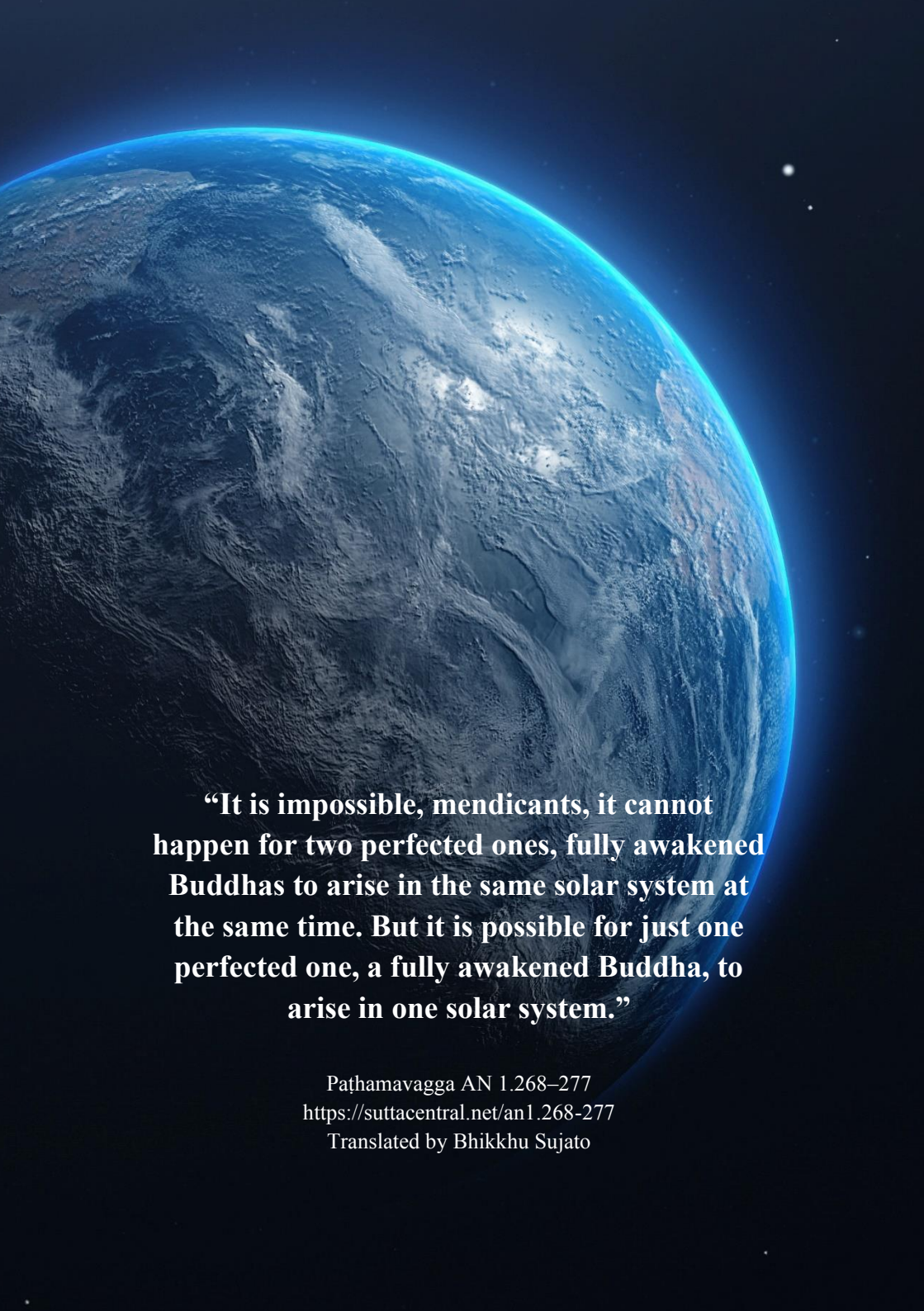
his passions quelled, the veil drawn back.
Rid of stress and weariness,
he sees this world and the next.

Those who do his bidding, both lay and
renunciate,
shake off wickedness, impure and blameworthy.
He's surrounded by pure people, who dispel
stains, callousness, sin, and corruptions.'”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the
mendicants were happy with what the Buddha
said.

Lakkhaṇasutta DN 30 <https://suttacentral.net/dn30>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato





“It is impossible, mendicants, it cannot happen for two perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas to arise in the same solar system at the same time. But it is possible for just one perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, to arise in one solar system.”

Paṭhamavagga AN 1.268–277
<https://suttacentral.net/an1.268-277>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

Incredible Things About the Realized One (1st)

“Mendicants, with the appearance of a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, four incredible and amazing things appear. What four?”

When the being intent on awakening passes away from the host of Joyful Gods, he’s conceived in his mother’s womb, mindful and aware. And then—in this world with its gods, Māras and

Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. And the sentient beings reborn there recognize each other by that light: ‘So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!’ This is the first incredible and amazing thing that appears with the appearance of a Realized One.

Furthermore, the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother’s womb, mindful and aware. And then ... an immeasurable, magnificent light appears ... even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space ... This is the second incredible and amazing thing that appears with the appearance of a Realized One.

Furthermore, the Realized One understands the supreme perfect awakening. And then ... an immeasurable, magnificent light appears ... even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space ... This is the third incredible and amazing thing that appears with the appearance of a Realized One.

Furthermore, the Realized One rolls forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma. And then ... an immeasurable, magnificent light appears ... even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space ... This is the fourth incredible and amazing thing that appears with the appearance of a Realized One.

With the appearance of a Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, these four incredible and amazing things appear.”

Paṭhamatathāgataacchariyasutta AN 4.127

<https://suttacentral.net/an4.127> Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

“It is impossible, mendicants, it cannot happen for a woman to be a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. But it is possible for a man to be a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha.”

Dutiyavagga AN 1.278–286

<https://suttacentral.net/an1.278-286>

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

Incredible Things About the Realized One (2nd)

“Mendicants, with the appearance of a Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, four incredible and amazing things appear. What four?

People like attachment, they love it and enjoy it. Yet when a Realized One is teaching the Dhamma of non-adherence, they want to listen, they lend

an ear, and they apply their minds to understand it. This is the first incredible and amazing thing that appears with the appearance of a Realized One.

People like conceit, they love it and enjoy it. Yet when a Realized One is teaching the Dhamma of removing conceit, they want to listen, they lend an ear, and they apply their minds to understand it. This is the second incredible and amazing thing that appears with the appearance of a Realized One.

People like excitement, they love it and enjoy it. Yet when a Realized One is teaching the Dhamma of peace, they want to listen, they lend an ear, and they apply their minds to understand it. This is the third incredible and amazing thing that appears with the appearance of a Realized One.

This population is lost in ignorance, trapped in their shells. Yet when a Realized One is teaching the Dhamma of removing ignorance, they want to listen, they lend an ear, and they apply their minds

to understand it. This is the fourth incredible and amazing thing that appears with the appearance of a Realized One.

With the appearance of a Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, four incredible and amazing things appear.”

Dutiyatathāgataacchariyasutta AN 4.128

<https://suttacentral.net/an4.128> Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



With Prince Bodhi

At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Bhaggas on Crocodile Hill, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā's Wood.

Now at that time a new stilt longhouse named Pink Lotus had recently been constructed for Prince Bodhi. It had not yet been occupied by an ascetic or brahmin or any person at all.

Then Prince Bodhi addressed the brahmin student Sañjikāputta, “Please, dear Sañjikāputta, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then ask him whether he might accept tomorrow’s meal from me together with the mendicant Saṅgha.”

“Yes, sir,” Sañjikāputta replied. He did as Prince Bodhi asked, and the Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Sañjikāputta got up from his seat, went to Prince Bodhi, and said, “I gave the ascetic Gotama your message, and he accepted.”

And when the night had passed Prince Bodhi had a variety of delicious foods prepared in his own home. He also had the Pink Lotus longhouse spread with white cloth down to the last step of the staircase. Then he said to Sañjikāputta, “Please, dear Sañjikāputta, go to the Buddha, and

announce the time, saying, ‘Sir, it’s time. The meal is ready.’”

“Yes, sir,” Sañjikāputta replied, and he did as he was asked.

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Prince Bodhi’s home.

Now at that time Prince Bodhi was standing outside the gates waiting for the Buddha. Seeing the Buddha coming off in the distance, he went out to greet him. After bowing and inviting the Buddha to go first, he approached the Pink Lotus longhouse. But the Buddha stopped by the last step of the staircase.

Then Prince Bodhi said to him, “Sir, let the Blessed One ascend on the cloth! Let the Holy One ascend on the cloth! It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.” But when he said this, the Buddha kept silent.

For a second time ... and a third time, Prince Bodhi said to him, “Sir, let the Blessed One ascend on the cloth! Let the Holy One ascend on the cloth! It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.”

Then the Buddha glanced at Venerable Ānanda. So Ānanda said to Prince Bodhi, “Fold up the cloth, Prince. The Buddha will not step upon white cloth. The Realized One has compassion for future generations.”

So Prince Bodhi had the cloth folded up and the seats spread out upstairs in the longhouse. Then the Buddha ascended the longhouse and sat on the seats spread out together with the Saṅgha of mendicants.

Then Prince Bodhi served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with his own hands with a variety of delicious foods. When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Prince Bodhi took a low seat, sat to one side, and said to him, “Sir, this is what I think:

‘Pleasure is not gained through pleasure; pleasure is gained through pain.’”

“Prince, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I too thought: ‘Pleasure is not gained through pleasure; pleasure is gained through pain.’”

Some time later, while still black-haired, blessed with youth, in the prime of life—though my mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces—I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ochre robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. Once I had gone forth I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, ‘Reverend Kālāma, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.’

Āḷāra Kālāma replied, ‘Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own teacher’s doctrine with their own insight and live having achieved it.’

I quickly memorized that teaching. So far as lip-recital and oral recitation were concerned, I spoke with knowledge and the authority of the elders. I claimed to know and see, and so did others. Then it occurred to me, ‘It is not solely by mere faith that Āḷāra Kālāma declares: “I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it.” Surely he meditates knowing and seeing this teaching.’

So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, ‘Reverend Kālāma, to what extent do you say you’ve realized this teaching with your own insight?’ When I said this, he declared the dimension of nothingness.

Then it occurred to me, ‘It’s not just Āḷāra Kālāma who has faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don’t I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Āḷāra Kālāma says he has realized with his own insight?’ I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, ‘Reverend Kālāma, have you realized this teaching with your own insight up to this point, and declare having achieved it?’

‘I have, reverend.’

‘I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.’

‘We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that I’ve realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it, you’ve realized with your own insight, and live having achieved it. The teaching that you’ve realized with your own insight, and live having achieved it, I’ve realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it. So the teaching that I know, you know, and the teaching you know, I know. I am like you and you are like me. Come now, reverend! We should both lead this community together.’ And that is how my

teacher Āḷāra Kālāma placed me, his student, on the same position as him, and honored me with lofty praise.

Then it occurred to me, ‘This teaching doesn’t lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of nothingness.’ Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Uddaka, son of Rāma, and said to him, ‘Reverend, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.’

Uddaka replied, ‘Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own teacher’s doctrine with their own insight and live having achieved it.’

I quickly memorized that teaching. So far as lip-recital and oral recitation were concerned, I spoke

with knowledge and the authority of the elders. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.

Then it occurred to me, ‘It is not solely by mere faith that Rāma declared: “I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it.” Surely he meditated knowing and seeing this teaching.’

So I approached Uddaka, son of Rāma, and said to him, ‘Reverend, to what extent did Rāma say he’d realized this teaching with his own insight?’ When I said this, Uddaka, son of Rāma, declared the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

Then it occurred to me, ‘It’s not just Rāma who had faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don’t I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Rāma said he had realized with his own insight?’ I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

So I approached Uddaka, son of Rāma, and said to him, ‘Reverend, had Rāma realized this teaching with his own insight up to this point, and declared having achieved it?’

‘He had, reverend.’

‘I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.’

‘We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it, you've realized with your own insight, and live having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and live having achieved it, Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it. So the teaching that Rāma directly knew, you know, and the teaching you know, Rāma directly knew. Rāma was like you and you are like Rāma. Come now, reverend! You should lead this

community.’ And that is how my spiritual companion Uddaka, son of Rāma, placed me in the position of a teacher, and honored me with lofty praise.

Then it occurred to me, ‘This teaching doesn’t lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.’ Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. Traveling stage by stage in the Magadhan lands, I arrived at Senanigama near Uruvelā. There I saw a delightful park, a lovely grove with a flowing river that was clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby was a village for alms.

Then it occurred to me, ‘This park is truly delightful, a lovely grove with a flowing river that’s clean and charming, with smooth banks.

And nearby there's a village for alms. This is good enough for a gentleman who wishes to put forth effort in meditation.' So I sat down right there, thinking, 'This is good enough for meditation.'

And then these three examples, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me.

Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying in water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Prince? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log lying in water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

"No, sir. Why is that? Because it's a green, sappy log, and it's lying in the water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated."

"In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who don't live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. They haven't internally given

up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings because of their efforts, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the first example that occurred to me.

Then a second example occurred to me.

Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Prince? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

"No, sir. Why is that? Because it's still a green, sappy log, despite the fact that it's lying on dry land far from water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated."

“In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. But they haven’t internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings because of their efforts, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the second example that occurred to me.

Then a third example occurred to me.

Suppose there was a dried up, withered log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Prince? By drilling the stick against that dried up, withered log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?”

“Yes, sir. Why is that? Because it’s a dried up, withered log, and it’s lying on dry land far from water.”

“In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. And they have internally given up and stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings because of their efforts, they are capable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the third example that occurred to me. These are the three examples, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, that occurred to me.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, squeeze, squash, and torture mind with mind.’ So that’s what I did, until sweat ran from my armpits. It was like when a strong man grabs a weaker man by the head or throat or shoulder and squeezes, squashes, and tortures them. In the same way, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, I squeezed, squashed, and tortured mind with mind until sweat ran from my armpits. My energy was

roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But then winds came out my ears making a loud noise, like the puffing of a blacksmith's bellows. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then strong winds ground my head, like a strong man was drilling into my head with a sharp point. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not

tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then I got a severe headache, like a strong man was tightening a tough leather strap around my head. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then strong winds carved up my belly, like a deft butcher or their apprentice was slicing my belly open with a meat cleaver. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I keep practicing the breathless absorption?’ So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then there was an intense burning in my body, like two strong men grabbing a weaker man by the arms to burn and scorch him on a pit of glowing coals. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I’d pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then some deities saw me and said, ‘The ascetic Gotama is dead.’ Others said, ‘He’s not dead, but he’s dying.’ Others said, ‘He’s not dead or dying. The ascetic Gotama is a perfected one, for that is how the perfected ones live.’

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I practice completely cutting off food?’ But deities came to me and said, ‘Good sir, don’t practice totally cutting off food. If you do, we’ll infuse divine nectar into your pores and you will live on that.’ Then it occurred to me, ‘If I claim to be

completely fasting while these deities are infusing divine nectar in my pores, that would be a lie on my part.’ So I dismissed those deities, saying, ‘There’s no need.’

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I just take a little bit of food each time, a cup of broth made from mung beans, lentils, chickpeas, or green gram.’ So that’s what I did, until my body became extremely emaciated. Due to eating so little, my limbs became like the joints of an eighty-year-old or a corpse, my bottom became like a camel’s hoof, my vertebrae stuck out like beads on a string, and my ribs were as gaunt as the broken-down rafters on an old barn. Due to eating so little, the gleam of my eyes sank deep in their sockets, like the gleam of water sunk deep down a well. Due to eating so little, my scalp shriveled and withered like a green bitter-gourd in the wind and sun. Due to eating so little, the skin of my belly stuck to my backbone, so that when I tried to rub the skin of my belly I grabbed my backbone, and when I tried to rub my backbone I rubbed the skin of my belly. Due to eating so

little, when I tried to urinate or defecate I fell face down right there. Due to eating so little, when I tried to relieve my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at its roots, fell out.

Then some people saw me and said, ‘The ascetic Gotama is black.’ Some said, ‘He’s not black, he’s brown.’ Some said, ‘He’s neither black nor brown. The ascetic Gotama has tawny skin.’ That’s how far the pure, bright complexion of my skin had been ruined by taking so little food.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Whatever ascetics and brahmins have experienced painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to overexertion—whether in the past, future, or present—this is as far as it goes, no-one has done more than this. But I have not achieved any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones by this severe, gruelling work. Could there be another path to awakening?’

Then it occurred to me, ‘I recall sitting in the cool shade of the rose-apple tree while my father the

Sakyan was off working. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. Could that be the path to awakening?’ Stemming from that memory came the realization: ‘That is the path to awakening!’

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why am I afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities?’ Then it occurred to me, ‘I’m not afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities.’

Then it occurred to me, ‘I can’t achieve that pleasure with a body so excessively emaciated. Why don’t I eat some solid food, some rice and porridge?’ So I ate some solid food. Now at that time the five mendicants were attending on me, thinking, ‘The ascetic Gotama will tell us of any truth that he realizes.’ But when I ate some solid food, they left disappointed in me, saying, ‘The

ascetic Gotama has become indulgent; he has strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence.’

After eating solid food and gathering my strength, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption ... second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward recollection of past lives. I recollected many past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. And so I recollected my many kinds of past lives, with features and details. This was the first knowledge, which I achieved in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed and knowledge arose; darkness

was destroyed and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understood how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds.

This was the second knowledge, which I achieved in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed and knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and

imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. I truly understood: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. I truly understood: ‘These are defilements’ ... ‘This is the origin of defilements’ ... ‘This is the cessation of defilements’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements’.

Knowing and seeing like this, my mind was freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When it was freed, I knew it was freed.

I understood: ‘Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is no return to any state of existence.’

This was the third knowledge, which I achieved in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed and knowledge arose; darkness was

destroyed and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

Then it occurred to me, ‘This principle I have discovered is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of logic, subtle, comprehensible to the astute. But people like attachment, they love it and enjoy it. It’s hard for them to see this thing; that is, specific conditionality, dependent origination. It’s also hard for them to see this thing; that is, the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment. And if I were to teach the Dhamma, others might not understand me, which would be wearying and troublesome for me.’ And then these verses, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me:

‘I’ve struggled hard to realize this,
 enough with trying to explain it!
 This teaching is not easily understood
 by those mired in greed and hate.

Those besotted by greed can't see
what's subtle, going against the stream,
deep, hard to see, and very fine,
for they're shrouded in a mass of darkness.'

And as I reflected like this, my mind inclined to
remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.

Then Brahmā Sahampati, knowing what I was
thinking, thought, 'Oh my goodness! The world
will be lost, the world will perish! For the mind
of the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully
awakened Buddha, inclines to remaining passive,
not to teaching the Dhamma.'

Then Brahmā Sahampati, as easily as a strong
person would extend or contract their arm,
vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared
in front of me. He arranged his robe over one
shoulder, raised his joined palms toward me, and
said, 'Sir, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!
Let the Holy One teach the Dhamma! There are
beings with little dust in their eyes. They're in

decline because they haven't heard the teaching.
There will be those who understand the teaching!'

That's what Brahmā Sahampati said. Then he
went on to say:

'Among the Magadhans there appeared in the
past
an impure teaching thought up by those still
stained.

Fling open the door to the deathless!
Let them hear the teaching the immaculate one
discovered.

Standing high on a rocky mountain,
you can see the people all around.
In just the same way, all-seer, wise one,
having ascended the Temple of Truth,

rid of sorrow, look upon the people
swamped with sorrow, oppressed by rebirth and
old age.

Rise, hero! Victor in battle, leader of the caravan,
wander the world without obligation.

Let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!
There will be those who understand!’

Then, understanding Brahmā’s invitation, I surveyed the world with the eye of a Buddha, because of my compassion for sentient beings. And I saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes; with keen faculties and with weak faculties, with good qualities and with bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach. And some of them lived seeing the danger in the fault to do with the next world, while others did not. It’s like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. Some of them sprout and grow in the water reaching the water’s surface. And some of them sprout and grow in the water but rise up above the water and stand with no water clinging to them. Then I replied in verse to Brahmā Sahampati:

‘Flung open are the doors to the deathless!
Let those with ears to hear commit to faith.

Thinking it would be troublesome, Brahmā, I did not teach the sophisticated, sublime Dhamma among humans.’

Then Brahmā Sahampati, knowing that his request for me to teach the Dhamma had been granted, bowed and respectfully circled me, keeping me on his right, before vanishing right there.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Who should I teach first of all? Who will quickly understand the teaching?’ Then it occurred to me, ‘That Āḷāra Kālāma is astute, competent, clever, and has long had little dust in his eyes. Why don’t I teach him first of all? He’ll quickly understand the teaching.’ But a deity came to me and said, ‘Sir, Āḷāra Kālāma passed away seven days ago.’

And knowledge and vision arose in me, ‘Āḷāra Kālāma passed away seven days ago.’ Then it occurred to me, ‘This is a great loss for Āḷāra

Kālāma. If he had heard the teaching, he would have understood it quickly.’

Then it occurred to me, ‘Who should I teach first of all? Who will quickly understand the teaching?’ Then it occurred to me, ‘That Uddaka, son of Rāma, is astute, competent, clever, and has long had little dust in his eyes. Why don’t I teach him first of all? He’ll quickly understand the teaching.’ But a deity came to me and said, ‘Sir, Uddaka, son of Rāma, passed away just last night.’

And knowledge and vision arose in me, ‘Uddaka, son of Rāma, passed away just last night.’ Then it occurred to me, ‘This is a great loss for Uddaka. If he had heard the teaching, he would have understood it quickly.’

Then it occurred to me, ‘Who should I teach first of all? Who will quickly understand the teaching?’ Then it occurred to me, ‘The group of five mendicants were very helpful to me. They looked after me during my time of resolute

striving. Why don't I teach them first of all?' Then it occurred to me, 'Where are the group of five mendicants staying these days?' With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman I saw that the group of five mendicants were staying near Benares, in the deer park at Isipatana.

So, when I had stayed in Uruvelā as long as I wished, I set out for Benares.

While I was traveling along the road between Gayā and Bodhgaya, the Ājīvaka ascetic Upaka saw me and said, 'Reverend, your faculties are so very clear, and your complexion is pure and bright. In whose name have you gone forth, reverend? Who is your Teacher? Whose teaching do you believe in?'

I replied to Upaka in verse:

'I am the champion, the knower of all,
unsullied in the midst of all things.
I've given up all, freed in the ending of craving.

Since I know for myself, whose follower should I
be?

I have no teacher.
There is no-one like me.
In the world with its gods,
I have no counterpart.

For in this world, I am the perfected one;
I am the supreme Teacher.
I alone am fully awakened,
cooled, extinguished.

I am going to the city of Kāsi
to roll forth the Wheel of Dhamma.
In this world that is so blind,
I'll beat the deathless drum!

‘According to what you claim, reverend, you
ought to be the Infinite Victor.’

‘The victors are those who, like me,
have reached the ending of defilements.
I have conquered bad qualities, Upaka—

that's why I'm a victor.'

When I had spoken, Upaka said: 'If you say so, reverend.' Shaking his head, he took a wrong turn and left.

Traveling stage by stage, I arrived at Benares, and went to see the group of five mendicants in the deer park at Isipatana. The group of five mendicants saw me coming off in the distance and stopped each other, saying, 'Here comes the ascetic Gotama. He's so indulgent; he strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence. We shouldn't bow to him or rise for him or receive his bowl and robe. But we can set out a seat; he can sit if he likes.'

Yet as I drew closer, the group of five mendicants were unable to stop themselves as they had agreed. Some came out to greet me and receive my bowl and robe, some spread out a seat, while others set out water for washing my feet. But they still addressed me by name and as 'reverend'.

So I said to them, ‘Mendicants, don’t address me by name and as “reverend”. The Realized One is Perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved the Deathless! I shall instruct you, I will teach you the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. You will live having achieved with your own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.’

But they said to me, ‘Reverend Gotama, even by that conduct, that practice, that grueling work you did not achieve any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. How could you have achieved such a state now that you’ve become indulgent, strayed from the struggle and fallen into indulgence?’

So I said to them, ‘The Realized One has not become indulgent, strayed from the struggle and fallen into indulgence. The Realized One is Perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved the Deathless! I shall

instruct you, I will teach you the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. You will live having achieved with your own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.’

But for a second time they said to me, ‘Reverend Gotama ... you’ve fallen into indulgence.’

So for a second time I said to them, ‘The Realized One has not become indulgent ...’

But for a third time they said to me, ‘Reverend Gotama ... you’ve fallen into indulgence.’

So I said to them, ‘Mendicants, have you ever known me to speak like this before?’

‘No, sir.’

‘The Realized One is Perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved the Deathless! I shall instruct you, I will teach you

the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. You will live having achieved with your own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.’

I was able to persuade the group of five mendicants. Then sometimes I advised two mendicants, while the other three went for alms. Then those three would feed all six of us with what they brought back. Sometimes I advised three mendicants, while the other two went for alms. Then those two would feed all six of us with what they brought back.

As the group of five mendicants were being advised and instructed by me like this, they soon realized the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. They lived having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

When he had spoken, Prince Bodhi said to the Buddha, “Sir, when a mendicant has the Realized One as trainer, how long would it take for them to realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life?”

“Well then, prince, I’ll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, prince? Are you skilled in the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What do you think, prince? Suppose a man were to come along thinking, ‘Prince Bodhi knows the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant. I’ll train in that art under him.’ If he’s faithless, he wouldn’t achieve what he could with faith. If he’s unhealthy, he wouldn’t achieve what he could with good health. If he’s devious or deceitful, he wouldn’t achieve what he could with honesty and integrity. If he’s lazy, he wouldn’t achieve what he could with energy. If he’s stupid,

he wouldn't achieve what he could with wisdom. What do you think, prince? Could that man still train under you in the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant?"

"Sir, if he had even a single one of these factors he couldn't train under me, let alone all five."

"What do you think, prince? Suppose a man were to come along thinking, 'Prince Bodhi knows the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant. I'll train in that art under him.' If he's faithful, he'd achieve what he could with faith. If he's healthy, he'd achieve what he could with good health. If he's honest and has integrity, he'd achieve what he could with honesty and integrity. If he's energetic, he'd achieve what he could with energy. If he's wise, he'd achieve what he could with wisdom. What do you think, prince? Could that man still train under you in the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant?"

"Sir, if he had even a single one of these factors he could train under me, let alone all five."

“In the same way, prince, there are these five factors that support meditation. What five? It’s when a noble disciple has faith in the Realized One’s awakening: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ They are rarely ill or unwell. Their stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and fit for meditation. They’re not devious or deceitful. They reveal themselves honestly to the Teacher or sensible spiritual companions. They live with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and embracing skillful qualities. They’re strong, staunchly vigorous, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. They’re wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. These are the five factors that support meditation.

When a mendicant with these five factors that support meditation has the Realized One as trainer, they could realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in seven years. Let alone seven years, they could realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in six years, or as little as one year. Let alone one year, when a mendicant with these five factors that support meditation has the Realized One as trainer, they could realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in seven months, or as little as one day. Let alone one day, when a mendicant with these five factors that support meditation has the Realized One as trainer, they could be instructed in the evening and achieve distinction in the morning, or be instructed in the morning and achieve distinction in the evening.”

When he had spoken, Prince Bodhi said to the Buddha, “Oh, the Buddha! Oh, the teaching! Oh, how well explained is the teaching! For someone could be instructed in the evening and achieve distinction in the morning, or be instructed in the morning and achieve distinction in the evening.”

When he said this, Sañjikāputta said to Prince Bodhi, “Though Master Bodhi speaks like this, you don’t go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha.”

“Don’t say that, dear Sañjikāputta, don’t say that! I have heard and learned this in the presence of the lady, my mother. This one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambi, in Ghosita’s Monastery. Then my pregnant mother went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, ‘Sir, the prince or princess in my womb goes for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember them as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.’

Another time the Buddha was staying here in the land of the Bhaggas on Crocodile Hill, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā’s Wood. Then my nurse, carrying me on her hip, went to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, ‘Sir, this Prince Bodhi goes for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha.

From this day forth, may the Buddha remember him as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.’

Now for a third time I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

Bodhirājakumārasutta MN 85 <https://suttacentral.net/mn85>

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato





With Saṅgārava

At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. Now at that time a brahmin lady named Dhanañjānī was residing at Caṇḍalakappa. She was devoted to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. Once, she tripped and expressed this heartfelt sentiment three times:

“Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one,
the fully awakened Buddha!

Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one,
the fully awakened Buddha!”

Now at that time the brahmin student Saṅgārava was residing in Caṇḍalakappa. He was young, newly tonsured; he was sixteen years old. He had mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies, ritual, phonology and etymology, and the testament as fifth. He knew philology and grammar, and was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man.

Hearing Dhanañjānī’s exclamation, he said to her, “The brahmin lady named Dhanañjānī is a disgrace! Though brahmins who are proficient in the three Vedas are found, she praises that shaveling, that fake ascetic.”

“But my little dear, you don’t understand the Buddha’s ethics and wisdom. If you did, you’d never think of abusing or insulting him.”

“Well then, ma’am, let me know when the Buddha arrives in Caṇḍalakappa.”

“I will, dear,” she replied.

And then the Buddha, traveling stage by stage in the Kosalan lands, arrived at Caṇḍalakappa, where he stayed in the mango grove of the Todeyya brahmins.

Dhanañjānī heard that he had arrived. So she went to Saṅgārava and told him, adding, “Please, my little dear, go at your convenience.”

“Yes, ma’am,” replied Saṅgārava. He went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

“Master Gotama, there are some ascetics and brahmins who claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life having attained perfection and consummation of insight in the

present life. Where do you stand regarding these?”

“I say there is a diversity among those who claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life having attained perfection and consummation of insight in the present life. There are some ascetics and brahmins who are oral transmitters. Through oral transmission they claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life. For example, the brahmins who are proficient in the three Vedas. There are some ascetics and brahmins who solely by mere faith claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life. For example, those who rely on logic and inquiry. There are some ascetics and brahmins who, having directly known for themselves the principle regarding teachings not learned before from another, claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life. I am one of those. And here’s a way to understand that I am one of them.

Before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought: ‘Living in a house is cramped and dirty, but the life of one gone forth is wide open. It’s not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don’t I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?’ Some time later, while still black-haired, blessed with youth, in the prime of life—though my mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces—I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.

Once I had gone forth, I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, ‘Reverend Kālāma, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.’

Āḷāra Kālāma replied, ‘Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon

realize their own teacher's doctrine with their own insight and live having achieved it.'

I quickly memorized that teaching. So far as lip-recital and oral recitation were concerned, I spoke with knowledge and the authority of the elders. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.

Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Āḷāra Kālāma declares: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it." Surely he meditates knowing and seeing this teaching.'

So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him: 'Reverend Kālāma, to what extent do you say you've realized this teaching with your own insight?' When I said this, he declared the dimension of nothingness.

Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Āḷāra Kālāma who has faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same

teaching that Āḷāra Kālāma says he has realized with his own insight?’ I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, ‘Reverend Kālāma, have you realized this teaching with your own insight up to this point, and declare having achieved it?’

‘I have, reverend.’

‘I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.’

‘We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that I’ve realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it, you’ve realized with your own insight, and live having achieved it. The teaching that you’ve realized with your own insight, and live having achieved it, I’ve realized with my own

insight, and declare having achieved it. So the teaching that I know, you know, and the teaching you know, I know. I am like you and you are like me. Come now, reverend! We should both lead this community together.’

And that is how my teacher Āḷāra Kālāma placed me, his student, on the same position as him, and honored me with lofty praise.

Then it occurred to me, ‘This teaching doesn’t lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of nothingness.’ Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Uddaka, son of Rāma, and said to him, ‘Reverend, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.’

Uddaka replied, ‘Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own teacher’s doctrine with their own insight and live having achieved it.’

I quickly memorized that teaching. So far as lip-recital and oral recitation were concerned, I spoke with knowledge and the authority of the elders. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.

Then it occurred to me, ‘It is not solely by mere faith that Rāma declared: “I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it.” Surely he meditated knowing and seeing this teaching.’

So I approached Uddaka, son of Rāma, and said to him, ‘Reverend, to what extent did Rāma say he’d realized this teaching with his own insight?’ When I said this, Uddaka, son of Rāma, declared the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

Then it occurred to me, ‘It’s not just Rāma who had faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don’t I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Rāma said he had realized with his own insight?’ I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

So I approached Uddaka, son of Rāma, and said to him, ‘Reverend, had Rāma realized this teaching with his own insight up to this point, and declared having achieved it?’

‘He had, reverend.’

‘I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.’

‘We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it, you’ve realized with your own

insight, and live having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and live having achieved it, Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it. So the teaching that Rāma directly knew, you know, and the teaching you know, Rāma directly knew. Rāma was like you and you are like Rāma. Come now, reverend! You should lead this community.' And that is how my spiritual companion Uddaka, son of Rāma, placed me in the position of a teacher, and honored me with lofty praise.

Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. Traveling stage by stage in the Magadhan lands, I arrived at Senanigama near Uruvelā. There I saw a

delightful park, a lovely grove with a flowing river that was clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby was a village for alms. Then it occurred to me, ‘This park is truly delightful, a lovely grove with a flowing river that’s clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby there’s a village to go for alms. This is good enough for a gentleman who wishes to put forth effort in meditation.’ So I sat down right there, thinking: ‘This is good enough for meditation.’

And then these three examples, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me. Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying in water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Bhāradvāja? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log lying in water, could they light a fire and produce heat?”

“No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because it’s a green, sappy log, and it’s lying in the water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated.”

“In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who don’t live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. They haven’t internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to overexertion, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the first example that occurred to me.

Then a second example occurred to me. Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Bhāradvāja? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?”

“No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because it’s still a green, sappy log, despite the fact that it’s lying on dry land far from water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated.” “In the same

way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. But they haven't internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to overexertion, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the second example that occurred to me.

Then a third example occurred to me. Suppose there was a dried up, withered log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Bhāradvāja? By drilling the stick against that dried up, withered log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

"Yes, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because it's a dried up, withered log, and it's lying on dry land far from water."

“In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. And they have internally given up and stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to overexertion, they are capable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the third example that occurred to me. These are the three examples, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, that occurred to me.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, squeeze, squash, and torture mind with mind.’ So that’s what I did, until sweat ran from my armpits. It was like when a strong man grabs a weaker man by the head or throat or shoulder and squeezes, squashes, and tortures them. In the same way, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, I squeezed, squashed, and tortured mind with mind until sweat ran from my armpits. My energy was

roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But then winds came out my ears making a loud noise, like the puffing of a blacksmith's bellows. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But then strong winds ground my head, like a strong man was drilling into my head with a sharp point. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I keep practicing the breathless absorption?’ So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But then I got a severe headache, like a strong man was tightening a tough leather strap around my head. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I’d pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I keep practicing the breathless absorption?’ So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But then strong winds carved up my belly, like a deft butcher or their apprentice was slicing my belly open with a meat cleaver. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I’d pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I keep practicing the breathless absorption?’ So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But

then there was an intense burning in my body, like two strong men grabbing a weaker man by the arms to burn and scorch him on a pit of glowing coals. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then some deities saw me and said, 'The ascetic Gotama is dead.' Others said, 'He's not dead, but he's dying.' Others said, 'He's not dead or dying. The ascetic Gotama is a perfected one, for that is how the perfected ones live.'

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice completely cutting off food?'

But deities came to me and said, 'Good sir, don't practice totally cutting off food. If you do, we'll infuse divine nectar into your pores and you will live on that.'

Then it occurred to me, 'If I claim to be completely fasting while these deities are infusing

divine nectar in my pores, that would be a lie on my part.’ So I dismissed those deities, saying, ‘There’s no need.’

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why don’t I just take a little bit of food each time, a cup of broth made from mung beans, lentils, chickpeas, or green gram.’ So that’s what I did, until my body became extremely emaciated. Due to eating so little, my limbs became like the joints of an eighty-year-old or a corpse, my bottom became like a camel’s hoof, my vertebrae stuck out like beads on a string, and my ribs were as gaunt as the broken-down rafters on an old barn. Due to eating so little, the gleam of my eyes sank deep in their sockets, like the gleam of water sunk deep down a well. Due to eating so little, my scalp shriveled and withered like a green bitter-gourd in the wind and sun. Due to eating so little, the skin of my belly stuck to my backbone, so that when I tried to rub the skin of my belly I grabbed my backbone, and when I tried to rub my backbone I rubbed the skin of my belly. Due to eating so little, when I tried to urinate or defecate I fell face

down right there. Due to eating so little, when I tried to relieve my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at its roots, fell out.

Then some people saw me and said: ‘The ascetic Gotama is black.’ Some said: ‘He’s not black, he’s brown.’ Some said: ‘He’s neither black nor brown. The ascetic Gotama has tawny skin.’ That’s how far the pure, bright complexion of my skin had been ruined by taking so little food.

Then it occurred to me, ‘Whatever ascetics and brahmins have experienced painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to overexertion—whether in the past, future, or present—this is as far as it goes, no-one has done more than this. But I have not achieved any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones by this severe, grueling work. Could there be another path to awakening?’

Then it occurred to me, ‘I recall sitting in the cool shade of the rose-apple tree while my father the Sakyan was off working. Quite secluded from

sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. Could that be the path to awakening?’ Stemming from that memory came the realization: ‘That is the path to awakening!’

Then it occurred to me, ‘Why am I afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities?’ I thought, ‘I’m not afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities.’

Then it occurred to me, ‘I can’t achieve that pleasure with a body so excessively emaciated. Why don’t I eat some solid food, some rice and porridge?’ So I ate some solid food.

Now at that time the five mendicants were attending on me, thinking, ‘The ascetic Gotama will tell us of any truth that he realizes.’ But when I ate some solid food, they left disappointed in me, saying, ‘The ascetic Gotama has become

indulgent; he has strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence.’

After eating solid food and gathering my strength, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption ... As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, I entered and remained in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption.

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward recollection of past lives. I recollected many past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. And so I recollected my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

This was the first knowledge, which I achieved in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed and knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understood how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds ...

This was the second knowledge, which I achieved in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed and knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. I truly understood: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’. I truly understood: ‘These are defilements’ ... ‘This is the origin of defilements’ ... ‘This is the cessation of defilements’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements’.

Knowing and seeing like this, my mind was freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When it was freed, I knew it was freed.

I understood: ‘Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is no return to any state of existence.’

This was the third knowledge, which I achieved in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed and knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.”

When he had spoken, Saṅgārava said to the Buddha, “Master Gotama’s effort was steadfast and appropriate for a good person, since he is a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. But Master Gotama, do gods absolutely exist?”

“I’ve understood the existence of gods in terms of causes.”

“But Master Gotama, when asked ‘Do gods exist?’ why did you say that you have understood the existence of gods in terms of causes? If that’s the case, isn’t it a hollow lie?”

“When asked ‘Do gods exist’, whether you reply ‘Gods exist’ or ‘I’ve understood it in terms of causes’ a sensible person would come to the definite conclusion that gods exist.”

“But why didn’t you say that in the first place?”

“It’s widely agreed in the world that gods exist.”

When he had spoken, Saṅgārava said to the Buddha, “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, Master Gotama has made the Teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

Saṅgārasutta MN 100 <https://suttacentral.net/mn100>

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



The brahmin Verañja rebukes the Buddha for his lack of respect for senior brahmins. He levels a series of criticisms, each of which the Buddha deflects by redefining terms. The Buddha affirms that his claim to superiority is because he was the first to achieve awakening

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Verañjā at the foot of Naḷeru’s neem tree. Then a brahmin of Verañjā approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When he had concluded his greetings and cordial talk, he sat down to one side and said to the Blessed One:

“I have heard, Master Gotama: ‘The ascetic Gotama does not pay homage to brahmins who are old, aged, burdened with years, advanced in life, come to the last stage; nor does he stand up for them or offer them a seat.’ This is indeed true, for Master Gotama does not pay homage to brahmins who are old, aged, burdened with years, advanced in life, come to the last stage; nor does he stand up for them or offer them a seat. This is not proper, Master Gotama.”

“Brahmin, in the world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans, I do not see one to whom I should pay homage, or for whom I should stand up, or whom I should offer a seat. For if the Tathāgata should pay homage to

anyone, or stand up for him, or offer him a seat, even that person's head would split.”

(1) “Master Gotama lacks taste.”

“There is, brahmin, a way in which one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama lacks taste.’ The Tathāgata has abandoned his taste for forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects; he has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it so that it is no more subject to future arising. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama lacks taste.’ But you did not speak with reference to this.”

(2) “Master Gotama is not convivial.”

“There is, brahmin, a way in which one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is not convivial.’ The Tathāgata has abandoned conviviality with forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects; he has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it so that it is no

more subject to future arising. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is not convivial.’ But you did not speak with reference to this.”

(3) “Master Gotama is a proponent of non-doing.”

“There is, brahmin, a way in which one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a proponent of non-doing.’ For I assert the non-doing of bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct; I assert the non-doing of the numerous kinds of bad unwholesome deeds. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a proponent of non-doing.’ But you did not speak with reference to this.”

(4) “Master Gotama is an annihilationist.”

“There is, brahmin, a way in which one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is an annihilationist.’ For I assert the annihilation of lust, hatred, and delusion; I assert the annihilation of the numerous kinds of bad unwholesome

qualities. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is an annihilationist.’ But you did not speak with reference to this.”

(5) “Master Gotama is a repeller.”

“There is, brahmin, a way in which one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a repeller.’ For I am repelled by bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct; I am repelled by the acquisition of the numerous kinds of bad unwholesome qualities. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a repeller.’ But you did not speak with reference to this.”

(6) “Master Gotama is an abolitionist.”

“There is, brahmin, a way in which one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is an abolitionist.’ For I teach the Dhamma for the abolition of lust, hatred, and delusion; I teach the Dhamma for the abolition of the numerous kinds

of bad unwholesome qualities. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is an abolitionist.’ But you did not speak with reference to this.”

(7) “Master Gotama is a tormentor.”

“There is, brahmin, a way in which one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a tormentor.’ For I assert that bad unwholesome qualities—bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct—are to be burned up. I say that someone is a tormentor when he has abandoned the bad unwholesome qualities that are to be burned up; when he has cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, obliterated them so that they are no more subject to future arising. The Tathāgata has abandoned the bad unwholesome qualities that are to be burned up; he has cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, obliterated them so that they are no more subject to future arising. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama

is a tormentor.’ But you did not speak with reference to this.”

(8) “Master Gotama is retiring.”

“There is, brahmin, a way in which one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is retiring.’ For I say that someone is retiring when he has abandoned the production of renewed existence, the future bed of the womb; when he has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it so that it is no more subject to future arising. The Tathāgata has abandoned the production of renewed existence, the future bed of the womb; he has cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it so that it is no more subject to future arising. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is retiring.’ But you did not speak with reference to this.

“Suppose, brahmin, there was a hen with eight, ten, or twelve eggs that she had properly covered, incubated, and nurtured. Should the first among

those chicks to pierce its shell with the points of its claws or beak and safely hatch be called the eldest or the youngest?”

“It should be called the eldest, Master Gotama. So it is the eldest among them.”

“So too, brahmin, in a population immersed in ignorance, become like an egg, completely enveloped, I have pierced the eggshell of ignorance. I am the sole person in the world who has awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment. So I am the eldest, the best in the world.

“My energy, brahmin, was aroused without slackening; my mindfulness was established without confusion; my body was tranquil without disturbance; my mind was concentrated and one-pointed. Secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered and dwelled in the first jhāna, which consists of rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by thought and examination. With

the subsiding of thought and examination, I entered and dwelled in the second jhāna, which has internal placidity and unification of mind and consists of rapture and pleasure born of concentration, without thought and examination. With the fading away as well of rapture, I dwelled equanimous and, mindful and clearly comprehending, I experienced pleasure with the body; I entered and dwelled in the third jhāna of which the noble ones declare: ‘He is equanimous, mindful, one who dwells happily.’ With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and dejection, I entered and dwelled in the fourth jhāna, neither painful nor pleasant, which has purification of mindfulness by equanimity.

“When my mind was thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, unblemished, rid of defilement, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the recollection of past abodes. I recollected my manifold past abodes, that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten

births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many eons of world-dissolution, many eons of world-evolution, many eons of world-dissolution and world-evolution thus: ‘There I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life span; passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere, and there too I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life span; passing away from there, I was reborn here.’ Thus I recollected my manifold past abodes with their aspects and details.

“This, brahmin, was the first true knowledge attained by me in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was dispelled, true knowledge had arisen; darkness was dispelled, light had arisen, as happens when one dwells heedful, ardent, and resolute. This, brahmin, was my first breaking out, like that of the chick breaking out of the eggshell.

“When my mind was thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, unblemished, rid of defilement, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings. With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and I understood how beings fare in accordance with their kamma thus: ‘These beings who engaged in misconduct by body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong view, and undertook kamma based on wrong view, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell; but these beings who engaged in good conduct by body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right view, and undertook kamma based on right view, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in a good destination, in the heavenly world.’ Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw beings passing away

and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and I understood how beings fare in accordance with their kamma.

“This, brahmin, was the second true knowledge attained by me in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was dispelled, true knowledge had arisen; darkness was dispelled, light had arisen, as happens when one dwells heedful, ardent, and resolute. This, brahmin, was my second breaking out, like that of the chick breaking out of the eggshell.

“When my mind was thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, unblemished, rid of defilement, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of the destruction of the taints. I understood as it really is: ‘This is suffering’; I understood as it really is: ‘This is the origin of suffering’; I understood as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of suffering’; I understood as it really is: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’ I

understood as it really is: ‘These are the taints’; I understood as it really is: ‘This is the origin of the taints’; I understood as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of the taints’; I understood as it really is: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints.’

“When I knew and saw thus, my mind was liberated from the taint of sensuality, from the taint of existence, and from the taint of ignorance. When it was liberated there came the knowledge: ‘It’s liberated.’ I directly knew: ‘Destroyed is birth, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.’

“This, brahmin, was the third true knowledge attained by me in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was dispelled, true knowledge had arisen; darkness was dispelled, light had arisen, as happens when one dwells heedful, ardent, and resolute. This, brahmin, was my third breaking out, like that of the chick breaking out of the eggshell.”

When this was said, the brahmin of Verañjā said to the Blessed One: “Master Gotama is the eldest! Master Gotama is the best! Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the darkness so those with good eyesight can see forms. I now go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the Dhamma, and to the Saṅgha of bhikkhus. Let Master Gotama consider me a lay follower who from today has gone for refuge for life.”

Verañjasutta AN 8.11 <https://suttacentral.net/an8.11>

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi





It is because he has fully awakened to these Four Noble Truths as they really are that the Tathagata is called the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One

At Savatthi. “Bhikkhus, there are these Four Noble Truths. What four? The noble truth of suffering ... the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. It is because he has

fully awakened to these Four Noble Truths as they really are that the Tathagata is called the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One.

“Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is suffering.’... An exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’”

Sammāsambuddhasutta SN 56.23 <https://suttacentral.net/sn56.23>

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi



All Buddhas Become Awakened Through the Four Noble Truths

At Savatthi.

“Bhikkhus, whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, in the past fully awakened to things as they really are, all fully awakened to the Four Noble Truths as they really are. Whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, in the future will fully awaken to things as they really are, all will fully awaken to the Four Noble Truths as they really are. Whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, at present have fully awakened

to things as they really are, all have fully awakened to the Four Noble Truths as they really are.

“What four?”

The noble truth of suffering, the noble truth of the origin of suffering, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. Whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, fully awakened ... will fully awaken ... have fully awakened to things as they really are, all have fully awakened to these Four Noble Truths as they really are.

“Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is suffering.’ ... An exertion should be made to understand: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’”

Arahantasutta SN 56.24 <https://suttacentral.net/sn56.24>

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

**“The death of one person,
mendicants, is regretted by
many people. What one person?
The Realized One, the perfected
one, the fully awakened
Buddha. This is the one person,
mendicants, whose death is
regretted by many people.”**

Ekapuggalavagga AN 1.170–187

<https://suttacentral.net/an1.170-187>

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

Why the Buddha is called 'Tathāgata.' (The Realized One)

“Bhikkhus, the Tathāgata has fully awakened to the world; the Tathāgata is detached from the world. The Tathāgata has fully awakened to the origin of the world; the Tathāgata has abandoned the origin of the world. The Tathāgata has fully awakened to the cessation of the world; the Tathāgata has realized the cessation of the world. The Tathāgata has fully awakened to the way leading to the cessation of the world; the

Tathāgata has developed the way leading to the cessation of the world.

(1) “Bhikkhus, in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, among this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans, whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, reached, sought after, examined by the mind—all that the Tathāgata has fully awakened to; therefore he is called the Tathāgata.

(2) “Bhikkhus, whatever the Tathāgata speaks, utters, or expounds in the interval between the night when he awakens to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment and the night when he attains final nibbāna, all that is just so and not otherwise; therefore he is called the Tathāgata.

(3) “Bhikkhus, as the Tathāgata speaks, so he does; as he does, so he speaks. Since he does as he speaks and speaks as he does, therefore he is called the Tathāgata.

(4) “Bhikkhus, in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, among this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans, the Tathāgata is the vanquisher, the unvanquished, the universal seer, the wielder of mastery; therefore he is called the Tathāgata.”

Having directly known all the world—
all in the world just as it is—
he is detached from all the world,
disengaged from all the world.

He is the vanquisher of all,
the wise one who has untied all knots.
He has reached the supreme peace,
nibbāna, inaccessible to fear.

He is the Buddha, his taints destroyed,
untroubled, all doubts cut off;
having reached the destruction of all kamma,
he is liberated in the extinction of acquisitions.

He is the Blessed One, the Buddha,
he is the lion unsurpassed;

in this world with its devas,
he set in motion the wheel of Brahmā.

Thus those devas and human beings
who have gone for refuge to the Buddha
assemble and pay homage to him,
the great one free from diffidence:

“Tamed, he is the best of tamers;
peaceful, he is the seer among peace-bringers;
freed, he is the chief of liberators;
crossed over, he is the best of guides across.”

Thus indeed they pay him homage,
the great one free from diffidence.
In this world together with its devas,
there is no one who can rival you.

Lokasutta AN 4.23 <https://suttacentral.net/an4.23>
Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi





Because of Three Things Are Found, the Realized One, the Perfected One, the Fully Awakened Buddha Arises in the World

“Mendicants, if three things were not found, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha would not arise in the world, and the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One would not shine in the world. What three? Rebirth, old age, and death. If these three things were not found, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha would

not arise in the world, and the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One would not shine in the world. But since these three things are found, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha arises in the world, and the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One shines in the world.

Without giving up three things you can't give up rebirth, old age, and death. What three? Greed, hate, and delusion. Without giving up these three things you can't give up rebirth, old age, and death.

Without giving up three things you can't give up greed, hate, and delusion. What three? Identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances. Without giving up these three things you can't give up greed, hate, and delusion.

Without giving up three things you can't give up identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances. What three? Improper attention, following a wrong path, and mental

sluggishness. Without giving up these three things you can't give up identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances.

Without giving up three things you can't give up improper attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness. What three? Unmindfulness, lack of situational awareness, and distracted mind. Without giving up these three things you can't give up improper attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness.

Without giving up three things you can't give up unmindfulness, lack of situational awareness, and distracted mind. What three? Not wanting to see the noble ones, not wanting to hear the teaching of the noble ones, and a fault-finding mind. Without giving up these three things you can't give up unmindfulness, lack of situational awareness, and distracted mind.

Without giving up three things you can't give up not wanting to see the noble ones, not wanting to hear the teaching of the noble ones, and a fault-

finding mind. What three? Restlessness, lack of restraint, and unethical conduct. Without giving up these three things you can't give up not wanting to see the noble ones, not wanting to hear the teaching of the noble ones, and a fault-finding mind.

Without giving up three things you can't give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and unethical conduct. What three? Faithlessness, uncharitableness, and laziness. Without giving up these three things you can't give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and unethical conduct.

Without giving up three things you can't give up faithlessness, uncharitableness, and laziness. What three? Disregard, being hard to admonish, and having bad friends. Without giving up these three things you can't give up faithlessness, uncharitableness, and laziness.

Without giving up three things you can't give up disregard, being hard to admonish, and having bad friends. What three? Lack of conscience,

imprudence, and negligence. Without giving up these three things you can't give up disregard, being hard to admonish, and having bad friends.

Mendicants, someone who lacks conscience and prudence is negligent. When you're negligent you can't give up disregard, being hard to admonish, and having bad friends. When you've got bad friends you can't give up faithlessness, uncharitableness, and laziness. When you're lazy you can't give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and unethical conduct. When you're unethical you can't give up not wanting to see the noble ones, not wanting to hear the teaching of the noble ones, and a fault-finding mind. When you've got a fault-finding mind you can't give up unmindfulness, lack of situational awareness, and a distracted mind. When your mind is scattered you can't give up improper attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness. When your mind is sluggish you can't give up identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances. When you have doubts you can't give up greed, hate, and delusion. Without giving

up greed, hate, and delusion you can't give up rebirth, old age, and death.

After giving up three things you can give up rebirth, old age, and death. What three? Greed, hate, and delusion. After giving up these three things you can give up rebirth, old age, and death.

After giving up three things you can give up greed, hate, and delusion. What three? Identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances. After giving up these three things you can give up greed, hate, and delusion.

After giving up three things you can give up identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances. What three? Improper attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness. After giving up these three things you can give up identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances.

After giving up three things you can give up improper attention, following a wrong path, and

mental sluggishness. What three? Unmindfulness, lack of situational awareness, and a distracted mind. After giving up these three things you can give up improper attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness.

After giving up three things you can give up unmindfulness, lack of situational awareness, and distracted mind. What three? Not wanting to see the noble ones, not wanting to hear the teaching of the noble ones, and a fault-finding mind. After giving up these three things you can give up unmindfulness, lack of situational awareness, and distracted mind.

After giving up three things you can give up not wanting to see the noble ones, not wanting to hear the teaching of the noble ones, and a fault-finding mind. What three? Restlessness, lack of restraint, and unethical conduct. After giving up these three things you can give up not wanting to see the noble ones, not wanting to hear the teaching of the noble ones, and a fault-finding mind.

After giving up three things you can give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and unethical conduct. What three? Faithlessness, uncharitableness, and laziness. After giving up these three things you can give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and unethical conduct.

After giving up three things you can give up faithlessness, uncharitableness, and laziness. What three? Disregard, being hard to admonish, and having bad friends. After giving up these three things you can give up faithlessness, uncharitableness, and laziness.

After giving up three things you can give up disregard, being hard to admonish, and having bad friends. What three? Lack of conscience, imprudence, and negligence. After giving up these three things you can give up disregard, being hard to admonish, and having bad friends.

Mendicants, someone who has conscience and prudence is diligent. When you're diligent you can give up disregard, being hard to admonish,

and having bad friends. When you've got good friends you can give up faithlessness, uncharitableness, and laziness. When you're energetic you can give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and unethical conduct. When you're ethical you can give up not wanting to see the noble ones, not wanting to hear the teaching of the noble ones, and a fault-finding mind. When you don't have a fault-finding mind you can give up unmindfulness, lack of situational awareness, and a distracted mind. When your mind isn't scattered you can give up improper attention, following a wrong path, and mental sluggishness. When your mind isn't sluggish you can give up identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances. When you have no doubts you can give up greed, hate, and delusion. After giving up greed, hate, and delusion you can give up rebirth, old age, and death.”

Tayodhammasutta AN 10.76 <https://suttacentral.net/an10.76>

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



The Lion Is a Designation for the Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One

“Bhikkhus, in the evening the lion, the king of beasts, comes out from his lair, stretches his body, surveys the four quarters all around, and roars his lion’s roar three times. Then he sets out in search of game. For what reason? With the thought: ‘Let me not cause harm to small creatures that might cross my track.’”

“‘The lion,’ bhikkhus, is a designation for the Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened

One. When the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma to an assembly, this is his lion’s roar.

“Bhikkhus, there are these ten Tathāgata’s powers that the Tathāgata has, possessing which he claims the place of the chief bull, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the brahma wheel. What ten?

(1) “Here, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible, this is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which he claims the place of the chief bull, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(2) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the result of the undertaking of kamma past, future, and present in terms of possibilities and causes. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is ... the result of the undertaking of kamma

... this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which he ... sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(3) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the ways leading everywhere. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the ways leading everywhere, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which he ... sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(4) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the world with its numerous and diverse elements. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the world with its numerous and diverse elements, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(5) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the diversity in the dispositions of beings. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the diversity in the dispositions of beings, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on

account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(6) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the superior or inferior condition of the faculties of other beings and persons. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the superior or inferior condition of the faculties of other beings and persons, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(7) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence in regard to the jhānas, emancipations, concentrations, and meditative attainments. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence in regard to the jhānas ... this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(8) “Again, the Tathāgata recollects his manifold past abodes, that is, one birth, two births, three

births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many eons of world-dissolution, many eons of world-evolution, many eons of world-dissolution and world-evolution thus: ‘There I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life span; passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere, and there too I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life span; passing away from there, I was reborn here.’ Thus he recollects his manifold past abodes with their aspects and details. Since the Tathāgata recollects his manifold past abodes ... with their aspects and details, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(9) “Again, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, the Tathāgata sees

beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings fare in accordance with their kamma thus: ‘These beings who engaged in misconduct by body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong view, and undertook kamma based on wrong view, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell; but these beings who engaged in good conduct by body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right view, and undertook kamma based on right view, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.’ Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings fare in accordance with their kamma. Since the Tathāgata ... understands how beings fare in accordance with their kamma, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on

account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(10) “Again, with the destruction of the taints, the Tathāgata has realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he dwells in it. Since the Tathāgata has realized for himself ... the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom ... this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which he claims the place of the chief bull, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the brahma wheel.

“These, bhikkhus, are the ten Tathāgata’s powers that the Tathāgata has, possessing which he claims the place of the chief bull, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the brahma wheel.”

Sīhanādasutta AN 10.21 <https://suttacentral.net/an10.21>

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi



“A Great Man of Great Wisdom”

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrel sanctuary.

Then the brahmin Vassakāra, the chief minister of Magadha, approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When they had concluded their greetings and cordial talk, he sat down to one side and said to the Blessed One:

“Master Gotama, we describe someone who possesses four qualities as a great man with great wisdom. What four?”

(1) Here, someone is highly learned in the various fields of learning.

(2) He understands the meaning of various statements, so that he can say: ‘This is the meaning of this statement; this is the meaning of that one.’

(3) He has a good memory; he remembers and recollects what was done and said long ago.

(4) He is skillful and diligent in attending to the diverse chores of a householder; he possesses sound judgment about them in order to carry out and arrange them properly. We describe someone who possesses these four qualities as a great man with great wisdom. If Master Gotama thinks what I say should be approved, let him approve it. If he thinks what I say should be rejected, let him reject it.”

“I neither approve of your statement, brahmin, nor do I reject it. Rather, I describe one who possesses four other qualities as a great man with great wisdom. What four?

(1) Here, he is practicing for the welfare and happiness of many people; he is one who has established many people in the noble method, that is, in the goodness of the Dhamma, in the wholesomeness of the Dhamma.

(2) He thinks whatever he wants to think and does not think what he does not want to think; he intends whatever he wants to intend and does not intend what he does not want to intend; thus he has attained to mental mastery over the ways of thought.

(3) He gains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and are pleasant dwellings in this very life.

(4) With the destruction of the taints, he has realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this

very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he dwells in it.

“I neither approve of your statement, brahmin, nor do I reject it. But I describe someone who possesses these four qualities as a great man with great wisdom.”

“It is astounding and amazing, Master Gotama, how well this has been stated by Master Gotama. And we consider Master Gotama as one who possesses these four qualities. For he is practicing for the welfare and happiness of many people; he is one who has established many people in the noble method, that is, in the goodness of the Dhamma, in the wholesomeness of the Dhamma. He thinks whatever he wants to think and does not think what he does not want to think; he intends whatever he wants to intend and does not intend what he does not want to intend; thus he has attained to mental mastery over the ways of thought. He gains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the

higher mind and are pleasant dwellings in this very life. With the destruction of the taints, he has realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he dwells in it.”

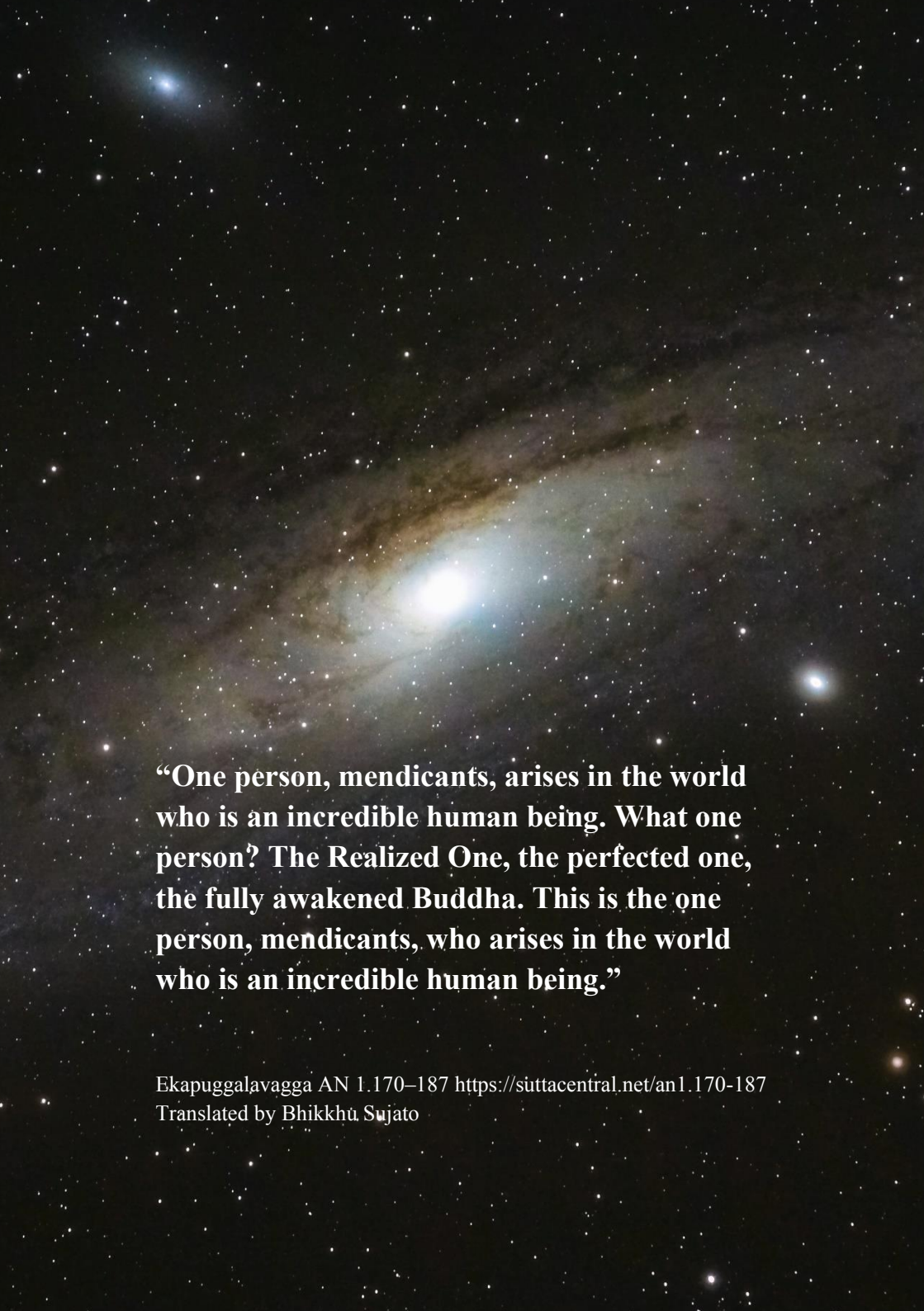
“Surely, brahmin, your words are prying and intrusive. Nevertheless, I will answer you. Indeed, I am practicing for the welfare and happiness of many people; I have established many people in the noble method, that is, in the goodness of the Dhamma, in the wholesomeness of the Dhamma. I think what I want to think and do not think what I do not want to think; I intend what I want to intend and do not intend what I do not want to intend; thus I have attained to mental mastery over the ways of thought. I gain at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and are pleasant dwellings in this very life. With the destruction of the taints, I have realized for myself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the taintless

liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, I dwell in it.”

He who found for the sake of all beings
release from the snare of death;
who revealed the Dhamma, the method,
for the benefit of devas and humans;
he in whom many people gain confidence
when they see and listen to him;
the one skilled in the path and what is not the path,
the taintless one who accomplished his task;
the Enlightened One bearing his final body
is called “a great man of great wisdom.”

Vassakārasutta AN 4.35 <https://suttacentral.net/an4.35>

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

A deep space photograph showing a vast field of stars and a prominent galaxy with a bright central core and diffuse, glowing arms. The background is a dark, star-filled sky.

“One person, mendicants, arises in the world who is an incredible human being. What one person? The Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. This is the one person, mendicants, who arises in the world who is an incredible human being.”

Ekapuggalavagga AN 1.170–187 <https://suttacentral.net/an1.170-187>
Translated by Bhikkhū Sujato

The Buddha Claims to Be Assured Regarding the Various Different Doctrinal Hypotheses, Based on the Ten Powers

Then the Venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, and sat down to one side. The Blessed One then said to him:

“Ānanda, I claim to be confident about the things that lead to the realization by direct knowledge of the various doctrinal principles, and I am thus able to teach the Dhamma to various people in

various ways such that one who practices accordingly will know of what exists that it exists and of what does not exist that it does not exist; such that one will know of the inferior that it is inferior and of the sublime that it is sublime; such that one will know of what is surpassable that it is surpassable and of what is unsurpassable that it is unsurpassable; such that it is possible that one will know, see, and realize this just as it is to be known, seen, and realized.

“But among knowledges, Ānanda, this one is unsurpassed, namely, the knowledge of these things and those things as they really are. And, I say, there is no other knowledge higher or more excellent than this.

“There are, Ānanda, these ten Tathāgata’s powers that the Tathāgata has, possessing which he claims the place of the chief bull, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the brahma wheel. What ten? ...

(1) “Here, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible, this is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which he claims the place of the chief bull, roars his lion’s roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(2) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the result of the undertaking of kamma past, future, and present in terms of possibilities and causes. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is ... the result of the undertaking of kamma ... this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which he ... sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(3) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the ways leading everywhere. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the ways leading everywhere, this too is a Tathāgata’s

power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which he ... sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(4) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the world with its numerous and diverse elements. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the world with its numerous and diverse elements, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(5) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the diversity in the dispositions of beings. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the diversity in the dispositions of beings, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(6) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the superior or inferior condition of the faculties of other beings and persons. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the superior or inferior condition of the faculties of other

beings and persons, this too is a Tathāgata's power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(7) “Again, the Tathāgata understands as it really is the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence in regard to the jhānas, emancipations, concentrations, and meditative attainments. Since the Tathāgata understands as it really is the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence in regard to the jhānas ... this too is a Tathāgata's power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(8) “Again, the Tathāgata recollects his manifold past abodes, that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many eons of world-dissolution, many eons of world-evolution, many eons of world-dissolution and world-evolution thus: ‘There I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my food, such my

experience of pleasure and pain, such my life span; passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere, and there too I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life span; passing away from there, I was reborn here.’ Thus he recollects his manifold past abodes with their aspects and details. Since the Tathāgata recollects his manifold past abodes ... with their aspects and details, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(9) “Again, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, the Tathāgata sees beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings fare in accordance with their kamma thus: ‘These beings who engaged in misconduct by body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong view, and undertook kamma based on wrong view, with the breakup of the body, after

death, have been reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell; but these beings who engaged in good conduct by body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right view, and undertook kamma based on right view, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.’ Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings fare in accordance with their kamma. Since the Tathāgata ... understands how beings fare in accordance with their kamma, this too is a Tathāgata’s power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which ... he sets in motion the brahma wheel.

(10) “Again, with the destruction of the taints, the Tathāgata has realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he dwells in it. Since the

Tathāgata has realized for himself ... the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom ... this too is a Tathāgata's power that the Tathāgata has, on account of which he claims the place of the chief bull, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the brahma wheel.

“These, Ānanda, are the ten Tathāgata's powers that the Tathāgata has, possessing which he claims the place of the chief bull, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets in motion the brahma wheel.”

Adhivuttipadasutta AN 10.22 <https://suttacentral.net/an10.22>

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi



A Lion's Roar Terrifies Beasts. The Buddha's Teaching Terrifies the Devas

“Bhikkhus, in the evening the lion, the king of beasts, comes out from his lair, stretches his body, surveys the four quarters all around, and roars his lion's roar three times. Then he sets out in search of game.

“Whatever animals hear the lion roaring for the most part are filled with fear, a sense of urgency,

and terror. Those who live in holes enter their holes; those who live in the water enter the water; those who live in the woods enter the woods; and the birds resort to the sky. Even those royal bull elephants, bound by strong thongs in the villages, towns, and capital cities, burst and break their bonds asunder; frightened, they urinate and defecate and flee here and there. So powerful among the animals is the lion, the king of beasts, so majestic and mighty.

“So too, bhikkhus, when the Tathāgata arises in the world, an arahant, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed, teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One, he teaches the Dhamma thus: ‘(1) Such is personal existence, (2) such the origin of personal existence, (3) such the cessation of personal existence, (4) such the way to the cessation of personal existence.’

“When those devas who are long-lived, beautiful, abounding in happiness, dwelling for a long time in lofty palaces, hear the Tathāgata’s teaching of the Dhamma, for the most part they are filled with fear, a sense of urgency, and terror thus: ‘It seems that we are actually impermanent, though we thought ourselves permanent; it seems that we are actually transient, though we thought ourselves everlasting; it seems that we are actually non-eternal, though we thought ourselves eternal. It seems that we are impermanent, transient, non-eternal, included in personal existence.’ So powerful is the Tathāgata, so majestic and mighty is he in this world together with its devas.”

When, through direct knowledge,
 the Buddha, the teacher, the peerless person
 in this world with its devas,
 sets in motion the wheel of Dhamma,
 he teaches personal existence, its cessation,
 the origin of personal existence,
 and the noble eightfold path
 that leads to the calming down of suffering.

Then even those devas with long life spans—
beautiful, ablaze with glory—
become fearful and filled with terror,
like beasts who hear the lion’s roar.
“It seems that we are impermanent,
not beyond personal existence,” they say,
when they hear the word of the Arahant,
the Stable One who is fully freed.

Sīhasutta AN 4.33 <https://suttacentral.net/an4.33>
Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi



The Realized One Has Respect and Reverence for the Teaching

“Mendicants, towards evening the lion, king of beasts, emerges from his den, yawns, looks all around the four directions, and roars his lion’s roar three times. Then he sets out on the hunt. If he strikes an elephant, he does it carefully, not carelessly. If he strikes a buffalo ... a cow ... a leopard ... or any smaller creatures—even a hare or a cat—he does it carefully, not carelessly. Why is that? Thinking: ‘May I not lose my way.’”

‘Lion’ is a term for the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. When the Realized One teaches Dhamma to an assembly, this is his lion’s roar. When the Realized One teaches the monks ... nuns ... laymen ... laywomen ... or ordinary people—even food-carriers and hunters—he teaches them carefully, not carelessly. Why is that? Because the Realized One has respect and reverence for the teaching.”

Sīhasutta AN 5.99 <https://suttacentral.net/an5.99>

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



How a corpse, a hedonist, a lion, and a Buddha go to sleep

“Mendicants, there are these four ways of lying down. What four? The ways a corpse, a pleasure seeker, a lion, and a Realized One lie down.

And how does a corpse lie down? Corpses usually lie flat on their backs. This is called the way a corpse lies down.

And how does a pleasure seeker lie down? Pleasure seekers usually lie down on their left side. This is called the way a pleasure seeker lies down.

And how does a lion lie down? The lion, king of beasts, lies down on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other, with his tail tucked between his thighs. When he wakes, he lifts his front quarters and checks his hind quarters. If he sees that any part of his body is disordered or displaced, he is displeased. But if he sees that no part of his body is disordered or displaced, he is pleased. This is called the way a lion lies down.

And how does a Realized One lie down? It's when a Realized One, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption ... second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. This is called the way a Realized One lies down.

These are the four ways of lying down.”

Seyyāsutta AN 4.246 <https://suttacentral.net/an4.246>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



“One person, mendicants, arises in the world unique, without peer or counterpart, incomparable, matchless, unrivaled, unequaled, without equal, the best of men. What one person? The Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. This is the one person, mendicants, who arises in the world unique, without peer or counterpart, incomparable, matchless, unrivaled, unequaled, without equal, the best of men.”

Ekapuggalavagga AN 1.170–187 <https://suttacentral.net/an1.170-187>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

The Venerable Ānanda Gets the Buddha to Talk about the Scale of the Universe

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“Sir, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Ānanda, the Buddha Sikhi had a disciple called Abhibhū. Standing in the Brahmā realm, he could make his voice heard throughout the galaxy.’ I wonder how far a Blessed One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha can make their voice heard?”

“He was a disciple, Ānanda. Realized Ones are immeasurable.”

For a second time ...

For a third time, Ānanda said to the Buddha: “... I wonder how far a Blessed One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha can make their voice heard?”

“Ānanda, have you heard of a thousandfold lesser world system, a galaxy?”

“Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the Buddha speak. The mendicants will listen and remember it.”

“Well then, Ānanda, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. The Buddha said this:

“Ānanda, a galaxy extends a thousand times as far as the moon and sun revolve and the shining ones

light up the quarters. In that galaxy there are a thousand moons, a thousand suns, a thousand Sinerus king of mountains, a thousand Indias, a thousand Western Continents, a thousand Northern Continents, a thousand Eastern Continents, four thousand oceans, four thousand Great Kings, a thousand realms of the Gods of the Four Great Kings, a thousand realms of the Gods of the Thirty-Three, of the Gods of Yama, of the Joyful Gods, of the Gods who Love to Create, of the Gods who Control the Creations of Others, and a thousand Brahmā realms. This is called a thousandfold lesser world system, a ‘galaxy’.

A world system that extends for a thousand galaxies is called a millionfold middling world system, a ‘galactic cluster’.

A world system that extends for a thousand galactic clusters is called a billionfold great world system, a ‘galactic supercluster’.

If he wished, Ānanda, a Realized One could make his voice heard throughout a galactic supercluster, or as far as he wants.”

“But how would the Buddha make his voice heard so far?”

“First, Ānanda, a Realized One would fill the galactic supercluster with light. When sentient beings saw the light, the Realized One would project his call so that they’d hear the sound. That’s how a Realized One could make his voice heard throughout a galactic supercluster, or as far as he wants.”

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to Venerable Udāyī, “I’m so fortunate, so very fortunate, to have a teacher with such power and might!”

When he said this, Venerable Udāyī said to Venerable Ānanda, “What is it to you, Reverend Ānanda, if your teacher has such power and might?”

When he said this, the Buddha said to Venerable Udāyī, “Not so, Udāyī, not so! If Ānanda were to die while still not free of greed, he would rule as king of the gods for seven lifetimes, and as king of all India for seven lifetimes, because of the confidence of his heart. However, Ānanda will be extinguished in the present life.”

Cūḷanikāśutta AN 3.80 <https://suttacentral.net/an3.80>

Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



**King Pasenadi of Kosala Show
such Supreme Honor toward
the Blessed One and Display
such an Offering of Loving-
kindness to Him**

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. Now on that occasion King Pasenadi of Kosala had returned from the war front, victorious in battle, his purpose having been achieved. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala set out for the park. He went by carriage as far as the ground was suitable for a carriage, and then he dismounted from his

carriage and entered the park on foot. Now on that occasion a number of bhikkhus were walking back and forth in the open air. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala approached those bhikkhus and asked them:

“Bhante, where is the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One now dwelling? For I wish to see the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One.”

“Great king, that is his dwelling with the closed door. Approach it quietly. Without hurrying, enter the porch, clear your throat, and tap on the bolt. The Blessed One will open the door for you.”

Then, King Pasenadi of Kosala went quietly up to the dwelling with the closed door. Without hurrying, he entered the porch, cleared his throat, and tapped on the bolt. The Blessed One opened the door.

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala entered the dwelling, prostrated himself with his head at the Blessed One's feet, and covered the Blessed One's feet with kisses and caressed them with his hands, pronouncing his name: "Bhante, I am King Pasenadi of Kosala! Bhante, I am King Pasenadi of Kosala!"

"But, great king, what reasons do you have for showing such supreme honor to this body and displaying such an offering of loving-kindness?"

"Bhante, it is out of my gratitude and thankfulness that I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One and display such an offering of loving-kindness to him.

(1) "For, Bhante, the Blessed One is practicing for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people; he has established many people in the noble method, that is, in the way of the good Dhamma, in the way of the wholesome Dhamma. This is one reason I show such supreme honor

toward the Blessed One and display such an offering of loving-kindness to him.

(2) “Again, Bhante, the Blessed One is virtuous, of mature behavior, of noble behavior, of wholesome behavior, possessing wholesome behavior. This is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One....

(3) “Again, Bhante, for a long time the Blessed One has been a forest-dweller who resorts to remote lodgings in forests and jungle groves. Since that is so, this is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One....

(4) “Again, Bhante, the Blessed One is content with any kind of robe, almsfood, lodging, and medicines and provisions for the sick. This is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One....

(5) “Again, Bhante, the Blessed One is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, an unsurpassed

field of merit for the world. This is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One....

(6) “Again, Bhante, the Blessed One gets to hear at will, without trouble or difficulty, talk concerned with the austere life that leads to the elimination of defilements, that is conducive to opening up the heart, that is, talk on fewness of desires, on contentment, on solitude, on not getting bound up with others, on arousing energy, on virtuous behavior, on concentration, on wisdom, on liberation, on the knowledge and vision of liberation. This is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One....

(7) “Again, Bhante, the Blessed One gains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and are pleasant dwellings in this very life. This is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One....

(8) “Again, Bhante, the Blessed One recollects his manifold past abodes, that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many eons of world-dissolution, many eons of world-evolution, many eons of world-dissolution and world-evolution thus: ‘There I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life span; passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere, and there too I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life span; passing away from there, I was reborn here.’ Thus he recollects his manifold past abodes with their aspects and details. Since that is so, this is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One....

(9) “Again, Bhante, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, the Blessed One sees beings passing away and being reborn,

inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings fare in accordance with their kamma thus: ‘These beings who engaged in misconduct by body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong view, and undertook kamma based on wrong view, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell; but these beings who engaged in good conduct by body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right view, and undertook kamma based on right view, with the breakup of the body, after death, have been reborn in a good destination, in the heavenly world.’ Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and being reborn, inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings fare in accordance with their kamma. Since that is so, this is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One....

(10) “Again, Bhante, with the destruction of the taints, the Blessed One has realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he dwells in it. Since that is so, this is another reason I show such supreme honor toward the Blessed One and display such an offering of loving-kindness to him.

“And now, Bhante, we must be going. We are busy and have much to do.”

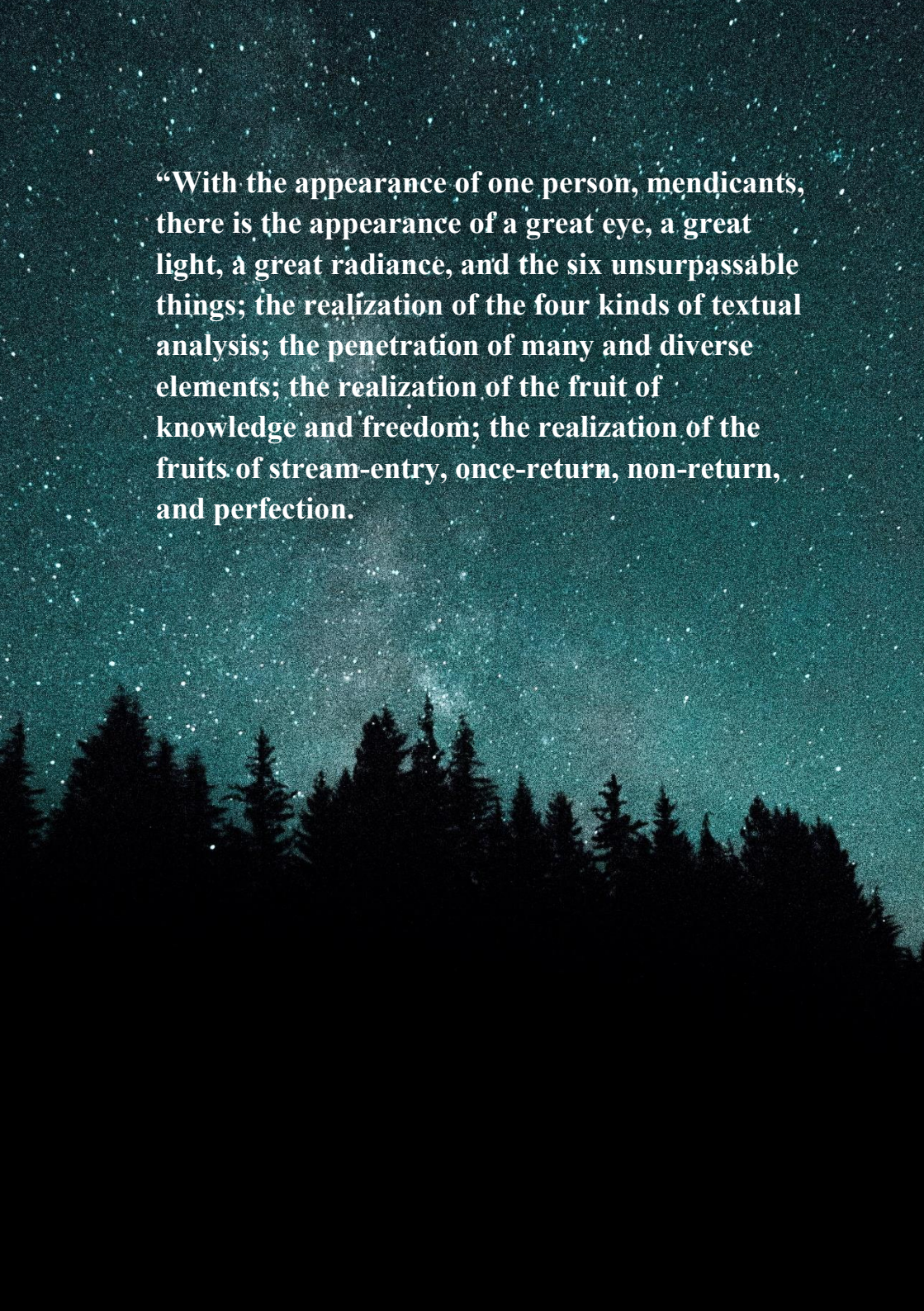
“You may go, great king, at your own convenience.”

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala rose from his seat, paid homage to the Blessed One, circumambulated him keeping the right side toward him, and departed.

Dutiyakosalasutta

AN 10.30 <https://suttacentral.net/an10.30>

Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

A night sky filled with stars, with a dark silhouette of a forest at the bottom. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

“With the appearance of one person, mendicants, there is the appearance of a great eye, a great light, a great radiance, and the six unsurpassable things; the realization of the four kinds of textual analysis; the penetration of many and diverse elements; the realization of the fruit of knowledge and freedom; the realization of the fruits of stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection.

What one person? The Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. This is the one person whose appearance brings the appearance of a great eye, a great light, a great radiance, and the six unsurpassable things; the realization of the four kinds of textual analysis; the penetration of many and diverse elements; the realization of the fruit of knowledge and release; the realization of the fruits of stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection.”

Ekāpuggalavagga AN 1.170–187 <https://suttacentral.net/an1.170-187>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

The Great Discourse on the Buddha's Extinguishment

At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain. Now at that time King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Māgadha wanted to invade the Vajjis. He declared: "I shall wipe out these Vajjis, so mighty and powerful! I shall destroy them, and lay ruin and devastation upon them!"

And then King Ajātasattu addressed Vassakāra the brahmin minister of Māgadha, "Please,

brahmin, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then say: ‘Sir, King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Māgadha wants to invade the Vajjis. He says, “I shall wipe out these Vajjis, so mighty and powerful! I shall destroy them, and lay ruin and devastation upon them!”’ Remember well how the Buddha answers and tell it to me. For Realized Ones say nothing that is not so.”

1. The Brahmin Vassakāra

“Yes, sir,” Vassakāra replied. He had the finest carriages harnessed. Then he mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Rājagaha for the Vulture’s Peak Mountain. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha on foot, and exchanged greetings with him.

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the

Buddha, “Master Gotama, King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Māgadha bows with his head to your feet. He asks if you are healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. Master Gotama, King Ajātasattu wants to invade the Vajjis. He has declared: ‘I shall wipe out these Vajjis, so mighty and powerful! I shall destroy them, and lay ruin and devastation upon them!’”

2. Principles That Prevent Decline

Now at that time Venerable Ānanda was standing behind the Buddha fanning him. Then the Buddha said to him, “Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis meet frequently and have many meetings?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis meet frequently and have many meetings, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis meet in harmony, leave in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis meet in harmony, leave in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis don't make new decrees or abolish existing decrees, but proceed having undertaken the traditional Vajjian principles as they have been decreed?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis don't make new decrees or abolish existing decrees, but proceed having undertaken the traditional Vajjian principles as they have been decreed, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis honor, respect, esteem, and venerate Vajjian elders, and think them worth listening to?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis honor, respect, esteem, and venerate Vajjian elders, and think them worth listening to, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis don’t rape or abduct women or girls from their families and force them to live with them?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis don’t rape or abduct women or girls from their families and force them to live with them, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis honor, respect, esteem, and venerate the Vajjian shrines, whether inner or outer, not neglecting the proper

spirit-offerings that were given and made in the past?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis honor, respect, esteem, and venerate the Vajjian shrines, whether inner or outer, not neglecting the proper spirit-offerings that were given and made in the past, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis organize proper protection, shelter, and security for perfected ones, so that more perfected ones might come to the realm and those already here may live in comfort?”

“I have heard that, sir.”

“As long as the Vajjis organize proper protection, shelter, and security for perfected ones, so that more perfected ones might come to the realm and those already here may live in comfort, they can expect growth, not decline.”

Then the Buddha said to Vassakāra, “Brahmin, this one time I was staying near Vesālī at the Sārāndada woodland shrine. There I taught the Vajjis these seven principles that prevent decline. As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the Vajjis, and as long as the Vajjis are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.”

When the Buddha had spoken, Vassakāra said to him, “Master Gotama, if the Vajjis follow even a single one of these principles they can expect growth, not decline. How much more so all seven! King Ajātasattu cannot defeat the Vajjis in war, unless by diplomacy or by sowing dissension. Well, now, Master Gotama, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do.”

“Please, brahmin, go at your convenience.” Then Vassakāra the brahmin, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, got up from his seat and left.

3. Principles That Prevent Decline Among the Mendicants

Soon after he had left, the Buddha said to Ānanda, “Go, Ānanda, gather all the mendicants staying in the vicinity of Rājagaha together in the assembly hall.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. He did what the Buddha asked. Then he went back, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, “Sir, the mendicant Saṅgha has assembled. Please, sir, go at your convenience.”

Then the Buddha went to the assembly hall, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, I will teach you these seven principles that prevent decline. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“As long as the mendicants meet frequently and have many meetings, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants meet in harmony, leave in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants don't make new decrees or abolish existing decrees, but undertake and follow the training rules as they have been decreed, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants honor, respect, esteem, and venerate the senior mendicants—of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha—and think them worth listening to, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants don't fall under the sway of arisen craving for future lives, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants take care to live in wilderness lodgings, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants individually establish mindfulness, so that more good-hearted spiritual companions might come, and those that have already come may live comfortably, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you seven more principles that prevent decline. ...

As long as the mendicants don't relish work, loving it and liking to relish it, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as they don't enjoy talk ...

sleep ...

company ...

they don't have wicked desires, falling under the sway of wicked desires ...

they don't have bad friends, companions, and associates ...

they don't stop half-way after achieving some insignificant distinction, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you seven more principles that prevent decline. ... As long as the mendicants are faithful ... conscientious ... prudent ... learned ... energetic ... mindful ... wise, they can expect growth, not decline. As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are

seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you seven more principles that prevent decline. ...

As long as the mendicants develop the awakening factors of mindfulness ... investigation of principles ... energy ... rapture ... tranquility ... immersion ... equanimity, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you seven more principles that prevent decline. ...

As long as the mendicants develop the perceptions of impermanence ... not-self ... ugliness ... drawbacks ... giving up ... fading

away ... cessation, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you six principles that prevent decline. ...

As long as the mendicants consistently treat their spiritual companions with bodily kindness ... verbal kindness ... and mental kindness both in public and in private, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants share without reservation any material possessions they have gained by legitimate means, even the food placed in the alms-bowl, using them in common with their ethical spiritual companions, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants live according to the precepts shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private—such precepts as are unbroken, impeccable, spotless, and unmarred, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion—they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants live according to the view shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private—the view that is noble and emancipating, and leads one who practices it to the complete end of suffering—they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these six principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.”

And while staying there at the Vulture’s Peak the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants:

“Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

When the Buddha had stayed in Rājagaha as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Ambalaṭṭhikā.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Ambalaṭṭhikā, where he stayed in the royal rest-house. And while staying there, too, he often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants:

“Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with

wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

When the Buddha had stayed in Ambalaṭṭhikā as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Nāḷandā.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Nāḷandā, where he stayed in Pāvārika’s mango grove.

4. Sāriputta’s Lion’s Roar

Then Sāriputta went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there’s no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.”

“That’s a grand and dramatic statement, Sāriputta. You’ve roared a definitive, categorical lion’s roar, saying: ‘I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there’s no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.’”

What about all the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who lived in the past? Have you comprehended their minds to know that those Buddhas had such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?”

“No, sir.”

“And what about all the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who will live in the future? Have you comprehended their minds to know that those Buddhas will have such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?”

“No, sir.”

“And what about me, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha at present? Have you comprehended my mind to know that I have such ethics, or such teachings, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?”

“No, sir.”

“Well then, Sāriputta, given that you don’t comprehend the minds of Buddhas past, future, or present, what exactly are you doing, making such a grand and dramatic statement, roaring such a definitive, categorical lion’s roar?”

“Sir, though I don’t comprehend the minds of Buddhas past, future, and present, still I understand this by inference from the teaching. Suppose there was a king’s frontier citadel with fortified embankments, ramparts, and arches, and a single gate. And it has a gatekeeper who is astute, competent, and intelligent. He keeps strangers out and lets known people in. As he

walks around the patrol path, he doesn't see a hole or cleft in the wall, not even one big enough for a cat to slip out. He thinks: 'Whatever sizable creatures enter or leave the citadel, all of them do so via this gate.'

In the same way, I understand this by inference from the teaching: 'All the perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas—whether past, future, or present—give up the five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Their mind is firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. They correctly develop the seven awakening factors. And they wake up to the supreme perfect awakening.'"

And while staying at Nāḷandā, too, the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants:

"Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it's very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it's very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with

wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

5. The Drawbacks of Unethical Conduct

When the Buddha had stayed in Nālandā as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Pāṭali Village.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Pāṭali Village.

The lay followers of Pāṭali Village heard that he had arrived. So they went to see him, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, please consent to come to our guest house.” The Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, the lay followers of Pāṭali Village got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right. Then they

went to the guest house, where they spread carpets all over, prepared seats, set up a water jar, and placed a lamp. Then they went back to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and told him of their preparations, saying: “Please, sir, come at your convenience.”

In the morning, the Buddha robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the guest house together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Having washed his feet he entered the guest house and sat against the central column facing east. The Saṅgha of mendicants also washed their feet, entered the guest house, and sat against the west wall facing east, with the Buddha right in front of them. The lay followers of Pāṭali Village also washed their feet, entered the guest house, and sat against the east wall facing west, with the Buddha right in front of them.

Then the Buddha addressed them:

“Householders, there are these five drawbacks for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics. What five?

Firstly, an unethical person loses substantial wealth on account of negligence. This is the first drawback for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics.

Furthermore, an unethical person gets a bad reputation. This is the second drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person enters any kind of assembly timid and embarrassed, whether it’s an assembly of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or ascetics. This is the third drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person feels lost when they die. This is the fourth drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a place of

loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is the fifth drawback.

These are the five drawbacks for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics.

6. The Benefits of Ethical Conduct

There are these five benefits for an ethical person because of their accomplishment in ethics. What five?

Firstly, an ethical person gains substantial wealth on account of diligence. This is the first benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person gets a good reputation. This is the second benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person enters any kind of assembly bold and self-assured, whether it's an assembly of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or ascetics. This is the third benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person dies not feeling lost. This is the fourth benefit.

Furthermore, when an ethical person's body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is the fifth benefit.

These are the five benefits for an ethical person because of their accomplishment in ethics.”

The Buddha spent most of the night educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the lay followers of Pāṭali Village with a Dhamma talk. Then he dismissed them, “The night is getting late, householders. Please go at your convenience.”

“Yes, sir,” replied the lay followers of Pāṭali Village. They got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right, before leaving. Soon after they left the Buddha entered a private cubicle.

7. Building a Citadel

Now at that time the Magadhan ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra were building a citadel at Pāṭali Village to keep the Vajjis out. At that time thousands of deities were taking possession of building sites in Pāṭali Village. Illustrious rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by illustrious deities. Middling rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by middling deities. Lesser rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by lesser deities.

With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, the Buddha saw those deities taking possession of building sites in Pāṭali Village. The Buddha rose at the crack of dawn and addressed Ānanda, “Ānanda, who is building a citadel at Pāṭali Village?”

“Sir, the Magadhan ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra are building a citadel to keep the Vajjis out.”

“It’s as if they were building the citadel in consultation with the gods of the Thirty-Three. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw those deities taking possession of building sites. Illustrious rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by illustrious deities. Middling rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by middling deities. Lesser rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by lesser deities. As far as the civilized region extends, as far as the trading zone extends, this will be the chief city: the Pāṭaliputta trade center. But Pāṭaliputta will face three threats: from fire, flood, and dissension.”

Then the Magadhan ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra approached the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they stood to one side and said, “Would Master Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept today’s meal from me?” The Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, they went to their own guest house, where they had a variety of delicious foods prepared. Then they had the Buddha informed of the time, saying, “It’s time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready.”

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to their guest house together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat on the seat spread out. Then Sunidha and Vassakāra served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with their own hands with a variety of delicious foods. When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Sunidha and Vassakāra took a low seat and sat to one side.

The Buddha expressed his appreciation with these verses:

“In the place he makes his dwelling,
 having fed the astute
 and the virtuous here,
 the restrained spiritual practitioners,

he should dedicate an offering
to the deities there.

Venerated, they venerate him;
honored, they honor him.

After that they have compassion for him,
like a mother for the child at her breast.

A man beloved of the deities
always sees nice things.”

When the Buddha had expressed his appreciation
to Sunidha and Vassakāra with these verses, he
got up from his seat and left.

Sunidha and Vassakāra followed behind the
Buddha, thinking, “The gate through which the
ascetic Gotama departs today shall be named the
Gotama Gate. The ford at which he crosses the
Ganges River shall be named the Gotama Ford.”

Then the gate through which the Buddha departed
was named the Gotama Gate.

Then the Buddha came to the Ganges River.

Now at that time the Ganges was full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. Wanting to cross from the near to the far shore, some people were seeking a boat, some a dinghy, while some were tying up a raft. But, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, the Buddha, together with the mendicant Saṅgha, vanished from the near shore and landed on the far shore.

He saw all those people wanting to cross over. Knowing the meaning of this, on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

“Those who cross a deluge or stream
have built a bridge and left the marshes behind.
While some people are still tying a raft,
intelligent people have crossed over.”

8. Talk on the Noble Truths

Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda,
“Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Koṭigāma.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Koṭigāma, and stayed there.

There he addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants, not understanding and not penetrating four noble truths, both you and I have wandered and transmigrated for such a very long time. What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. These noble truths of suffering, origin, cessation, and the path have been understood and comprehended. Craving for continued existence has been cut off; the attachment to continued existence is ended; now there are no more future lives.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Because of not truly seeing
the four noble truths,

we have transmigrated for a long time
from one rebirth to the next.

But now that these truths have been seen,
the attachment to rebirth is eradicated.
The root of suffering is cut off,
now there are no more future lives.”

And while staying at Koṭigāma, too, the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants:
“Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

9. The Deaths in Nāḍika

When the Buddha had stayed in Koṭigāma as long as he wished, he said to Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Nāḍika.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Nādika, where he stayed in the brick house.

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “Sir, the monk named Sāḷha has passed away in Nādika. Where has he been reborn in his next life? The nun named Nandā, the layman named Sudatta, and the laywoman named Sujātā have passed away in Nādika. Where have they been reborn in the next life? The laymen named Kakkāṭa, Kaḷibha, Nikata, Kaṭissaha, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, Bhadda, and Subhadda have passed away in Nādika. Where have they been reborn in the next life?”

“Ānanda, the monk Sāḷha had realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, having realized it with his own insight due to the ending of defilements.

The nun Nandā had ended the five lower fetters. She's been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.

The layman Sudatta had ended three fetters, and weakened greed, hate, and delusion. He's a once-returned; he will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.

The laywoman Sujātā had ended three fetters. She's a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.

The laymen Kakkāṭa, Kaḷibha, Nikata, Kaṭṭissaha, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, Bhadda, and Subhadda had ended the five lower fetters. They've been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.

Over fifty laymen in Nādika have passed away having ended the five lower fetters. They've been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.

More than ninety laymen in Nāḍika have passed away having ended three fetters, and weakened greed, hate, and delusion. They're once-returners, who will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.

In excess of five hundred laymen in Nāḍika have passed away having ended three fetters. They're stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.

10. The Mirror of the Teaching

It's hardly surprising that a human being should pass away. But if you should come and ask me about it each and every time someone passes away, that would be a bother for me.

So Ānanda, I will teach you the explanation of the Dhamma called 'the mirror of the teaching'. A noble disciple who has this may declare of themselves: 'I've finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I've finished with all places of loss, bad places, the

underworld. I am a stream-enterer! I'm not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am bound for awakening.'

And what is that mirror of the teaching?

It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'

They have experiential confidence in the teaching: 'The teaching is well explained by the Buddha—visible in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.'

They have experiential confidence in the Saṅgha: 'The Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples is practicing the way that's good, direct, methodical, and proper. It consists of the four

pairs, the eight individuals. This is the Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples that is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of greeting with joined palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world.'

And a noble disciple's ethical conduct is loved by the noble ones, unbroken, impeccable, spotless, and unmarred, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion.

This is that mirror of the teaching."

And while staying there in Nāḍika the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants:

"Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it's very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it's very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements,

namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

When the Buddha had stayed in Nādika as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Vesālī.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Vesālī, where he stayed in Ambapālī’s mango grove.

There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants, a mendicant should live mindful and aware. This is my instruction to you.

And how is a mendicant mindful? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of

desire and aversion for the world. That's how a mendicant is mindful.

And how is a mendicant aware? It's when a mendicant acts with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent. That's how a mendicant is aware. A mendicant should live mindful and aware. This is my instruction to you.”

11. Ambapālī the Courtesan

Ambapālī the courtesan heard that the Buddha had arrived and was staying in her mango grove. She had the finest carriages harnessed. Then she mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Vesālī for her own park. She went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha on

foot. She bowed and sat down to one side. The Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired her with a Dhamma talk.

Then she said to the Buddha, “Sir, may the Buddha together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow’s meal from me.” The Buddha consented in silence. Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Ambapālī got up from her seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on her right, before leaving. The Licchavis of Vesālī also heard that the Buddha had arrived and was staying in Ambapālī’s mango grove. They had the finest carriages harnessed. Then they mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Vesālī. Some of the Licchavis were in blue, of blue color, clad in blue, adorned with blue. And some were similarly colored in yellow, red, or white.

Then Ambapālī the courtesan collided with those Licchavi youths, axle to axle, wheel to wheel, yoke to yoke. The Licchavis said to her, “What

the hell, Ambapālī, are you doing colliding with us axle to axle, wheel to wheel, yoke to yoke?”

“Well, masters, it’s because I’ve invited the Buddha for tomorrow’s meal together with the mendicant Saṅgha.”

“Girl, give us that meal for a hundred thousand!”

“Masters, even if you were to give me Vesālī with her fiefdoms, I still wouldn’t give that meal to you.”

Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers, saying, “We’ve been beaten by the aunty! We’ve been beaten by the aunty!” Then they continued on to Ambapālī’s grove.

The Buddha saw them coming off in the distance, and addressed the mendicants: “Any of the mendicants who’ve never seen the gods of the Thirty-Three, just have a look at the assembly of Licchavis. See the assembly of Licchavis, check them out: they’re just like the Thirty-Three!”

The Licchavis went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha on foot. They bowed to the Buddha, sat down to one side, and the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk.

Then they said to the Buddha, “Sir, may the Buddha together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow’s meal from us.”

Then the Buddha said to the Licchavis, “I have already accepted tomorrow’s meal from Ambapālī the courtesan.”

Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers, saying, “We’ve been beaten by the aunty! We’ve been beaten by the aunty!”

And then those Licchavis approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. They got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right, before leaving.

And when the night had passed Ambapālī had a variety of delicious foods prepared in her own park. Then she had the Buddha informed of the time, saying, “Sir, it’s time. The meal is ready.”

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of Ambapālī together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat on the seat spread out. Then Ambapālī served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with her own hands with a variety of delicious foods.

When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hands and bowl, Ambapālī took a low seat, sat to one side, and said to the Buddha, “Sir, I present this park to the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha.”

The Buddha accepted the park.

Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired her with a Dhamma talk, after which he got up from his seat and left.

And while staying at Vesālī, too, the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants:

“Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

12. Commencing the Rains at Beluva

When the Buddha had stayed in Ambapālī’s grove as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to the little village of Beluva.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at the little village of Beluva, and stayed there.

There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, please enter the rainy season residence with whatever friends or acquaintances you have around Vesālī. I’ll commence the rainy season residence right here in the little village of Beluva.”

“Yes, sir,” those mendicants replied. They did as the Buddha said, while the Buddha commenced the rainy season residence right there in the little village of Beluva.

After the Buddha had commenced the rainy season residence, he fell severely ill, struck by dreadful pains, close to death. But he endured unperturbed, with mindfulness and situational awareness. Then it occurred to the Buddha, “It would not be appropriate for me to become fully extinguished before informing my attendants and taking leave of the mendicant Saṅgha. Why don’t I forcefully suppress this illness, stabilize the life force, and live on?”

So that is what he did. Then the Buddha's illness died down.

Soon after the Buddha had recovered from that sickness, he came out from his dwelling and sat in the shade of the porch on the seat spread out. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, it's fantastic that the Buddha is comfortable and well. Because when the Buddha was sick, my body felt like it was drugged. I was disorientated, and the teachings weren't clear to me. Still, at least I was consoled by the thought that the Buddha won't become fully extinguished without making some statement regarding the Saṅgha of mendicants."

"But what could the mendicant Saṅgha expect from me, Ānanda? I've taught the Dhamma without making any distinction between secret and public teachings. The Realized One doesn't have the closed fist of a teacher when it comes to the teachings. If there's anyone who thinks: 'I'll take charge of the Saṅgha of mendicants,' or 'the

Saṅgha of mendicants is meant for me,’ let them make a statement regarding the Saṅgha. But the Realized One doesn’t think like this, so why should he make some statement regarding the Saṅgha?

I’m now old, elderly and senior. I’m advanced in years and have reached the final stage of life. I’m currently eighty years old. Just as a decrepit cart keeps going by relying on straps, in the same way, the Realized One’s body keeps going by relying on straps, or so you’d think. Sometimes the Realized One, not focusing on any signs, and with the cessation of certain feelings, enters and remains in the signless immersion of the heart. Only then does the Realized One’s body become more comfortable.

So Ānanda, be your own island, your own refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge. And how does a mendicant do this? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire

and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. That’s how a mendicant is their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge. That’s how the teaching is their island and their refuge, with no other refuge.

Whether now or after I have passed, any who shall live as their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge; with the teaching as their island and their refuge, with no other refuge—those mendicants of mine who want to train shall be among the best of the best.”

13. An Obvious Hint

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms. Then, after the meal, on his return from almsround, he addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, get your sitting cloth. Let’s go to the Cāpāla shrine for the day’s meditation.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Taking his sitting cloth he followed behind the Buddha.

Then the Buddha went up to the Cāpāla shrine, where he sat on the seat spread out. Ānanda bowed to the Buddha and sat down to one side.

The Buddha said to him: “Ānanda, Vesālī is lovely. And the Udena, Gotamaka, Sattamba, Bahuputta, Sārandada, and Cāpāla shrines are all lovely.

Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon.”

But Ānanda didn't get it, even though the Buddha dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. He didn't beg the Buddha: "Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans." For his mind was as if possessed by Māra.

For a second time ... And for a third time, the Buddha said to Ānanda: "Ānanda, Vesālī is lovely. And the Udena, Gotamaka, Sattamba, Bahuputta, Sārandada, and Cāpāla shrines are all lovely. Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon, or what's left of it. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he

wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon, or what's left of it.”

But Ānanda didn't get it, even though the Buddha dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. He didn't beg the Buddha: “Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.” For his mind was as if possessed by Māra.

Then the Buddha got up and said to Venerable Ānanda, “Go now, Ānanda, at your convenience.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. He rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before sitting at the root of a tree close by.

14. The Appeal of Māra

And then, not long after Ānanda had left, Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha, stood to one side, and said to him:

“Sir, may the Blessed One now become fully extinguished! May the Holy One now become fully extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become fully extinguished. Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have monk disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned, have memorized the teachings, and practice in line with the teachings. Not until they practice properly, living in line with the teaching. Not until they’ve learned their tradition, and explain, teach, assert, establish, disclose, analyze, and make it clear. Not until they can legitimately and completely refute the doctrines of others that come up, and teach with a demonstrable basis.’

Today you do have such monk disciples. May the Blessed One now become fully extinguished!

May the Holy One now become fully extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become fully extinguished.

Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have nun disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned ...’

Today you do have such nun disciples. May the Blessed One now become fully extinguished! May the Holy One now become fully extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become fully extinguished.

Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have layman disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned ...’

Today you do have such layman disciples. May the Blessed One now become fully extinguished! May the Holy One now become fully

extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become fully extinguished.

Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have laywoman disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned ...’

Today you do have such laywoman disciples. May the Blessed One now become fully extinguished! May the Holy One now become fully extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become fully extinguished.

Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until my spiritual path is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans.’

Today your spiritual path is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans. May the Blessed One now become fully

extinguished! May the Holy One now become fully extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become fully extinguished.”

When this was said, the Buddha said to Māra, “Relax, Wicked One. The final extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon. Three months from now the Realized One will finally be extinguished.”

15. Surrendering the Life Force

So at the Cāpāla tree shrine the Buddha, mindful and aware, surrendered the life force. When he did so there was a great earthquake, awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky. Then, knowing the meaning of this, on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

“Weighing up the incomparable against an extension of life,
the sage surrendered the life force.
Happy inside, serene,

he burst out of this self-made chain like a suit of armor.”

16. The Causes of Earthquakes

Then Venerable Ānanda thought, “How incredible, how amazing! That was a really big earthquake! That was really a very big earthquake; awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky! What’s the cause, what’s the reason for a great earthquake?”

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, “How incredible, sir, how amazing! That was a really big earthquake! That was really a very big earthquake; awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky! What’s the cause, what’s the reason for a great earthquake?”

“Ānanda, there are these eight causes and reasons for a great earthquake. What eight?”

This great earth is grounded on water, the water is grounded on air, and the air stands in space. At a time when a great wind blows, it stirs the water, and the water stirs the earth. This is the first cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, there is an ascetic or brahmin with psychic power who has achieved mastery of the mind, or a god who is mighty and powerful. They've developed a limited perception of earth and a limitless perception of water. They make the earth shake and rock and tremble. This is the second cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the being intent on awakening passes away from the host of Joyful Gods, he's conceived in his mother's belly, mindful and aware. Then the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the third cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the being intent on awakening comes out of his mother's belly mindful and aware, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles.

This is the fourth cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the Realized One realizes the supreme perfect awakening, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the fifth cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the Realized One rolls forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the sixth cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the Realized One, mindful and aware, surrenders the life force, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the seventh cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the Realized One becomes fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the eighth cause and reason for a great earthquake.

These are the eight causes and reasons for a great earthquake.

17. Eight Assemblies

There are, Ānanda, these eight assemblies. What eight? The assemblies of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and ascetics. An assembly of the gods of the Four Great Kings. An assembly of the gods of the Thirty-Three. An assembly of Māras. An assembly of Brahmās.

I recall having approached an assembly of hundreds of aristocrats. There I used to sit with them, converse, and engage in discussion. And my appearance and voice became just like theirs. I educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk. But when I spoke they didn't know: 'Who is this that speaks? Is it a god or a human?' And when my Dhamma talk was finished I vanished. But when I vanished they didn't know: 'Who was that who vanished? Was it a god or a human?'

I recall having approached an assembly of hundreds of brahmins ... householders ... ascetics ... the gods of the Four Great Kings ... the gods of the Thirty-Three ... Māras ... Brahmās. There too I used to sit with them, converse, and engage in discussion. And my appearance and voice became just like theirs. I educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk. But when I spoke they didn't know: 'Who is this that speaks? Is it a god or a human?' And when my Dhamma talk was finished I vanished. But when I vanished they didn't know: 'Who was that who vanished? Was it a god or a human?'

These are the eight assemblies.

18. Eight Dimensions of Mastery

Ānanda, there are these eight dimensions of mastery. What eight?

Perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limited, both pretty and ugly.

Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’
This is the first dimension of mastery.

Perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’
This is the second dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limited, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’
This is the third dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’
This is the fourth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. They’re like a flax flower that’s blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that’s smoothed on both sides, blue, with blue color, blue hue, and

blue tint. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’ This is the fifth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. They’re like a champak flower that’s yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that’s smoothed on both sides, yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’ This is the sixth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. They’re like a scarlet mallow flower that’s red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that’s smoothed on

both sides, red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’ This is the seventh dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. They’re like the morning star that’s white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that’s smoothed on both sides, white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’ This is the eighth dimension of mastery.

These are the eight dimensions of mastery.

19. The Eight Liberations

Ānanda, there are these eight liberations. What eight?

Having physical form, they see visions. This is the first liberation.

Not perceiving form internally, they see visions externally. This is the second liberation.

They're focused only on beauty. This is the third liberation.

Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fourth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they

enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing at all’, they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is the eighth liberation.

These are the eight liberations.

Ānanda, this one time, when I was first awakened, I was staying near Uruvelā at the goatherd’s banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River. Then Māra the wicked

approached me, stood to one side, and said: ‘Sir, may the Blessed One now become fully extinguished! May the Holy One now become fully extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become fully extinguished.’ When he had spoken, I said to Māra:

‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have monk disciples ... nun disciples ... layman disciples ... laywoman disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned.

Not until my spiritual path is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans.’

Today, just now at the Cāpāla shrine Māra the Wicked approached me once more with the same request, reminding me of my former statement, and saying that those conditions had been fulfilled.

When he had spoken, I said to Māra: ‘Relax, Wicked One. The final extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon. Three months from now the Realized One will finally be extinguished.’ So today, just now at the Cāpāla tree shrine, mindful and aware, I surrendered the life force.”

20. The Appeal of Ānanda

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, “Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.”

“Enough now, Ānanda. Do not beg the Realized One. Now is not the time to beg the Realized One.”

For a second time ... For a third time, Ānanda said to the Buddha, “Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One

please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.”

“Ānanda, do you have faith in the Realized One’s awakening?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then why do you keep pressing me up to the third time?”

“Sir, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized

One could live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon.””

“Do you have faith, Ānanda?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Therefore, Ānanda, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone. For even though the Realized One dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign, you didn’t beg me to remain for the eon, or what’s left of it. If you had begged me, I would have refused you twice, but consented on the third time. Therefore, Ānanda, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone.

Ānanda, this one time I was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain. There I said to you: ‘Ānanda, Rājagaha is lovely, and so is the Vulture’s Peak. Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon or

what's left of the eon. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what's left of the eon.' But you didn't get it, even though I dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. You didn't beg me to remain for the eon, or what's left of it. If you had begged me, I would have refused you twice, but consented on the third time. Therefore, Ānanda, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone.

Ānanda, this one time I was staying right there near Rājagaha, at the Gotama banyan tree ... at Bandit's Cliff ... in the Sattapaṇṇi cave on the slopes of Vebhara ... at the Black rock on the slopes of Isigili ... in the Cool Grove, under the Snake's Hood Grotto ... in the Hot Springs Monastery ... in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground ... in Jīvaka's mango grove ... in the Maddakucchi deer park ...

And in each place I said to you: ‘Ānanda, Rājagaha is lovely, and so are all these places. ... If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon.’ But you didn’t get it, even though I dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. You didn’t beg me to remain for the eon, or what’s left of it.

Ānanda, this one time I was staying right here near Vesālī, at the Udena shrine ... at the Gotamaka shrine ... at the Sattamba shrine ... at the Many Sons shrine ... at the Sārandada shrine ... and just now, today at the Cāpāla shrine. There I said to you: ‘Ānanda, Vesālī is lovely. And the Udena, Gotamaka, Sattamba, Bahuputta, Sārandada, and Cāpāla shrines are all lovely. Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases of psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and

properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what's left of the eon.' But you didn't get it, even though I dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. You didn't beg me to remain for the eon, or what's left of it, saying: 'Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.'

If you had begged me, I would have refused you twice, but consented on the third time. Therefore, Ānanda, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone.

Did I not prepare for this when I explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to fall apart should not fall apart? The Realized One has discarded, eliminated, released, given up, relinquished, and surrendered the life force. He

has definitively stated: ‘The final extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon. Three months from now the Realized One will finally be extinguished.’ It’s not possible for the Realized One, for the sake of life, to take back the life force once it has been given up like that.

Come, Ānanda, let’s go to the Great Wood, the hall with the peaked roof.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied.

So the Buddha went with Ānanda to the hall with the peaked roof, and said to him, “Go, Ānanda, gather all the mendicants staying in the vicinity of Vesālī together in the assembly hall.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. He did what the Buddha asked, went up to him, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, “Sir, the mendicant Saṅgha has assembled. Please, sir, go at your convenience.”

Then the Buddha went to the assembly hall, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants:

“So, mendicants, having carefully memorized those things I have taught you from my direct knowledge, you should cultivate, develop, and make much of them so that this spiritual practice may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. And what are those things I have taught from my direct knowledge? They are: the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, the four right efforts, the four bases of psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path.

These are the things I have taught from my direct knowledge. Having carefully memorized them, you should cultivate, develop, and make much of them so that this spiritual practice may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and

happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants:

“Come now, mendicants, I say to you all: ‘Conditions fall apart. Persist with diligence.’ The final extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon. Three months from now the Realized One will finally be extinguished.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“I’ve reached a ripe old age,
and little of my life is left.
Having given it up, I’ll depart;
I’ve made a refuge for myself.

Diligent and mindful,
be of good virtues, mendicants!
With well-settled thoughts,
take good care of your minds.

Whoever meditates diligently

in this teaching and training,
giving up transmigration through rebirths,
will make an end to suffering.”

21. The Elephant Look

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms. Then, after the meal, on his return from almsround, he turned his whole body, the way that elephants do, to look back at Vesālī. He said to Venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, this will be the last time the Realized One sees Vesālī. Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Bhaṇḍagāma.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied.

Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Bhaṇḍagāma, and stayed there. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants, not understanding and not penetrating four things, both you and I have

wandered and transmigrated for such a very long time. What four? Noble ethics, immersion, wisdom, and freedom. These noble ethics, immersion, wisdom, and freedom have been understood and comprehended. Craving for continued existence has been cut off; the attachment to continued existence is ended; now there are no more future lives.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Ethics, immersion, and wisdom,
and the supreme freedom:
these things have been understood
by Gotama the renowned.

And so the Buddha, having insight,
explained this teaching to the mendicants.
The teacher made an end of suffering,
seeing clearly, he is extinguished.”

And while staying there, too, he often gave this
Dhamma talk to the mendicants:

“Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

22. The Four Great References

When the Buddha had stayed in Bhaṇḍagāma as long as he wished, he addressed Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Hatthigāma.”...

“Let’s go to Ambagāma.”...

“Let’s go to Jambugāma.”...

“Let’s go to Bhoganagara.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants

arrived at Bhoganagara, where he stayed at the Ānanda shrine.

There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, I will teach you the four great references. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Take a mendicant who says: ‘Reverend, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: this is the teaching, this is the monastic law, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss that mendicant’s statement. Instead, you should carefully memorize those words and phrases, then check if they’re included in the discourses or found in the monastic law. If they’re not included in the discourses or found in the monastic law, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is not the word of the Buddha. It has been incorrectly memorized by that mendicant.’ And so you should reject it. If they are included in the

discourses or found in the monastic law, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is the word of the Buddha. It has been correctly memorized by that mendicant.’ You should remember it. This is the first great reference.

Take another mendicant who says: ‘In such-and-such monastery lives a Saṅgha with seniors and leaders. I’ve heard and learned this in the presence of that Saṅgha: this is the teaching, this is the monastic law, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss that mendicant’s statement. Instead, you should carefully memorize those words and phrases, then check if they’re included in the discourses or found in the monastic law. If they’re not included in the discourses or found in the monastic law, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is not the word of the Buddha. It has been incorrectly memorized by that Saṅgha.’ And so you should reject it. If they are included in the discourses or found in the monastic law, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is the word of the Buddha. It has been correctly

memorized by that Saṅgha.’ You should remember it. This is the second great reference.

Take another mendicant who says: ‘In such-and-such monastery there are several senior mendicants who are very learned, knowledgeable in the scriptures, who have memorized the teachings, the monastic law, and the outlines. I’ve heard and learned this in the presence of those senior mendicants: this is the teaching, this is the monastic law, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss that mendicant’s statement. Instead, you should carefully memorize those words and phrases, then check if they’re included in the discourses or found in the monastic law. If they’re not included in the discourses or found in the monastic law, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is not the word of the Buddha. It has not been correctly memorized by those senior mendicants.’ And so you should reject it. If they are included in the discourses and found in the monastic law, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is the word of the Buddha. It has been correctly

memorized by those senior mendicants.’ You should remember it. This is the third great reference.

Take another mendicant who says: ‘In such-and-such monastery there is a single senior mendicant who is very learned and knowledgeable in the scriptures, who has memorized the teachings, the monastic law, and the outlines. I’ve heard and learned this in the presence of that senior mendicant: this is the teaching, this is the monastic law, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss that mendicant’s statement. Instead, you should carefully memorize those words and phrases, then check if they’re included in the discourses or found in the monastic law. If they’re not included in the discourses or found in the monastic law, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is not the word of the Buddha. It has been incorrectly memorized by that senior mendicant.’ And so you should reject it. If they are included in the discourses and found in the monastic law, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is

the word of the Buddha. It has been correctly memorized by that senior mendicant.’ You should remember it. This is the fourth great reference.

These are the four great references. You should remember them.”

And while staying at the Ānanda shrine, too, the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants:

“Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

23. On Cunda the Smith

When the Buddha had stayed in Bhoganagara as long as he wished, he addressed Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Pāvā.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Pāvā, where he stayed in Cunda the smith’s mango grove.

Cunda heard that the Buddha had arrived and was staying in his mango grove. Then he went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk. Then Cunda said to the Buddha, “Sir, may the Buddha together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow’s meal from me.” The Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Cunda got up from his seat, bowed, and

respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

And when the night had passed Cunda had a variety of delicious foods prepared in his own home, and plenty of pork on the turn. Then he had the Buddha informed of the time, saying, “Sir, it’s time. The meal is ready.”

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of Cunda together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed Cunda, “Cunda, please serve me with the pork on the turn that you’ve prepared. And serve the mendicant Saṅgha with the other foods.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Cunda, and did as he was asked.

Then the Buddha addressed Cunda, “Cunda, any pork on the turn that’s left over, you should bury it in a pond. I don’t see anyone in this world—with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this

population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who could properly digest it except for the Realized One.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Cunda. He did as he was asked, then came back to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk, after which he got up from his seat and left.

After the Buddha had eaten Cunda’s meal, he fell severely ill with bloody dysentery, struck by dreadful pains, close to death. But he endured unperturbed, with mindfulness and situational awareness. Then he addressed Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Kusinārā.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied.

I’ve heard that after eating
the meal of Cunda the smith,
the wise one fell severely ill,
with pains, close to death.

A severe sickness struck the Teacher who had eaten the pork on the turn. While still purging the Buddha said: “I’ll go to the citadel of Kusinārā.”

24. Bringing a Drink

Then the Buddha left the road and went to the root of a certain tree, where he addressed Ānanda, “Please, Ānanda, fold my outer robe in four and spread it out for me. I am tired and will sit down.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda, and did as he was asked. The Buddha sat on the seat spread out.

When he was seated he said to Venerable Ānanda, “Please, Ānanda, fetch me some water. I am thirsty and will drink.”

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, “Sir, just now around five hundred carts have passed by. The shallow water has been churned up by their wheels, and it flows cloudy and murky. The Kakutthā river is not far away,

with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. There the Buddha can drink and cool his limbs.”

For a second time, the Buddha asked Ānanda for a drink, and for a second time Ānanda suggested going to the Kakutthā river.

And for a third time, the Buddha said to Ānanda, “Please, Ānanda, fetch me some water. I am thirsty and will drink.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Taking his bowl he went to the river. Now, though the shallow water in that creek had been churned up by wheels, and flowed cloudy and murky, when Ānanda approached it flowed transparent, clear, and unclouded.

Then Ānanda thought, “It’s incredible, it’s amazing! The Realized One has such psychic power and might! For though the shallow water in that creek had been churned up by wheels, and flowed cloudy and murky, when I approached it

flowed transparent, clear, and unclouded.” Gathering a bowl of drinking water he went back to the Buddha, and said to him, “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! The Realized One has such psychic power and might! Just now, though the shallow water in that creek had been churned up by wheels, and flowed cloudy and murky, when I approached it flowed transparent, clear, and unclouded. Drink the water, Blessed One! Drink the water, Holy One!” So the Buddha drank the water.

25. On Pukkusa the Malla

Now at that time Pukkusa the Malla, a disciple of Āḷāra Kālāma, was traveling along the road from Kusinārā and Pāvā. He saw the Buddha sitting at the root of a certain tree. He went up to him, bowed, sat down to one side, and said, “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! Those who have gone forth remain in such peaceful meditations.

Once it so happened that Āḷāra Kālāma, while traveling along a road, left the road and sat at the

root of a nearby tree for the day's meditation. Then around five hundred carts passed by right next to Āḷāra Kālāma. Then a certain person coming behind those carts went up to Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him: 'Sir, didn't you see the five hundred carts pass by?'

'No, friend, I didn't see them.'

'But sir, didn't you hear a sound?'

'No, friend, I didn't hear a sound.'

'But sir, were you asleep?'

'No, friend, I wasn't asleep.'

'But sir, were you conscious?'

'Yes, friend.' 'So, sir, while conscious and awake you neither saw nor heard a sound as five hundred carts passed by right next to you? Why sir, even your outer robe is covered with dust!'

‘Yes, friend.’

Then that person thought: ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! Those who have gone forth remain in such peaceful meditations, in that, while conscious and awake he neither saw nor heard a sound as five hundred carts passed by right next to him.’ And after declaring his lofty confidence in Āḷāra Kālāma, he left.”

“What do you think, Pukkusa? Which is harder and more challenging to do while conscious and awake: to neither see nor hear a sound as five hundred carts pass by right next to you? Or to neither see nor hear a sound as it’s raining and pouring, lightning’s flashing, and thunder’s cracking?”

“What do five hundred carts matter, or six hundred, or seven hundred, or eight hundred, or nine hundred, or a thousand, or even a hundred thousand carts? It’s far harder and more challenging to neither see nor hear a sound as it’s

raining and pouring, lightning's flashing, and thunder's cracking!"

"This one time, Pukkusa, I was staying near Ātumā in a threshing-hut. At that time it was raining and pouring, lightning was flashing, and thunder was cracking. And not far from the threshing-hut two farmers who were brothers were killed, as well as four oxen. Then a large crowd came from Ātumā to the place where that happened.

Now at that time I came out of the threshing-hut and was walking mindfully in the open near the door of the hut. Then having left that crowd, a certain person approached me, bowed, and stood to one side. I said to them, 'Why, friend, has this crowd gathered?'

'Just now, sir, it was raining and pouring, lightning was flashing, and thunder was cracking. And two farmers who were brothers were killed, as well as four oxen. Then this crowd gathered here. But sir, where were you?'

‘I was right here, friend.’

‘But sir, did you see?’

‘No, friend, I didn’t see anything.’

‘But sir, didn’t you hear a sound?’

‘No, friend, I didn’t hear a sound.’

‘But sir, were you asleep?’

‘No, friend, I wasn’t asleep.’

‘But sir, were you conscious?’

‘Yes, friend.’

‘So, sir, while conscious and awake you neither saw nor heard a sound as it was raining and pouring, lightning was flashing, and thunder was cracking?’

‘Yes, friend.’

Then that person thought: ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! Those who have gone forth remain in such peaceful meditations, in that, while conscious and awake he neither saw nor heard a sound as it was raining and pouring, lightning was flashing, and thunder was cracking.’ And after declaring their lofty confidence in me, they bowed and respectfully circled me, keeping me on their right, before leaving.”

When he said this, Pukkusa said to him, “Any confidence I had in Ālāra Kālāma I sweep away as in a strong wind, or float away as down a swift stream. Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

Then Pukkusa addressed a certain man, “Please, my man, fetch a pair of ready to wear polished golden garments.”

“Yes, sir,” replied that man, and did as he was asked. Then Pukkusa brought the garments to the Buddha, “Sir, please accept this pair of ready to wear polished golden garments from me out of compassion.”

“Well then, Pukkusa, clothe me in one, and Ānanda in the other.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Pukkusa, and did so.

Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired Pukkusa the Malla with a Dhamma talk, after which he got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha before leaving.

Then, not long after Pukkusa had left, Ānanda placed the pair of golden garments on the Buddha’s body. But when placed on the Buddha’s

body they seemed to lose their shine. Then Ānanda said to the Buddha, “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how pure and bright is the color of the Realized One’s skin. When this pair of ready to wear polished golden garments is placed on the Buddha’s body they seem to lose their shine.”

“That’s so true, Ānanda, that’s so true! There are two times when the color of the Realized One’s skin becomes extra pure and bright. What two? The night when a Realized One understands the supreme perfect awakening; and the night he becomes fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over. These are the are two times when the color of the Realized One’s skin becomes extra pure and bright.

Today, Ānanda, in the last watch of the night, between a pair of sal trees in the sal forest of the Mallas at Upavattana near Kusinārā, shall be the Realized One’s full extinguishment. Come, Ānanda, let’s go to the Kakutthā River.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied.

A pair of golden polished garments
was presented by Pukkusa;
when the teacher was clothed with them,
his golden skin glowed bright.

Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants went to the Kakutthā River. He plunged into the river and bathed and drank. And when he had emerged, he went to the mango grove, where he addressed Venerable Cundaka, “Please, Cundaka, fold my outer robe in four and spread it out for me. I am tired and will lie down.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Cundaka, and did as he was asked. And then the Buddha laid down in the lion’s posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware, and focused on the time of getting up. But Cundaka sat down right there in front of the Buddha.

Having gone to Kakutthā Creek,
whose water was transparent, sweet, and clear,

the Teacher, being tired, plunged in,
the Realized One, without compare in the world.

And after bathing and drinking the Teacher
emerged.

Before the group of mendicants, in the middle, the
Buddha,
the Teacher who rolled forth the present
dispensation,
the great hermit went to the mango grove.

He addressed the mendicant named Cundaka:
“Spread out my folded robe so I can lie down.”
The evolved one urged Cunda,
who quickly spread the folded robe.
The Teacher lay down so tired,
while Cunda sat there before him.
Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda:

“Now it may happen, Ānanda, that others may
give rise to some regret for Cunda the smith: ‘It’s
your loss, friend Cunda, it’s your misfortune, in
that the Realized One became fully extinguished
after eating his last almsmeal from you.’ You

should dispel remorse in Cunda the smith like this: ‘You’re fortunate, friend Cunda, you’re so very fortunate, in that the Realized One became fully extinguished after eating his last almsmeal from you. I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha.

There are two almsmeal offerings that have identical fruit and result, and are more fruitful and beneficial than other almsmeal offerings. What two? The almsmeal after eating which a Realized One understands the supreme perfect awakening; and the almsmeal after eating which he becomes fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over. These two almsmeal offerings have identical fruit and result, and are more fruitful and beneficial than other almsmeal offerings.

You’ve accumulated a deed that leads to long life, beauty, happiness, fame, heaven, and sovereignty.’ That’s how you should dispel remorse in Cunda the smith.”

Then, knowing the meaning of this, on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

“A giver’s merit grows;
enmity doesn’t build up when you have self-control.

A skillful person gives up bad things—
with the end of greed, hate, and delusion, they’re extinguished.”

26. The Pair of Sal Trees

Then the Buddha said to Ānanda, “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to the far shore of the Golden River, and on to the sal forest of the Mallas at Upavattana near Kusinārā.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. And that’s where they went. Then the Buddha addressed Ānanda, “Please, Ānanda, set up a cot for me between the twin sal trees, with my head to the north. I am tired and will lie down.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda, and did as he was asked. And then the Buddha laid down in the lion’s posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware.

Now at that time the twin sal trees were in full blossom with flowers out of season. They sprinkled and bestrewed the Realized One’s body in honor of the Realized One. And the flowers of the heavenly Flame Tree fell from the sky, and they too sprinkled and bestrewed the Realized One’s body in honor of the Realized One. And heavenly sandalwood powder fell from the sky, and it too sprinkled and bestrewed the Realized One’s body in honor of the Realized One. And heavenly music played in the sky in honor of the Realized One. And heavenly choirs sang in the sky in honor of the Realized One.

Then the Buddha pointed out to Ānanda what was happening, adding: “That’s not how the Realized One is honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed. Any monk or nun or male or female lay follower who practices in line with the

teachings, practicing properly, living in line with the teachings—they honor, respect, revere, venerate, and esteem the Realized One with the highest honor. So Ānanda, you should train like this: ‘We shall practice in line with the teachings, practicing properly, living in line with the teaching.’

27. The Monk Upavāṇa

Now at that time Venerable Upavāṇa was standing in front of the Buddha fanning him. Then the Buddha made him move, “Move over, mendicant, don’t stand in front of me.”

Ānanda thought, “This Venerable Upavāṇa has been the Buddha’s attendant for a long time, close to him, living in his presence. Yet in his final hour the Buddha makes him move, saying: ‘Move over, mendicant, don’t stand in front of me.’ What is the cause, what is the reason for this?”

Then Ānanda said to the Buddha, “This Venerable Upavāṇa has been the Buddha’s

attendant for a long time, close to him, living in his presence. Yet in his final hour the Buddha makes him move, saying: ‘Move over, mendicant, don’t stand in front of me.’ What is the cause, sir, what is the reason for this?”

“Most of the deities from ten solar systems have gathered to see the Realized One. For twelve leagues all around this sal grove there’s no spot, not even a fraction of a hair’s tip, that’s not crowded full of illustrious deities. The deities are complaining: ‘We’ve come such a long way to see the Realized One! Only rarely do Realized Ones arise in the world, perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas. This very day, in the last watch of the night, the Realized One will become fully extinguished. And this illustrious mendicant is standing in front of the Buddha blocking the view. We won’t get to see the Realized One in his final hour!’”

“But sir, what kind of deities are you thinking of?”

“There are, Ānanda, deities—both in the sky and on the earth—who are percipient of the earth. With hair disheveled and arms raised, they fall down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamenting: ‘Too soon the Blessed One will become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One will become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer will vanish from the world!’

But the deities who are free of desire endure, mindful and aware, thinking: ‘Conditions are impermanent. How could it possibly be otherwise?’”

28. The Four Inspiring Places

“Previously, sir, when mendicants had completed the rainy season residence in various districts they came to see the Realized One. We got to see the esteemed mendicants, and to pay homage to them. But when the Buddha has passed, we won’t get to see the esteemed mendicants or to pay homage to them.”

“Ānanda, a faithful gentleman should go to see these four inspiring places. What four? Thinking: ‘Here the Realized One was born!’—that is an inspiring place. Thinking: ‘Here the Realized One became awakened as a supreme fully awakened Buddha!’—that is an inspiring place. Thinking: ‘Here the supreme Wheel of Dhamma was rolled forth by the Realized One!’—that is an inspiring place. Thinking: ‘Here the Realized One became fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over!’—that is an inspiring place. These are the four inspiring places that a faithful gentleman should go to see.

Faithful monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen will come, and think: ‘Here the Realized One was born!’ and ‘Here the Realized One became awakened as a supreme fully awakened Buddha!’ and ‘Here the supreme Wheel of Dhamma was rolled forth by the Realized One!’ and ‘Here the Realized One became fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over!’ Anyone who passes away

while on pilgrimage to these shrines will, when their body breaks up, after death, be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.”

29. Ānanda’s Questions

“Sir, how do we proceed when it comes to females?”

“Without seeing, Ānanda.”

“But when seeing, how to proceed?”

“Without getting into conversation, Ānanda.”

“But when in a conversation, how to proceed?”

“Be mindful, Ānanda.”

“Sir, how do we proceed when it comes to the Realized One’s corpse?”

“Don’t get involved in the rites for venerating the Realized One’s corpse, Ānanda. Please, Ānanda, you must all strive and practice for your own

goal! Meditate diligent, keen, and resolute for your own goal! There are astute aristocrats, brahmins, and householders who are devoted to the Realized One. They will perform the rites for venerating the Realized One's corpse."

"But sir, how to proceed when it comes to the Realized One's corpse?"

"Proceed in the same way as they do for the corpse of a wheel-turning monarch."

"But how do they proceed with a wheel-turning monarch's corpse?"

"They wrap a wheel-turning monarch's corpse with unworn cloth, then with uncarded cotton, then again with unworn cloth. In this way they wrap the corpse with five hundred double-layers. Then they place it in an iron case filled with oil and close it up with another case. Then, having built a funeral pyre out of all kinds of fragrant substances, they cremate the corpse. They build a monument for the wheel-turning monarch at the

crossroads. That's how they proceed with a wheel-turning monarch's corpse. Proceed in the same way with the Realized One's corpse. A monument for the Realized One is to be built at the crossroads. When someone there lifts up garlands or fragrance or powder, or bows, or inspires confidence in their heart, that will be for their lasting welfare and happiness.

30. Persons Worthy of Monument

Ānanda, these four are worthy of a monument. What four? A Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha; a Buddha awakened for themselves; a disciple of a Realized One; and a wheel-turning monarch.

And for what reason is a Realized One worthy of a monument? So that many people will inspire confidence in their hearts, thinking: 'This is the monument for that Blessed One, perfected and fully awakened!' And having done so, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a

good place, a heavenly realm. It is for this reason that a Realized One is worthy of a monument.

And for what reason is a Buddha awakened for themselves worthy of a monument? So that many people will inspire confidence in their hearts, thinking: ‘This is the monument for that Buddha awakened for himself!’ And having done so, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It is for this reason that a Buddha awakened for himself is worthy of a monument.

And for what reason is a Realized One’s disciple worthy of a monument? So that many people will inspire confidence in their hearts, thinking: ‘This is the monument for that Blessed One’s disciple!’ And having done so, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It is for this reason that a Realized One’s disciple is worthy of a monument.

And for what reason is a wheel-turning monarch worthy of a monument? So that many people will

inspire confidence in their hearts, thinking: ‘This is the monument for that just and principled king!’ And having done so, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It is for this reason that a wheel-turning monarch is worthy of a monument.

These four are worthy of a monument.”

31. Ānanda’s Incredible Qualities

Then Venerable Ānanda entered a dwelling, and stood there leaning against the door-jamb and crying, “Oh! I’m still only a trainee with work left to do; and my Teacher’s about to become fully extinguished, he who is so kind to me!”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, “Mendicants, where is Ānanda?”

“Sir, Ānanda has entered a dwelling, and stands there leaning against the door-jamb and crying: ‘Oh! I’m still only a trainee with work left to do;

and my Teacher's about to become fully extinguished, he who is so kind to me!"

So the Buddha addressed a certain monk, "Please, monk, in my name tell Ānanda that the teacher summons him."

"Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to Ānanda and said to him, "Reverend Ānanda, the teacher summons you."

"Yes, reverend," Ānanda replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

"Enough, Ānanda! Do not grieve, do not lament. Did I not prepare for this when I explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to fall apart should not fall apart, even the Realized One's body? For a long time, Ānanda, you've treated the Realized One with deeds of body, speech, and mind that are loving,

beneficial, pleasant, whole-hearted, and limitless. You have done good deeds, Ānanda. Devote yourself to meditation, and you will soon be free of defilements.”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants:

“The Buddhas of the past or the future have attendants who are no better than Ānanda is for me. Ānanda is astute, he is intelligent. He knows the time for monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, king’s ministers, religious founders, and the disciples of religious founders to visit the Realized One.

There are these four incredible and amazing things about Ānanda. What four? If an assembly of monks goes to see Ānanda, they’re uplifted by seeing him and uplifted by hearing him speak. And when he falls silent, they’ve never had enough. If an assembly of nuns ... laymen ... or laywomen goes to see Ānanda, they’re uplifted by seeing him and uplifted by hearing him speak. And when he falls silent, they’ve never had

enough. These are the four incredible and amazing things about Ānanda.

There are these four incredible and amazing things about a wheel-turning monarch. What four? If an assembly of aristocrats goes to see a wheel-turning monarch, they're uplifted by seeing him and uplifted by hearing him speak. And when he falls silent, they've never had enough. If an assembly of brahmins ... householders ... or ascetics goes to see a wheel-turning monarch, they're uplifted by seeing him and uplifted by hearing him speak. And when he falls silent, they've never had enough.

In the same way, there are those four incredible and amazing things about Ānanda.”

32. Teaching the Discourse on Mahāsudassana

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha:

“Sir, please don’t become fully extinguished in this little hamlet, this jungle hamlet, this branch hamlet. There are other great cities such as Campā, Rājagaha, Sāvattihī, Sāketa, Kosambī, and Benares. Let the Buddha become fully extinguished there. There are many well-to-do aristocrats, brahmins, and householders there who are devoted to the Buddha. They will perform the rites of venerating the Realized One’s corpse.”

“Don’t say that Ānanda! Don’t say that this is a little hamlet, a jungle hamlet, a branch hamlet.

Once upon a time there was a king named Mahāsudassana who was a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extended to all four sides, he achieved stability in the country, and he possessed the seven treasures. His capital was this Kusinārā, which at the time was named Kusāvātī. It stretched for twelve leagues from east to west, and seven leagues from north to south. The royal capital of Kusāvātī was successful, prosperous,

populous, full of people, with plenty of food. It was just like Āḷakamandā, the royal capital of the gods, which is successful, prosperous, populous, full of spirits, with plenty of food. Kusāvātī was never free of ten sounds by day or night, namely: the sound of elephants, horses, chariots, drums, clay drums, arched harps, singing, horns, gongs, and handbells; and the cry: ‘Eat, drink, be merry!’ as the tenth.

Go, Ānanda, into Kusinārā and inform the Mallas: ‘This very day, Vāsetṭhas, in the last watch of the night, the Realized One will become fully extinguished. Come forth, Vāsetṭhas! Come forth, Vāsetṭhas! Don’t regret it later, thinking: ‘The Realized One became fully extinguished in our own village district, but we didn’t get a chance to see him in his final hour.’”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Then he robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Kusinārā with a companion.

33. The Mallas Pay Homage

Now at that time the Mallas of Kusinārā were sitting together at the meeting hall on some business. Ānanda went up to them, and announced: “This very day, Vāsetṭhas, in the last watch of the night, the Realized One will become fully extinguished. Come forth, Vāsetṭhas! Come forth, Vāsetṭhas! Don’t regret it later, thinking: ‘The Realized One became fully extinguished in our own village district, but we didn’t get a chance to see him in his final hour.’”

When they heard what Ānanda had to say, the Mallas, their sons, daughters-in-law, and wives became distraught, saddened, and grief-stricken. And some, with hair disheveled and arms raised, falling down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamented, “Too soon the Blessed One will become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One will become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer will vanish from the world!”

Then the Mallas, their sons, daughters-in-law, and wives, distraught, saddened, and grief-stricken went to the Mallian sal grove at Upavattana and approached Ānanda.

Then Ānanda thought, “If I have the Mallas pay homage to the Buddha one by one, they won’t be finished before first light. I’d better separate them family by family and then have them pay homage, saying: ‘Sir, the Malla named so-and-so with children, wives, retinue, and ministers bows with his head at your feet.’” And so that’s what he did. So by this means Ānanda got the Mallas to finish paying homage to the Buddha in the first watch of the night.

34. On Subhadda the Wanderer

Now at that time a wanderer named Subhadda was residing near Kusinārā. He heard that on that very day, in the last watch of the night, the ascetic Gotama would become fully extinguished. He thought: “I have heard that brahmins of the past who were elderly and senior, the teachers of

teachers, said: ‘Only rarely do Realized Ones arise in the world, perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas.’ And this very day, in the last watch of the night, the ascetic Gotama will become fully extinguished. This state of uncertainty has come up in me. I am quite confident that the Buddha is capable of teaching me so that I can give up this state of uncertainty.”

Then Subhadda went to the Mallian sal grove at Upavattana, approached Ānanda, and said to him, “Master Ānanda, I have heard that brahmins of the past who were elderly and senior, the teachers of teachers, said: ‘Only rarely do Realized Ones arise in the world, perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas.’ And this very day, in the last watch of the night, the ascetic Gotama will become fully extinguished. This state of uncertainty has come up in me. I am quite confident that the Buddha is capable of teaching me so that I can give up this state of uncertainty. Master Ānanda, please let me see the ascetic Gotama.”

When he had spoken, Ānanda said, “Enough, Reverend Subhadda, do not trouble the Realized One. He is tired.”

For a second time, and a third time, Subhadda asked Ānanda, and a third time Ānanda refused. The Buddha heard that discussion between Ānanda and Subhadda. He said to Ānanda, “Enough, Ānanda, don’t obstruct Subhadda; let him see the Realized One. For whatever he asks me, he will only be looking for understanding, not trouble. And he will quickly understand any answer I give to his question.”

So Ānanda said to the wanderer Subhadda, “Go, Reverend Subhadda, the Buddha is taking the time for you.”

Then the wanderer Subhadda went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

“Master Gotama, there are those ascetics and brahmins who lead an order and a community, and teach a community. They’re well-known and famous religious founders, regarded as holy by many people. Namely: Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, Pakudha Kaccāyana, and Ajita Kesakambala. According to their own claims, did all of them have direct knowledge, or none of them, or only some?”

“Enough, Subhadda, let that be. I shall teach you the Dhamma. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, sir,” Subhadda replied. The Buddha said this:

“Subhadda, in whatever teaching and training the noble eightfold path is not found, there is no true ascetic found, no second ascetic, no third ascetic, and no fourth ascetic. In whatever teaching and training the noble eightfold path is found, there is a true ascetic found, a second ascetic, a third

ascetic, and a fourth ascetic. In this teaching and training the noble eightfold path is found. Only here is there a true ascetic, here a second ascetic, here a third ascetic, and here a fourth ascetic. Other sects are empty of ascetics.

Were these mendicants to practice well, the world would not be empty of perfected ones.

I was twenty-nine years of age, Subaddha,
when I went forth to discover what is skillful.
It's been over fifty years
since I went forth.
I am the one who points out the proper teaching:
Outside of here there is no true ascetic.

Were these mendicants to practice well, the world would not be empty of perfected ones.”

When he had spoken, Subhadda said to the Buddha, “Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see

what's there, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence?"

"Subhadda, if someone formerly ordained in another sect wishes to take the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training, they must spend four months on probation. When four months have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, they'll give the going forth, the ordination into monkhood. However, I have recognized individual differences in this matter."

"Sir, if four months probation are required in such a case, I'll spend four years on probation. When four years have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, let them give me the going forth, the ordination into monkhood."

Then the Buddha said to Ānanda, "Well then, Ānanda, give Subhadda the going forth."

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied.

Then Subhadda said to Ānanda, “You’re so fortunate, Reverend Ānanda, so very fortunate, to be anointed here in the Teacher’s presence as his pupil!” And the wanderer Subhadda received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha’s presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Subhadda, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

He understood: “Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is no return to any state of existence.” And Venerable Subhadda became one of the perfected. He was the last personal disciple of the Buddha.

35. The Buddha's Last Words

Then the Buddha addressed Venerable Ānanda:

“Now, Ānanda, some of you might think: ‘The teacher’s dispensation has passed. Now we have no Teacher.’ But you should not see it like this. The teaching and training that I have taught and pointed out for you shall be your Teacher after my passing.

After my passing, mendicants ought not address each other as ‘reverend’, as they do today. A more senior mendicant ought to address a more junior mendicant by name or clan, or by saying ‘reverend’. A more junior mendicant ought to address a more senior mendicant using ‘sir’ or ‘venerable’.

If it wishes, after my passing the Saṅgha may abolish the lesser and minor training rules.

After my passing, give the prime punishment to the mendicant Channa.”

“But sir, what is the prime punishment?”

“Channa may say what he likes, but the mendicants should not advise or instruct him.”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, “Perhaps even a single mendicant has doubt or uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the path, or the practice. So ask, mendicants! Don’t regret it later, thinking: ‘We were in the Teacher’s presence and we weren’t able to ask the Buddha a question.’”

When this was said, the mendicants kept silent.

For a second time, and a third time the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Perhaps even a single mendicant has doubt or uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the path, or the practice. So ask, mendicants! Don’t regret it later, thinking: ‘We were in the Teacher’s presence and we weren’t able to ask the Buddha a question.’”

For a third time, the mendicants kept silent. Then the Buddha said to the mendicants,

“Mendicants, perhaps you don’t ask out of respect for the Teacher. So let a friend tell a friend.”

When this was said, the mendicants kept silent.

Then Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! I am quite confident that there’s not even a single mendicant in this Saṅgha who has doubt or uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the path, or the practice.”

“Ānanda, you speak from faith. But the Realized One knows that there’s not even a single mendicant in this Saṅgha who has doubt or uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the path, or the practice. Even the last of these five hundred mendicants is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: “Come now, mendicants, I say to you all: ‘Conditions fall apart. Persist with diligence.’”

These were the Realized One’s last words.

36. The Full Extinguishment

Then the Buddha entered the first absorption. Emerging from that, he entered the second absorption. Emerging from that, he successively entered into and emerged from the third absorption, the fourth absorption, the dimension of infinite space, the dimension of infinite consciousness, the dimension of nothingness, and the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Then he entered the cessation of perception and feeling.

Then Venerable Ānanda said to Venerable Anuruddha, “Venerable Anuruddha, has the Buddha become fully extinguished?”

“No, Reverend Ānanda. He has entered the cessation of perception and feeling.”

Then the Buddha emerged from the cessation of perception and feeling and entered the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Emerging from that, he successively entered into and emerged from the dimension of nothingness, the dimension of infinite consciousness, the dimension of infinite space, the fourth absorption, the third absorption, the second absorption, and the first absorption. Emerging from that, he successively entered into and emerged from the second absorption and the third absorption. Then he entered the fourth absorption. Emerging from that the Buddha immediately became fully extinguished.

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, along with the full extinguishment there was a great earthquake, awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky. When the Buddha became fully extinguished, Brahmā Sahampati recited this verse:

“All creatures in this world
must lay down this bag of bones.

For even a Teacher such as this,
unrivaled in the world,
the Realized One, attained to power,
the Buddha became fully extinguished.”
When the Buddha became fully extinguished,
Sakka, lord of gods, recited this verse:

“Oh! Conditions are impermanent,
their nature is to rise and fall;
having arisen, they cease;
their stilling is true bliss.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished,
Venerable Anuruddha recited this verse:

“There was no more breathing
for such a one of steady heart.
Imperturbable, committed to peace,
the sage has done his time.

He put up with painful feelings
without flinching.
The liberation of his heart
was like the extinguishing of a lamp.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished,
Venerable Ānanda recited this verse:

“Then there was terror!
Then they had goosebumps!
When the Buddha, endowed with all fine
qualities,
became fully extinguished.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, some of the mendicants there, with arms raised, falling down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamented: “Too soon the Blessed One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer has vanished from the world!” But the mendicants who were free of desire endured, mindful and aware, thinking, “Conditions are impermanent. How could it possibly be otherwise?”

Then Anuruddha addressed the mendicants: “Enough, reverends, do not grieve or lament. Did the Buddha not prepare us for this when he

explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to fall apart should not fall apart? The deities are complaining.”

“But sir, what kind of deities are you thinking of?”

“There are, Ānanda, deities—both in the sky and on the earth—who are percipient of the earth. With hair disheveled and arms raised, they fall down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamenting: ‘Too soon the Blessed One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer has vanished from the world!’ But the deities who are free of desire endure, mindful and aware, thinking: ‘Conditions are impermanent. How could it possibly be otherwise?’”

Ānanda and Anuruddha spent the rest of the night talking about Dhamma.

Then Anuruddha said to Ānanda, “Go, Ānanda, into Kusinārā and inform the Mallas: ‘Vāseṭṭhas, the Buddha has become fully extinguished. Please come at your convenience.’”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Then, in the morning, he robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Kusinārā with a companion.

Now at that time the Mallas of Kusinārā were sitting together at the meeting hall on some business. Ānanda went up to them, and announced, “Vāseṭṭhas, the Buddha has become fully extinguished. Please come at your convenience.”

When they heard what Ānanda had to say, the Mallas, their sons, daughters-in-law, and wives became distraught, saddened, and grief-stricken. And some, with hair disheveled and arms raised, falling down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamented, “Too soon the Blessed One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One has become fully

extinguished! Too soon the seer has vanished from the world!”

37. The Rites of Venerating the Buddha’s Corpse

Then the Mallas ordered their men, “So then, my men, collect fragrances and garlands, and all the musical instruments in Kusinārā.”

Then—taking those fragrances and garlands, all the musical instruments, and five hundred pairs of garments—they went to the Mallian sal grove at Upavattana and approached the Buddha’s corpse. They spent the day honoring, respecting, revering, and venerating the Buddha’s corpse with dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances, and making awnings and setting up pavilions.

Then they thought, “It’s too late to cremate the Buddha’s corpse today. Let’s do it tomorrow.” But they spent the next day the same way, and so too the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth days.

Then on the seventh day they thought, “Honoring, respecting, revering, and venerating the Buddha’s corpse with dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances, let us carry it to the south of the town, and cremate it there outside the town.”

Now at that time eight of the leading Mallas, having bathed their heads and dressed in unworn clothes, said, “We shall lift the Buddha’s corpse.” But they were unable to do so.

The Mallas said to Anuruddha, “What is the cause, Venerable Anuruddha, what is the reason why these eight Mallian leaders are unable to lift the Buddha’s corpse?”

“Vāsetṭhas, you have one plan, but the deities have a different one.”

“But sir, what is the deities’ plan?”

“You plan to carry the Buddha’s corpse to the south of the town while venerating it with dance

and song and music and garlands and fragrances, and cremate it there outside the town. The deities plan to carry the Buddha's corpse to the north of the town while venerating it with heavenly dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances. Then they plan to enter the town by the northern gate, carry it through the center of the town, leave by the eastern gate, and cremate it there at the Mallian shrine named Makuṭabandhana."

"Sir, let it be as the deities plan."

Now at that time the whole of Kusinārā was covered knee-deep with the flowers of the Flame Tree, without gaps even on the filth and rubbish heaps. Then the deities and the Mallas of Kusinārā carried the Buddha's corpse to the north of the town while venerating it with heavenly and human dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances. Then they entered the town by the northern gate, carried it through the center of the town, left by the eastern gate, and deposited the corpse there at the Mallian shrine named Makuṭabandhana.

Then the Mallas said to Anuruddha, “Sir, how do we proceed when it comes to the Realized One’s corpse?”

“Proceed in the same way as they do for the corpse of a wheel-turning monarch.”

“But how do they proceed with a wheel-turning monarch’s corpse?”

“They wrap a wheel-turning monarch’s corpse with unworn cloth, then with uncarded cotton, then again with unworn cloth. In this way they wrap the corpse with five hundred double-layers. Then they place it in an iron case filled with oil and close it up with another case. Then, having built a funeral pyre out of all kinds of fragrant substances, they cremate the corpse. They build a monument for the wheel-turning monarch at the crossroads. That’s how they proceed with a wheel-turning monarch’s corpse. Proceed in the same way with the Realized One’s corpse. A monument for the Realized One is to be built at the crossroads. When someone there lifts up

garlands or fragrance or powder, or bows, or inspires confidence in their heart, that will be for their lasting welfare and happiness.”

Then the Mallas ordered their men, “So then, my men, collect uncarded cotton.”

So the Mallas wrapped the Buddha’s corpse, and placed it in an iron case filled with oil. Then, having built a funeral pyre out of all kinds of fragrant substances, they lifted the corpse on to the pyre.

38. Mahākassapa’s Arrival

Now at that time Venerable Mahākassapa was traveling along the road from Pāvā to Kusinārā together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants. Then he left the road and sat at the root of a tree.

Now at that time a certain Ājīvaka ascetic had picked up a Flame Tree flower in Kusinārā and was traveling along the road to Pāvā.

Mahākassapa saw him coming off in the distance and said to him, “Reverend, might you know about our Teacher?”

“Yes, reverend. Seven days ago the ascetic Gotama became fully extinguished. From there I picked up this Flame Tree flower.” Some of the mendicants there, with arms raised, falling down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamented, “Too soon the Blessed One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer has vanished from the world!” But the mendicants who were free of desire endured, mindful and aware, thinking, “Conditions are impermanent. How could it possibly be otherwise?”

Now at that time a monk named Subhadda, who had gone forth when old, was sitting in that assembly. He said to those mendicants, “Enough, reverends, do not grieve or lament. We’re well rid of that Great Ascetic harassing us: ‘This is allowable for you; this is not allowable for you.’”

Well, now we shall do what we want and not do what we don't want.”

Then Venerable Mahākassapa addressed the mendicants, “Enough, reverends, do not grieve or lament. Did the Buddha not prepare us for this when he explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to fall apart should not fall apart, even the Realized One's body?”

Now at that time four of the leading Mallas, having bathed their heads and dressed in unworn clothes, said, “We shall light the Buddha's funeral pyre.” But they were unable to do so.

The Mallas said to Anuruddha, “What is the cause, Venerable Anuruddha, what is the reason why these four Mallian leaders are unable to light the Buddha's funeral pyre?”

“Vāsetṭhas, the deities have a different plan.”

“But sir, what is the deities’ plan?”

“The deities’ plan is this: Venerable Mahākassapa is traveling along the road from Pāvā to Kusinārā together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants. The Buddha’s funeral pyre shall not burn until he bows with his head at the Buddha’s feet.”

“Sir, let it be as the deities plan.”

Then Venerable Mahākassapa came to the Mallian shrine named Makuṭabandhana at Kusinārā and approached the Buddha’s funeral pyre. Arranging his robe over one shoulder and raising his joined palms, he respectfully circled the Buddha three times, keeping him on his right, and bowed with his head to the Buddha’s feet. And the five hundred mendicants did likewise. And when Mahākassapa and the five hundred mendicants bowed the Buddha’s funeral pyre burst into flames all by itself.

And when the Buddha's corpse was cremated no ash or soot was found from outer or inner skin, flesh, sinews, or synovial fluid. Only the relics remained. It's like when ghee or oil blaze and burn, and neither ashes nor soot are found. In the same way, when the Buddha's corpse was cremated no ash or soot was found from outer or inner skin, flesh, sinews, or synovial fluid. Only the relics remained. And of those five hundred pairs of garments only two were not burnt: the innermost and the outermost. But when the Buddha's corpse was consumed the funeral pyre was extinguished by a stream of water that appeared in the sky, by water dripping from the sal trees, and by the Mallas' fragrant water.

Then the Mallas made a cage of spears for the Buddha's relics in the meeting hall and surrounded it with a buttress of bows. For seven days they honored, respected, revered, and venerated them with dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances.

39. Distributing the Relics

King Ajātasattu of Magadha heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. He sent an envoy to the Mallas of Kusinārā: “The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so am I. I too deserve a share of the Buddha’s relics. I will build a monument for them and conduct a memorial service.”

The Licchavis of Vesālī also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallas of Kusinārā: “The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha’s relics. We will build a monument for them and conduct a memorial service.”

The Sakyans of Kapilavatthu also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallas of Kusinārā: “The Buddha was our foremost relative. We too deserve a share of the Buddha’s

relics. We will build a monument for them and conduct a memorial service.”

The Bulas of Allakappa also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallas of Kusinārā: “The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha’s relics. We will build a monument for them and conduct a memorial service.”

The Koḷiyans of Rāmagāma also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallas of Kusinārā: “The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha’s relics. We will build a monument for them and conduct a memorial service.”

The brahmin of Veṭhadīpa also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. He sent an envoy to the Mallas of Kusinārā: “The Buddha was an aristocrat, and I am a brahmin. I too deserve a share of the

Buddha’s relics. I will build a monument for them and conduct a memorial service.”

The Mallas of Pāvā also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallas of Kusinārā: “The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha’s relics. We will build a monument for them and conduct a memorial service.”

When they had spoken, the Mallas of Kusinārā said to those various groups: “The Buddha became fully extinguished in our village district. We will not give away a share of his relics.”

Then Doṇa the brahmin said to those various groups:

“Hear, sirs, a single word from me.
Our Buddha’s teaching was acceptance.
It would not be good to fight over
a share of the supreme person’s relics.

Let us make eight portions, good sirs,
 rejoicing in unity and harmony.
 Let there be monuments far and wide,
 so many folk may gain faith in the Seer!”

“Well then, brahmin, you yourself should fairly
 divide the Buddha’s relics in eight portions.”

“Yes, sirs,” replied Doṇa to those various groups.
 He divided the relics as asked and said to them,
 “Sirs, please give me the urn, and I shall build a
 monument for it and conduct a memorial
 service.” So they gave Doṇa the urn.

The Moras of Pippalivana heard that the Buddha
 had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They
 sent an envoy to the Mallas of Kusinārā: “The
 Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too
 deserve a share of the Buddha’s relics. We will
 build a monument for them and conduct a
 memorial service.”

“There is no portion of the Buddha’s relics left, they have already been portioned out. Here, take the embers.” So they took the embers.

40. Venerating the Relics

Then King Ajātasattu of Magadha, the Licchavis of Vesālī, the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu, the Bulas of Allakappa, the Koḷiyans of Rāmagāma, the brahmin of Veṭhadīpa, the Mallas of Pāvā, the Mallas of Kusinārā, the brahmin Doṇa, and the Moriyas of Pippalivana built monuments for them and conducted memorial services. Thus there were eight monuments for the relics, a ninth for the urn, and a tenth for the embers. That is how it was in those days.

There were eight shares of the Seer’s relics.
Seven were worshipped throughout India.
But one share of the most excellent of men
was worshipped in Rāmagāma by a dragon king.

One tooth is venerated by the gods of the Three
and Thirty,

and one is worshipped in the city of Gandhāra;
another one in the realm of the Kalinga King,
and one is worshipped by a dragon king.

Through their glory this rich earth
is adorned with the best of offerings.
Thus the Seer's corpse
is well honored by the honorable.
It's venerated by lords of gods, dragons, and
spirits;
and likewise venerated by the finest lords of men.
Honor it with joined palms when you get the
chance,
for a Buddha is rare even in a hundred eons.

Altogether forty even teeth,
and the body hair and head hair,
were carried off individually by gods
across the universe.

Mahāparinibbānasutta DN 16 <https://suttacentral.net/dn16>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato

“The death of one person, mendicants, is regretted by many people. What one person? The Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. This is the one person, mendicants, whose death is regretted by many people.”

Ekapuggalavagga AN 1.170–187 <https://suttacentral.net/an1.170-187>
Translated by Bhikkhu Sujato



KNOWING THE BUDDHA BY HIS WORDS

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“One person, mendicants, arises in the world for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.

*What one person? **The Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.** This is the one person, mendicants, who arises in the world for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.”*

Ekapuggalavagga AN 1.170–187

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