

The Great Chapter

translated by

Anandajoti Bhikkhu



The Great Chapter

(Vinaya Mahākhanda sections 1-4)

Translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

(Ver 1.1 June, 2010)

Table of Contents

Introduction.....3

[I: The First Teachings].....17

[II: Progress of the Sāsana].....72

[III: The Miracles at Uruvelā].....97

[IV: In Rājagaha].....128

Introduction

The text of the first four sections of the Great Chapter in the Discipline collection¹ traces the life and career of the Buddha for a period of about one year after the Complete Awakening, and is one of the earliest sources we have for this period in the Buddha's life.² This section of the text forms a continuous narrative before it is replaced with a detailing of the various duties incumbent on monastics, and other rules for the monks and nuns.³

As the text forms an integral part of the Discipline Collection it appears that it was originally meant to show how the monastic life was established in the first place, how and why it evolved, and what is the relationship between lay supporters and monastics, and only incidentally does it thereby reveal the early part of the Buddha's career.

¹ Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga, Mahākhandhaka, bhāṇavarā 1-4.

² Other sources include the Mahāvastu, the rescension of which is probably around the same time as the Pāli text, and the Lalitavistara, which, though in the form we have it is undoubtedly much younger, nevertheless still contains much material that is old and bears all the signs of authenticity.

³ Even these texts are interspersed with many interesting stories from the life of the Buddha, which I hope to collect together at some point.

The Great Chapter

Although many of the discourses that have been preserved provide contextual information on such matters as where the discourse was given, to whom and for what reason, very few indeed can be placed within a reliable time frame,⁴ and the only other comparable text we have is The Discourse about the Great Emancipation (Mahāparinibbānasutta), which provides a more-or-less continuous narrative detailing the last year of the Buddha's life.⁵

First Section

Our present text opens some time after the Awakening,⁶ with the Buddha still at the foot of the Bodhi Tree, enjoying the bliss of liberation and reflecting to himself on Conditional Origination through the three watches of the night.⁷

⁴ The commentaries go some way to providing this framework, but their reliability is many times questionable.

⁵ A text and translation of this important work was made available last year on this website.

⁶ According to the much later Introduction (Nidāna) to the Jātaka this would have been about four weeks after the Awakening, but there are a number of differences between the earlier and later texts which would make a reconciliation between them difficult, if not impossible, so we cannot rely on this timing.

⁷ It may have been the strength of this remembrance that formed the basis for the later anachronous tradition that the Buddha spent some time in the first few weeks reviewing in detail all seven books of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

Introduction

His first encounter with another person only comes when he moves to another tree in the same area, where he meets someone significantly enquiring about the real meaning of being a brāhmaṇa. It is here that we see the Buddha for the first time explicitly redefining the given terms of his day by explaining the true meaning of being a brāhmaṇa, which has nothing to do with the pretensions of birth, of course.

There is no record of the brāhmaṇa's response to the teaching but he evidently did not become a lay follower at the time, otherwise it would have been recorded, so we can perhaps infer that he was unconvinced.

The Buddha's next meeting was at the root of another tree in the same vicinity, and this time with the Dragon-King Mucilinda, who protected him from unseasonable weather. These first 3 sections are parallel to five discourses in the Udāna 1:1-4, and 2:1, which all end in an exalted utterance being made by the Buddha.

The next section tells how the Buddha met with two merchants, Tapussa and Bhallika, who were apparently traveling north to Magadha. At the culmination of the story the merchants go for refuge to the Buddha and the Dhamma⁸ and became the first of the Buddha's

⁸ Although in Mahāvastu they go for the three refuges there was still no Saṅgha at that time, and it seems that must be an anachronism.

The Great Chapter

followers in the Dispensation. Perhaps it is significant that the first people who gain faith in the Buddha and his Teaching were not professional religious, but simple merchants, as that section of society was to provide crucial support to the fledgling Teaching.

The scene then changes to the root of another tree, still in the vicinity of Uruvelā, where the Buddha ponders on whether it is really possible to teach such a deep and profound doctrine to people when they have so little inclination towards spiritual things and such attachment to material pleasures. He is ultimately persuaded by the Mahābrahmā Sahampati, who points out that there are some with little dust on their eyes and that they will understand.

The Buddha therefore agrees to teach, but just who to teach is the next question. He first thinks of his former teachers, Āḷāra and Uddaka,⁹ but they had recently passed away, so then he recalled the group-of-five ascetics who had been helping him during his six years of austerity. Seeing that they were now in the neighbouring State of Kāśī,¹⁰ he decided to walk across the countryside for the approximately 200 km in order to teach them.

⁹ In Mahāvastu the order in which he thinks of these teachers is reversed, perhaps because as Uddaka was the more highly developed he was thought of first.

¹⁰ Uruvelā, where the Buddha attained Awakening, was in the south-western reaches of Magadha. Kāśī was to the west of there.

Introduction

A meeting on the way with the Abstainer (*Ājīvika*) Upaka is recorded at this point. Again the Abstainer, like the brāhmaṇa earlier, was unable to grasp the message or to gain faith in the Buddha, and went away, ‘shaking his head and taking the wrong path (*ummagga*)’, as the text says.

The Buddha eventually reaches the Deer Park at Isipatana, a few kilometres from the capital of Kāsī, Bārāṇasī. Although the group-of-five have been chosen for the first formal teaching of the new school, they are anything but impressed when they see their former associate coming. Indeed they make an agreement amongst themselves not to honour him in any way, although as he is a member of the Khattiya class they agree to put out a seat for him.

As the Buddha approaches though they are unable to keep to their agreement and they rise up, prepare a seat, take his bowl and robe, put out water for him, and so on. But still they are not quite ready for the new teaching and the Buddha will not teach them until they acknowledged his declared status. Eventually they are convinced by his earnestness and stop addressing him in a familiar way and speak to him with all due reverence.¹¹

¹¹ This is signalled in the text by the change of address from *Āvuso* to *Bhante*.

The Great Chapter

It is only then that the Buddha deigns to teach them the discourse that is famous now for Setting the Dhamma-Wheel Rolling. The Discourse itself is as revolutionary as it is simple. It basically only consists of an outline of the Four Noble Truths with short definitions of each. However the approach to the spiritual life that it signifies must have been felt to be quite extraordinary.

The prevalent religious teachings of the time stressed either correct ritual observance or extreme asceticism. The Buddha knew that neither led to the desired goal, and started his teaching career with a completely fresh look at the problem of existence. First he had diagnosed the problem: suffering; then he had found the cause: craving; then he had seen that its end (*nirodha*) was possible, and to the group-of-five monks he taught the Path to that goal, the eightfold noble Path which went, contrary to their expectation as ascetics, by the middle way.

For religious steeped in extreme asceticism, that must have been revolutionary indeed, and one of them, Koṇḍañña, did indeed attain to the first stage of sainthood on that very teaching, and all of them were ordained as monks by the Buddha. But for their further progress many more teachings would be required.

Introduction

Unfortunately for us the teachings during those first few days have not been preserved in any of the traditions that have come down to us, but over the next few days the Buddha did give them the necessary basis upon which they gradually made successively deeper attainments until they stood on the brink of full liberation.¹²

It was then that the Buddha taught the second recorded discourse containing the profound teaching about non-Self, which demonstrated that there was no Self or Divinity to be found in any of the constituents that make up the human personality, and that none of them were worth clinging to. It was on the basis of this teaching that the group-of-five monks fulfilled the teaching and attained to such a state of purity that they would never be reborn again, and it is this teaching that closes the first section for recit al (*bhāṇavāra*).

Second Section

The next section is easier to summarise: it traces the progress the Dispensation made during the first Rains Retreat, which was spent in the Deer Park after the initial teachings. First Yasa, a wealthy young man from the capital, meets up with the Buddha and becomes a monk, and eventually a Worthy One. His Father,¹³ Mother and former Wife

¹² They were technically non-returns (*anāgāmi*) when the Buddha taught the following discourse.

¹³ He was the first lay-follower to take the threefold refuge.

The Great Chapter

all go for refuge to the Three Treasures as lay followers committed for life. Then four of his good friends, and fifty more friends all become monks and attain full liberation.

At that point there were sixty-one monks and Arahats in the world, and at the end of the Rains Retreat the Buddha sent them out to the four directions to teach to all who would listen. They go and start making their own converts and the Buddha eventually initialises a procedure whereby they can administer ordination themselves, rather than bringing the aspirant to him personally. The curious thing is this: with only one or two possible exceptions,¹⁴ we never hear of any of these monks again, and not even one appears to accompany the Buddha when he sets out to return to Uruvelā, where he had initially attained Awakening.

Before he sets out on that journey the Buddha apparently had one or two encounters with Māra, who according to the traditions was still pursuing the Buddha for up to one year after the Awakening. I say one or two purposely, because it is not clear from the text whether we are dealing with two different visitations, or with two rescensions of the same encounter. I tend to think the latter, which is strengthened by there being two rescensions of the next but one story in the text.

¹⁴ See the discussion about Assaji below.

Introduction

We next have the curious story of the Buddha's encounter with the good group of 30 friends while traveling back to Magadha. Apparently out for a picnic, one of their number has his belongings stolen by a prostitute he had brought along for the day. The group goes off in search of the miscreant, but come across the Buddha instead who teaches them Dhamma so effectively that they all attain at least the first stage of sainthood and request and receive ordination, but once again it appears none of the group accompany the Buddha on his further journeying into Magadha.

Third Section

The third section for recital finds the Buddha back in Uruvelā, but now somewhat north of where he had Awakened, in the Ashram of the fire-worshipper Uruvelā Kassapa, who is living there with his five-hundred disciples. This Kassapa is one of three brothers who are living in the area engaged in the same practice, with three hundred and two hundred disciples each.

The Buddha asks if he can stay for the night in the firehouse. At first Kassapa refuses, fearing that a Dragon (*Nāga*) who is living there would harm him, but eventually the Buddha persuades Kassapa to let him stay. During the night there is a fiery contest with the Dragon, which the Buddha wins.

Kassapa is impressed by this, but he still believes that the Buddha is not at the same standing as he is himself, still he offers to provide

The Great Chapter

food for the Buddha if he stays on in the Ashram, and the Buddha agrees. This exact same story is told twice in the text, first in prose and then in verse. The commentary specifically states that the verses came later and were inserted after the prose. There is yet another rescension of the same story in the Mahāvastu, but there it occurs not as the first but as the last of a series of miracles that are different from those recorded in the Pāḷi.

The Pāḷi text then has a series of miracles performed by the Buddha, but none of them succeed in convincing Kassapa of the Buddha's superiority, so eventually the Buddha tells Kassapa straight that he is neither a Worthy One nor is he on his way to becoming one. Kassapa is convinced and asks for ordination, and both he and his followers and afterwards his brothers and their followers are ordained.

At this point the Buddha gives the famous Instruction about Burning, showing that the true fires are burning in our hearts, and rather than leading to release they are keeping us entrapped in the round of birth and death, and all 1,000 yogis attain to Worthiness upon hearing the discourse, which closes the third section.

Note that the time must now be sometime towards the end of the Winter period, which is perhaps six months after the Buddha gave his first discourse, and up and till now only three discourses have been recorded, though it is evident from the text, which explicitly says as much, that he had taught many more.

Fourth Section

Following the conversion of the Kassapas and their one thousand followers, the Buddha goes with them to Rājagaha, the capital of Magadha. King Bimbisāra hears that he has come to his Royal Capital and along with twelve thousand of his fellow citizens he goes out to meet him, fulfilling some wishes he had made while still a prince.

The Buddha teaches them a discourse at this point, but only a synopsis is given in the Pāli text, while in the Mahāvastu the full discourse is given.¹⁵ After the discourse the King goes for refuge to the Three Treasures and invites him for a meal on the following day, after which he donates the Bamboo Wood to the Buddha, thus ensuring the material establishment of the Dispensation.

There follows the conversion of the Wanderers Sāriputta and Moggallāna. They were followers of Sañjaya (apparently to be identified with one of the Six Heretical Teachers), and had previously made a promise to each other that if one of them attained the Deathless state, that he would immediately inform the other.

Sāriputta sees Assaji, one of the Buddha's disciples, on almsround and is immediately inspired with confidence and asks what teaching he

¹⁵ See *Utpadyananirudhyanasūtram, the Discourse on Arising and Ceasing* elsewhere on this website.

The Great Chapter

knows. Assaji replies that he is new to the teaching, that he doesn't know much, but he recites a verse which was enough for Sāriputta to attain to the first stage of Sainthood (*Sotāpatti*).¹⁶

This Assaji is normally identified with the Assaji who was one of the group-of-five monks. I question this though, as Assaji characterises himself as one who was new to the teaching and not long gone forth. But the group-of-five Assaji was hardly new to the Sāsana, indeed he stands right at the source. He had also heard some of the most important teachings that the Buddha had given, and had attained full liberation. There is also no record of any of the monks from the Bāṇārasī period following the Buddha over from Kāsī to Magadha. Assaji must have been a common name at the time and given the weight of the evidence I am inclined to believe that the Assaji Sāriputta met was not the same as the one in the group-of-five, but was as he characterised himself, one newly gone forth.

In any case on the strength of this encounter Sāriputta does see the Deathless and tells his friend Moggallāna about it, and they both leave Sañjaya, together with another 250 of his followers, and join the Buddha and become his chief disciples. This causes something of an uproar around the capital as many of their finest young men are going-forth. But the Buddha teaches a verse to the monks that

¹⁶ This verse became very famous later and is found in inscriptions all over India and Asia.

Introduction

convinces his critics that he is teaching true Dhamma and the uproar dies down. It is at this point in the text that the narrative ends.

Comparison with other Texts

In preparing this text and translation of the Great Chapter I have made a careful comparison with other records of the same events, both in the Canon and the commentaries, together with texts like the Mahāvastu and Lalitavistara, which belong to other sects, so as to compare and supplement the information given in the text itself.

This has involved making a number of other translations that are parallel to this text, and which are now published elsewhere on the website, and which can be read in their own right as well as supplementary to the present work:

Uruvilvāto R̥ṣipatanam̐ Gamanam̐ - The Journey from Uruvilvā to R̥ṣipatana (from Mahāvastu pp. 322-329)

Dharmacakrapravartanasūtram - The Discourse that Set the Dharma-Wheel Rolling (from Lalitavistara)

Utpadyananirudhyanasūtram - The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing (The Fourth Discourse of the Buddha) (Mahāvastu pp. 443-9)

I have also included many notes drawn from the commentary, and comparisons with the Jātakanidāna, a full text and translation of which I hope to prepare at some time.

The Great Chapter

I am very grateful indeed to Rod Bucknell who has made many contributions to this project by reading all of the above works through for me and making many useful suggestions and corrections, which has gone a long way to improve the accuracy and usefulness of these works. He has been a true *kalyāṇamitta*.

Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

August 2009

The First Section of the Great Division in the Discipline Collection

*Reverence to him, the Gracious One, the Worthy One,
the Perfect Sambuddha*

The Great Chapter¹⁷

[I: The First Teachings]

1: The Story about the Awakening (Tree)¹⁸ (Conditional Origination)

At that time the Awakened One,¹⁹ the Gracious One, was dwelling near Uruvelā,²⁰ on the bank of the river Nerañjarā, at the root of the Awakening tree, in the first (period) after the complete and perfect

¹⁷ from Vinaya Mahāvagga, Mahākhandhaka Sections 1-4; only the first four sections have been prepared here, as they form a continuous narrative which is lost in later sections.

¹⁸ Cf. Udāna 1.1. The first section in the Mahākhandhaka occurs also as the first 3 discourses in the Udāna in somewhat different form, which will be noted as we come across them.

¹⁹ In the Udāna after the usual *This I heard*, which is said to have been spoken by Ānanda, a different formula is used: *At one time the Gracious One...* The *At one time...* formula is normally used in the Vinaya in its place.

²⁰ Although the Commentary gives a number of explanations, it seems to me that *Uruvelā* would mean *Great Sands*, which must have described the area in Lord Buddha's time.

The Great Chapter

Awakening.²¹ Then at that time the Gracious One sat at the root of the Awakening tree²² in one cross-legged posture for seven days experiencing the happiness of liberation.

Then the Gracious One, for the first watch of the night, applied his mind thoroughly to conditional origination in forward and reverse order:²³

“Because of ignorance there are (volitional) processes,
because of (volitional) processes: consciousness,
because of consciousness: mind and body,
because of mind and body: the six sense spheres,
because of the six sense spheres: contact,
because of contact: feeling,

²¹ Although here this obviously refers to the period immediately after the Awakening, the first (period) after the complete and perfect Awakening is taken to refer to the first 20 years after that event.

²² Comm: *Awakening is said (because of) knowledge in regard to the four Paths (of Awakening).*

²³ In the Udāna, the first discourse only has the forward order, the second the reverse order, and the third has both, as the first verse refers to the arising of suffering (only) and the second to its cessation, it would seem the Udāna’s version is more authentic. For complementary doctrinal and grammatical notes I refer the reader to my translation of the Udāna under the title Exalted Utterances elsewhere on this website.

I. The First Teachings

because of feeling: craving,
because of craving: attachment,
because of attachment: continuation,
because of continuation: birth,
because of birth: old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow,
and despair (all) arise, and so there is an origination of this whole
mass of suffering.

But from the complete fading away and cessation of ignorance,
there is the cessation of (volitional) processes,
from the cessation of (volitional) processes, the cessation of
consciousness,
from the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of mind and
body,
from the cessation of mind and body, the cessation of the six sense
spheres,
from the cessation of the six sense spheres, the cessation of contact,
from the cessation of contact, the cessation of feeling,
from the cessation of feeling, the cessation of craving,
from the cessation of craving, the cessation of attachment,
from the cessation of attachment, the cessation of continuation,
from the cessation of continuation, the cessation of birth,
from the cessation of birth, old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain,
sorrow, and despair (all) cease, and so there is a cessation of this
whole mass of suffering.”

The Great Chapter

Then the Gracious One, having understood the significance of it, on that occasion uttered this exalted utterance:

“When (the nature of) things²⁴ becomes really manifest
To the ardent meditating brāhmaṇa,²⁵
Then all his doubts disappear,
Since he knows (the nature of a) thing and its cause.”²⁶

* * *

Then the Gracious One,²⁷ for the middle watch of the night, applied his mind thoroughly to conditional origination in forward and reverse order:

“Because of ignorance there are (volitional) processes,
because of (volitional) processes: consciousness,
because of consciousness: mind and body,
because of mind and body: the six sense spheres,

²⁴ Comm: *the (nature of) things means things on the side of Awakening that effect the experience of the causal series in forward order ... [or] ... (understanding the nature of) the Four Noble Truths*. This verse refers to understanding the origination of suffering.

²⁵ Comm: *to the one who has destroyed the pollutants and removed wickedness*.

²⁶ Comm: *he knows ignorance and so on and its cause, together with its cause, this whole mass of suffering beginning with (mental) processes and so on*.

²⁷ Udāna has a longer opening here parallel to the first discourse; the same remark applies to the next section, cf. Udāna 1.2 and 1.3.

I. The First Teachings

because of the six sense spheres: contact,
because of contact: feeling,
because of feeling: craving,
because of craving: attachment,
because of attachment: continuation,
because of continuation: birth,
because of birth: old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow,
and despair (all) arise, and so there is an origination of this whole
mass of suffering.

But from the complete fading away and cessation of ignorance,
there is the cessation of (volitional) processes,
from the cessation of (volitional) processes, the cessation of
consciousness,
from the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of mind and
body,
from the cessation of mind and body, the cessation of the six sense
spheres,
from the cessation of the six sense spheres, the cessation of contact,
from the cessation of contact, the cessation of feeling,
from the cessation of feeling, the cessation of craving,
from the cessation of craving, the cessation of attachment,
from the cessation of attachment, the cessation of continuation,
from the cessation of continuation, the cessation of birth,
from the cessation of birth, old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain,
sorrow, and despair (all) cease, and so there is a cessation of this
whole mass of suffering.”

The Great Chapter

Then the Gracious One, having understood the significance of it, on that occasion uttered this exalted utterance:

“When (the nature of) things becomes really manifest
To the ardent meditating brāhmaṇa,
Then all his doubts disappear,
Since the destruction of causes has been understood.”²⁸

* * *

Then the Gracious One, for the last watch of the night,²⁹ applied his mind thoroughly to conditional origination in forward and reverse order:

“Because of ignorance there are (volitional) processes,
because of (volitional) processes: consciousness,
because of consciousness: mind and body,
because of mind and body: the six sense spheres,
because of the six sense spheres: contact,

²⁸ This verse refers to the cessation of suffering.

²⁹ Cf. Udāna 1.3.

I. The First Teachings

because of contact: feeling,
because of feeling: craving,
because of craving: attachment,
because of attachment: continuation,
because of continuation: birth,
because of birth: old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow,
and despair (all) arise, and so there is an origination of this whole
mass of suffering.

But from the complete fading away and cessation of ignorance,
there is the cessation of (volitional) processes,
from the cessation of (volitional) processes, the cessation of
consciousness,
from the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of mind and
body,
from the cessation of mind and body, the cessation of the six sense
spheres,
from the cessation of the six sense spheres, the cessation of contact,
from the cessation of contact, the cessation of feeling,
from the cessation of feeling, the cessation of craving,
from the cessation of craving, the cessation of attachment,
from the cessation of attachment, the cessation of continuation,
from the cessation of continuation, the cessation of birth,
from the cessation of birth, old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain,
sorrow, and despair (all) cease, and so there is a cessation of this
whole mass of suffering.”

The Great Chapter

Then the Gracious One, having understood the significance of it, on that occasion uttered this exalted utterance:

“When (the nature of) things becomes really manifest
To the ardent meditating brāhmaṇa,
He stands dispelling Māra’s army,
Just like the sun lighting up the firmament.”³⁰

The Story about the Bodhi (tree) is Finished

³⁰ *Comm: thus in this it is to be understood that the first exalted utterance refers to reflection on causality, the second to reflection on Emancipation, and the third to reflection on how the Path arises.*

2: The Story about the Goatherd's (Tree)³¹ (The Grumbling Brāhmaṇa)³²

Then with the passing of seven days, the Gracious One,³³ after arising from that concentration, approached the Goatherd's Banyan (tree)³⁴ from the root of the Awakening tree, and after approaching the root of the Goatherds' Banyan tree he sat in one cross-legged posture for seven days experiencing the happiness of liberation.³⁵

³¹ Cf. Udāna 1.4.

³² The story of the grumbling brāhmaṇa is placed later in Mahāvastu, on the journey between Uruvelā and Isipatana, see the Text and Translation *Uruvilvā to R̥ṣipatana* elsewhere on this website.

³³ Jā Nid places the temptation by Māra's daughters during this week, but it goes completely unnoticed in the earlier text. On the other hand Jā Nid does not mention the encounter with the brāhmaṇa recorded here.

³⁴ Comm: *it seems that the goat-herders, having gone to the shade of that Banyan tree, would sit down (there), therefore the name Goatherds' Banyan tree arose.* According to the commentary this was east of the Awakening tree.

³⁵ Jā Nid states that it is now five weeks since the Awakening, the first week having been spent in blissful contemplation, the second worshipping the Bodhi Tree, the third walking in the jewelled walkway, and the fourth reflecting on the Abhidhamma collection; exactly where the first section recorded above fits in is not clear, unless it is taken as the conclusion of the last section.

The Great Chapter

Then a certain brāhmaṇa who was a grumbler by nature³⁶ approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he exchanged greetings with the Gracious One, and after exchanging courteous talk³⁷ and greetings, he stood on one side. While standing on one side that brāhmaṇa said this to the Gracious One:

“To what extent, dear Gotama, is one a brāhmaṇa? And again what things make one a brāhmaṇa?”

Then the Gracious One, having understood the significance of it, on that occasion uttered this exalted utterance:

“That brāhmaṇa who has barred wickedness,³⁸
Not grumbling, free from blemish, self-restrained,
With perfect understanding, (and) the spiritual life accomplished,

³⁶ Described by the commentary as being *one who believes that luck arises through what is seen*, like seeing a lucky black cat in the morning, and says that he was a grumbler *through conceit and through anger*.

³⁷ ChS adds: *he spoke grumblingly, and he spoke in praise of speaking grumblingly*, but this is unknown to the other texts.

³⁸ There is a pun on *bāhita* (*barred*) and *brāhmaṇa*, which is nearly lost in Pāli owing to the reintroduction of the *-r-* element. In the original language it must have been **bāhmaṇa*, or something very similar, where the pun would have been more obvious.

I. The First Teachings

Righteously he might speak a word about the Brahman,³⁹
For him there is no arrogance⁴⁰ anywhere in the world.”⁴¹

The Story about the Goatherd's (Tree) is finished

3: The Story about the Mucalinda (Tree)⁴²

Then with the passing of seven days, the Gracious One,⁴³ after arising from that concentration, approached the Mucalinda (tree) from the root of the Goatherd's Banyan (tree), and after approaching the root of the Mucalinda (tree)⁴⁴ he sat in one cross-legged posture for seven days experiencing the happiness of liberation.⁴⁵

Then at that time a great cloud arose out of season, (bringing) seven days of rainy weather, cold winds, and overcast days. Then the

³⁹ Comm: *he might righteously speak this word, saying “I am a brāhmaṇa.”* This may be the meaning, but it is not what it says, as *Brahma-* cannot be equal to *brāhmaṇa-*.

⁴⁰ Comm: *there is no arrogance like the arrogance owing to passion, hatred, delusion, conceit or views.*

⁴¹ This verse differs somewhat from the parallel verse in Mahāvastu, see *Urulivā to Ṛṣipātana* elsewhere on this website.

⁴² This section is parallel to Mucalindasuttam Udāna 2.1.

⁴³ The opening to this discourse is dissimilar to the Udāna, but similar to the opening passages in the first three discourses of the Udāna.

⁴⁴ Scientific name: *Barringtonia acutangula*; according to the commentary the Mucalinda tree was east of the Bodhi tree.

⁴⁵ According to Jā Nid it is now the beginning of the 6th week.

The Great Chapter

Dragon-King Mucalinda,⁴⁶ after leaving his domicile, and surrounding the Gracious One's body seven times with his coils, stood having placed his great hood above his head, (thinking):

“May the Gracious One not be cold, may the Gracious One not be hot, may the Gracious One not be affected by gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the heat (of the sun), and serpents.”

Then the Dragon-King Mucalinda, with the passing of those seven days,⁴⁷ having understood that the sky was now clear, without a cloud, after unravelling his coils from the Gracious One's body, withdrawing his own form, and creating the appearance of a young brāhmaṇa, stood in front of the Gracious One, revering the Gracious One with raised hands.

Then the Gracious One, having understood the significance of it, on that occasion uttered this exalted utterance:⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Comm: *a powerful Dragon-King who had been born in a lake near to that Mucalinda tree.*

⁴⁷ Udāna reads: *Then with the passing of those seven days, the Gracious One arose from that concentration. Then the Dragon-King Mucalinda having understood... etc.*

⁴⁸ None of the Udānas mentioned in the first 3 sections here are referred to in Jā Nid.

I. The First Teachings

“There is happiness and detachment for the one who is satisfied,
who has heard the Dhamma, and who sees,
There is happiness for him who is free from ill-will in the world,
who is restrained towards breathing beings.⁴⁹

The state of dispassion in the world is happiness, the complete
transcending of sense desires,⁵⁰

(But) for he who has removed the conceit ‘I am’⁵¹ - this is indeed
the highest happiness.”

The Story about Mucalinda is Finished

⁴⁹ According to the Comm. the first half of this line refers to friendliness (*mettā*), and the second half to kindness (*karunā*).

⁵⁰ Comm: *with this he speaks about the Non-returner path.*

⁵¹ Comm: *with this he speaks about being Worthy.*

4: The Story about the Royal (Tree)⁵² (Tapussa and Bhallika)

Then with the passing of seven days, the Gracious One, after arising from that concentration, approached the Royal (tree)⁵³ from the root of the Mucalinda (tree), and after approaching the root of the Royal (tree) he sat in one cross-legged posture for seven days experiencing the happiness of liberation.⁵⁴

Then at that time the merchants Tapussa and Ballika⁵⁵ were in that district travelling along the highway from Ukkalā.⁵⁶ Then a god who had (formerly) been a blood relative⁵⁷ of the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika said this to the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika: “The

⁵² At this point the Vinaya and the Udāna diverge, but interestingly the discourse that occurs next in the Udāna is called Rājasuttam.

⁵³ Scientific name: *Buchanania latifolia*; FF: *a medium-sized straight tree with rough bark and dense pyramid-shaped clusters of white flowers*. It was south of the Bodhi Tree according to the commentary.

⁵⁴ According to the Jā Nid seven weeks have passed by now. It also mentions that, before the following events, Sakka brought the Buddha medicinal myrobalan to clean his stomach, and a tooth-pick to clean his teeth and water to wash his face.

⁵⁵ The commentary says they were brothers, and Jā Nid says they were leading a caravan of 500 carts.

⁵⁶ According to DPPN Ukkalā was in what is modern day Orissa. They were therefore coming from the south, and were apparently on their way to Rājagaha.

⁵⁷ AA specifies that the devatā was formerly their Mother (source: DPPN).

I. The First Teachings

Gracious One, Sirs, is dwelling at the root of the Royal (tree), in the first (period) after the complete and perfect Awakening. Go and wait upon the Gracious One with milk-rice and honey-balls and for a long time⁵⁸ that will be for your benefit and happiness.”

Then the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika having taken milk-rice and honey-balls approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One they stood at one side. While standing on one side the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika said this to the Gracious One: “Please accept our milk-rice and honey-balls, venerable Sir, Gracious One, that for a long time will be for our benefit and happiness.”

Then it occurred to the Gracious One: “Realised Ones⁵⁹ do not accept (food) in the hands, now how can I accept the milk-rice and honey-balls?”⁶⁰

Then the (gods called the) Four Great Kings, knowing with their minds the reflection in the mind of the Gracious One brought from

⁵⁸ An idiom, literally meaning: *for a long night*.

⁵⁹ This is how the Buddha regularly refers to himself. Although not entirely clear, the prime meanings seem to be *One who has Gone (or Come) to the Real*. Maybe it is formed parallel to the term *Titthaṅkara (Ford-Maker)* which was already in use at the time, and is commonly used of the Jaina saints.

⁶⁰ According to Jā Nid the Buddha’s bowl had ‘disappeared’ after taking Sujātā’s milk-rice, which seems to be an anomaly.

The Great Chapter

the four directions four bowls made of (green) stone⁶¹ to the Gracious One (saying): “Please accept, venerable Sir, Gracious One, the milk-rice and honey-balls here (in the bowls).”

The Gracious One accepted in the new bowl⁶² made of stone the milk-rice and honey-balls, and having accepted (it) he ate.

Then the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika said this to the Gracious One: “We, venerable Sir, are those who go to the Gracious One for refuge, and to the Dhamma,⁶³ please bear in mind that we are lay disciples who have gone for refuge from today forward for as long as we have the breath of life,” and they became the first lay disciples in the world with the two(-refuge) formula.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Comm: *bowls made of rock coloured like green peas*. Jayawickrama (SGB) translates as *granite*, though that rock is not green. The commentary and Jā Nid mention that first the four kings brought a sapphire bowl, but the Gracious One would not accept it, presumably because jewelled bowls are not allowed in the Vinaya (see Cullavagga Khuddhakavattthukkhandaṁ, 8), but there only two bowls *are* allowed, those made of iron and of earthenware.

⁶² Comm: *having taken the four (bowls they) became as one bowl through determining*. *Paccagghe* is explained as meaning either *precious* (its normal meaning) or *new* in the commentary, it seems the latter is intended here.

⁶³ There was still no Saṅgha at that time, so they took the double refuge; in Mahāvastu, on the contrary they go for refuge in the Three Treasures.

⁶⁴ Comm: *then the Gracious One brushed his head and hair stuck to his hand, and he gave it to them (saying): “Take this with you.” After receiving the hair relics, consecrated by the Deathless, joyful and satisfied, and worshipping the Gracious One, they departed*. Same story in Jā Nid.

I. The First Teachings

The Story about the Royal (tree) is Finished

5: The Story about Brahmā's Request⁶⁵

Then with the passing of seven days, the Gracious One, after arising from that concentration, approached the Goatherd's Banyan (tree) from the root of the Royal (tree), and there the Gracious One dwelt at the root of the Goatherd's Banyan (tree).

Then when the Gracious One had gone into solitude, into seclusion, this reflection arose in his mind: This Dhamma I have attained is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, excellent, beyond the sphere of logic, profound, understandable (only) to the wise.

⁶⁵ This section should be compared with DN 14, Mahāpadānasuttaṃ, the opening of the 3rd bhāṇavāraṃ, said in relation to the Buddha Vipassī; MN 26 and 85, where the Buddha relates the same incident about himself; and SN Brahmāsamyuttaṃ, 1.6.1, which is similar to here.

The Great Chapter

But this generation delights in desire,⁶⁶ is devoted to desire, gladdened by desire, and for a generation delighting in desire, devoted to desire, gladdened by desire this thing is hard to see, that is to say: conditionality and conditional origination.⁶⁷ This thing also is very hard to see, that is to say:

the tranquilising of all processes,
the letting go of all bases for cleaving,
the end of craving,
dispassion,
cessation,
Emancipation.⁶⁸

But if I were to teach the Dhamma and others did not understand me that would be tiring for me, that would be troublesome to me.”

⁶⁶ Comm: *beings attach to the five strands of sensual pleasures, therefore they have **desire** is said.*

⁶⁷ Defined in this way, as a *dvanda* compound, in the commentary.

⁶⁸ Two versions of this reflection are found in Girimānandasutta (AN 10:60) where they are known as *Perception of Dispassion* and *Perception of Cessation*.

I. The First Teachings

Further these truly wonderful verses, unheard previously in the past, occurred to the Gracious One:⁶⁹

“Now is it suitable for me to explain what was attained with difficulty?

For those overcome by passion and hatred this Dhamma is not easily understood.

Going against the stream,⁷⁰ it is profound, deep, hard to see, subtle, Those delighting in passion,⁷¹ obstructed by darkness, will not see (it).”⁷²

⁶⁹ As well as the following Lalitavistara 25.1 has another verse on the hesitation: *deep, peaceful, unstained, luminous is the unconditioned Deathless state attained by me, I shall not teach to other people, what if I were to live quietly in the forest?*

⁷⁰ Comm: *going to Emancipation is the meaning.*

⁷¹ Comm: *delighting through delighting in sensuality, delighting in continuity in existence, delighting in views.*

⁷² cf. Mahāvastū vol. iii. p. 314, has the verses in reverse order, and has a different last line: *those people who grasp at sensual pleasure are said to be going with the stream.* Lalitavistara is similar.

The Great Chapter

Such was the Gracious One's reflection and his mind inclined to inaction,⁷³ not to teaching the Dhamma.

Then to Brahmā Sahampati,⁷⁴ knowing with his mind the reflection in the mind of the Gracious One, this (thought) occurred: "The world is surely going to destruction, the world is surely going to complete destruction, wherever the Realised One, the Worthy One, the Perfect Sambuddha's mind inclines to inaction, not to teaching the Dhamma."

Then Brahmā Sahampati, just as a strong man might stretch out a bent arm, or bend in an outstretched arm, so did he vanish from the Brahmā world and appear in front of the Gracious One.⁷⁵ Then Brahmā Sahampati, after arranging his upper robe on one shoulder, placing his right knee on the earth, and raising his hands in respectful salutation, said this to the Gracious One: "Let the Gracious One preach the Dhamma, venerable Sir, let the Fortunate One preach the Dhamma, there are beings with little dust⁷⁶ on the eyes who are

⁷³ A much disputed term, it is made up of *appa-*, *little, few*, and *-ussukka-*, *endeavour, action*, and *-tā*, which adds abstract meaning, *little-endeavour-ness*. This hesitation to teach is ascribed to all the Buddhas in Jā Nid.

⁷⁴ Described as *the most senior of the great Brahmās*, according to DPPN.

⁷⁵ Comm: *having taken (all) the Mahābrahmā-s from the ten-thousand world-systems, he came and appeared in front of the Gracious One*. Jā Nid: *having taken (all) the Sakkas, Suyāmas, Santusitas, Sunimmitavasavatti-s, and Mahābrahma-s from the ten thousand world-systems*.

⁷⁶ Comm: *the dust of passion, hatred, and delusion*.

I. The First Teachings

perishing through not hearing the Dhamma, there will be those who understand the Dhamma.”⁷⁷

Brahmā Sahampati said this, and after saying this he said something more:

“Formerly there appeared amongst the Magadhans
An impure Dhamma, invented by those still stained,⁷⁸
Open this door⁷⁹ to the Deathless
Let them hear the Dhamma understood by the Pure One.

As one who is standing on a rock on the top of a mountain
Can see the people on all sides
In the same way, One of Great Wisdom, having ascended
The Palace made from Dhamma, Visionary One,

⁷⁷ Comm: *those who understand means those who penetrate*. Although this last clause is awkward, the meaning seems straightforward, and I am not quite sure how Mrs. C F Rhys-Davids arrives at *They who come to know ... will come to be, will become*; or I. Horner, who follows her with: *They who learn will grow*. BD, IV, p. 8, which both obscures and changes the meaning.

⁷⁸ Comm: *invented by the six Teachers*. It means the six famous teachers in Lord Buddha’s time: Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambali, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta, and Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta.

⁷⁹ Comm: *the Noble Path which is the true door to the Deathless Emancipation*.

The Great Chapter

Look down on the people overcome by grief, One Free of Grief,
on those overcome by birth and old-age.⁸⁰

Rise up, Hero, Victorious in Battle,⁸¹ Caravan-Leader, Debtless
One, travel through the world. Let the Gracious One teach the
Dhamma, there will be those who understand.”

After this was said, The Gracious One said this to Brahmā Sahampati:
“This occurred to me, Brahmā: ‘This Dhamma I have attained is deep,
hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, excellent, beyond the sphere
of logic, profound, understandable (only) to the wise. But this
generation delights in desire, is devoted to desire, gladdened by desire,
and for a generation delighting in desire, devoted to desire, gladdened
by desire this thing is hard to see, that is to say: conditionality and
conditional origination. This thing also is very hard to see, that is to
say:

the tranquilising of all processes,
the letting go of all bases for cleaving,
the end of craving,

⁸⁰ cf. Dhṛ 28: *having ascended the Palace of Wisdom, sorrow-free amongst the
sorrowing people, standing on a mountain-top the Wise One sees the fools
stood on the ground (below)*. Although the wording is similar the sentiment
is quite different, with the text expressing compassion, and the Dhṛ verse
aloofness.

⁸¹ Comm: *having victory over Māra (as) Divinity, death, defilements, and the
accumulation (of processes leading to rebirth)*.

I. The First Teachings

dispassion,
cessation,
Emancipation.

But if I were to teach the Dhamma and others did not understand me that would be tiring for me, that would be troublesome to me.’

Further these truly wonderful verses, unheard previously in the past, Brahmā, occurred to me:

‘Now is it suitable for me to explain what was attained with difficulty?

For those overcome by passion and hatred this Dhamma is not easily understood.

Going against the stream, it is profound, deep, hard to see, subtle, Those delighting in passion, obstructed by darkness, will not see (it).’

Such was my reflection and my mind inclined to inaction, not to teaching the Dhamma.”

For a second time Brahmā Sahampati said this to the Gracious One: “Let the Gracious One preach the Dhamma, venerable Sir, let the Fortunate One

preach the Dhamma, there are beings with little dust on the eyes who are perishing through not hearing the Dhamma, there will be those

The Great Chapter

who understand the Dhamma.” Brahmā Sahampati said this, and after saying this he said something more:

“Formerly there appeared amongst the Magadhans
An impure Dhamma, invented by those still stained,
Open this door to the Deathless
Let them hear the Dhamma understood by the Pure One.

As one who is standing on a rock on the top of a mountain
Can see the people on all sides
In the same way, One of Great Wisdom, having ascended
The Palace made from Dhamma, Visionary One,
Look down on the people overcome by grief, One Free of Grief,
on those overcome by birth and old-age.

Rise up, Hero, Victorious in Battle, Caravan-Leader, Debtless One,
travel through the world. Let the Gracious One teach the Dhamma,
there will be those who understand.”

For a second time the Gracious One said this to Brahmā Sahampati:
“This occurred to me, Brahmā: ‘This Dhamma I have attained is deep,
hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, excellent, beyond the sphere
of logic, profound, understandable (only) to the wise. But this
generation delights in desire, is devoted to desire, gladdened by desire,
and for a generation delighting in desire, devoted to desire, gladdened
by desire this thing is hard to see, that is to say: conditionality and
conditional origination. This thing also is very hard to see, that is to
say:

I. The First Teachings

the tranquilising of all processes,
the letting go of all bases for cleaving,
the end of craving,
dispassion,
cessation,
Emancipation.

But if I were to teach the Dhamma and others did not understand me that would be tiring for me, that would be troublesome to me.’ Further these truly wonderful verses, unheard previously in the past, Brahmā, occurred to me:

‘Now, is it suitable for me to explain what was attained with difficulty?

For those overcome by passion and hatred this Dhamma is not easily understood.

Going against the stream, it is profound, deep, hard to see, subtle, Those delighting in passion, obstructed by darkness, will not see (it).’

Such was my reflection and my mind inclined to inaction, not to teaching the Dhamma.”

For a third time Brahmā Sahampati said this to the Gracious One: Let the Gracious One preach the Dhamma, venerable Sir, let the Fortunate One

The Great Chapter

preach the Dhamma, there are beings with little dust on the eyes who are perishing through not hearing the Dhamma, there will be those who understand the Dhamma.” Brahmā Sahampati said this, and after saying this he said something more:

“Formerly there appeared amongst the Magadhans
An impure Dhamma, invented by those still stained,
Open this door to the Deathless
Let them hear the Dhamma understood by the Pure One.

As one who is standing on a rock on the top of a mountain
Can see the people on all sides
In the same way, One of Great Wisdom, having ascended
The Palace made from Dhamma, Visionary One,
Look down on the people overcome by grief, One Free of Grief,
on those overcome by birth and old-age.

Rise up, Hero, Victorious in Battle, Caravan-Leader, Debtless One,
travel through the world. Let the Gracious One teach the Dhamma,
there will be those who understand.”

Then the Gracious One, having understood Brahmā’s request, out of kindness looked at beings around the world with his Buddha-eye.⁸²

⁸² Comm: *Buddha-eye (here) means with his knowledge of the disposition of others’ faculties and with his knowledge of their underlying tendencies.*

I. The First Teachings

While looking around the world with his Buddha-eye the Gracious One saw beings having little dust on the eyes, having great dust on the eyes, having sharp faculties, having undeveloped faculties, having good conditions, having poor conditions, easy to instruct, hard to instruct, and (only) some who dwelt seeing danger in what is blameworthy and in the next world.

Just as with water-lilies or lotuses or white lotuses some of those water-lilies or lotuses or white lotuses, born in the water, flourishing in the water, not rising above water, are nourished from inside the depths, some of those water-lilies or lotuses or white lotuses, born in the water, flourishing in the water, stand level with the water, some of those water-lilies or lotuses or white lotuses, born in the water, flourishing in the water, stand above the water, and are untouched by the water.⁸³

Even so while looking around the world with his Buddha-eye the Gracious One saw beings having little dust on the eyes, having great dust on the eyes, having sharp faculties, having undeveloped faculties, having good conditions, having poor conditions, easy to instruct, hard to instruct, and (only) some who dwelt seeing danger in what is

⁸³ The simile offered here gives three possibilities: being below, level with and above the water, but the text it illustrates offers only two: being with or without dust on the eyes, etc. which is curious.

blameworthy and in the next world, and having seen (it) he recited this verse to Brahmā Sahampati:

“Open for you are the doors to the Deathless,
Whoever has ears let them release their faith.⁸⁴

Perceiving trouble, Brahmā, I did not speak amongst humans,
About what was hard-learned, the excellent Dhamma!”

Then Brahmā Sahampati (thought): “I have obtained consent for the Gracious One to teach the Dhamma,” and after worshipping the Gracious One, and circumambulating him, he vanished right there.

The Story about Brahmā’s request is Finished

[6: Deciding Who to Teach]⁸⁵

Then this occurred to the Gracious One:⁸⁶ “To whom should I teach the first Dhamma-teaching? Who will be able to understand the Dhamma quickly?”

⁸⁴ Horner: *let them renounce their faith*; however the Sub-commentary says: *let them raise the state of faith in the Dhamma taught by me myself is the meaning*. Lalitavistara 25.34 agrees with the latter: *let them undertake faith*.

⁸⁵ These titles written between square brackets are added by the present editor to help outline the story.

⁸⁶ Cf. MN 26 and 85, and the version of this story in Mahāvastu, for which see *Uruvilvā to R̥ṣipātana* elsewhere on this website.

I. The First Teachings

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “This Āḷāra Kālāma⁸⁷ is wise, learned, intelligent, for a long time he has been one with little dust on his eyes. Now what if I teach the first Dhamma-teaching to Āḷāra Kālāma? He will be able to understand the Dhamma quickly.”⁸⁸

Then an invisible god⁸⁹ informed the Gracious One: “Āḷāra Kālāma died⁹⁰ seven days ago, venerable Sir,” and this knowledge arose in the Gracious One: “Āḷāra Kālāma died seven days ago.”⁹¹ Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Āḷāra Kālāma had great understanding, if he had heard this Dhamma he would have understood it quickly.”

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “To whom should I teach the first Dhamma-teaching? Who will be able to understand the Dhamma quickly?”

⁸⁷ Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta (see below), were among the Bodhisatta’s early teachers (see MN 26). Another teacher is mentioned at the beginning of ThiA., as Bhaggava, whose doctrine (*samaya*) he learned before going to Āḷāra Kālāma.

⁸⁸ In Mahāvastu and Lalitavistara the order in which he thought of these teachers is reversed, which is perhaps more logical as Rāmaputta was considered to be at a higher level than Kālāma.

⁸⁹ Comm to Aṅg. 6.62: *Antarahitā means one who has become invisible.*

⁹⁰ An idiom, literally: *made time.*

⁹¹ Comm: This is the cosmic equivalent of the level of meditation that he had taught to the Bodhisatta.

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “This Uddaka Rāmaputta is wise, learned, intelligent, for a long time he has been one with little dust on his eyes. Now, what if I teach the first Dhamma-teaching to Uddaka Rāmaputta? He will be able to understand the Dhamma quickly.”

Then an invisible god informed the Gracious One: “Uddaka Rāmaputta died yesterday evening,⁹² venerable Sir,” and this knowledge arose in the Gracious One: “Uddaka Rāmaputta died yesterday evening.” Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Uddaka Rāmaputta had great understanding, if he had heard this Dhamma he would have understood it quickly.”

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “To whom should I teach the first Dhamma-teaching? Who will be able to understand the Dhamma quickly?” Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “The group-of-five monks⁹³ were very helpful to me, they attended on me when I was striving resolutely.

⁹² According to Mahāvastu and Lalitavistara he had died three days earlier. The Pāli commentary says he had been reborn in the Sphere of Neither-Perception-nor-Non-Perception, again the level of meditation he had reached, the ‘8th level’ of absorption. Part of the Formless Worlds, it is the highest level in the Universe, 17 levels higher than the Mahābrahmā Worlds, from which Brahmā Sahampati had descended.

⁹³ It is interesting that even here the group-of-five are referred to as monks (*bhikkhū*), before they were Awakened or had even been ordained by the Buddha, this is not the case in Mahāvastu.

I. The First Teachings

Now, what if I teach the first Dhamma-teaching to the group-of-five monks?” Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Where are the group-of-five monks dwelling now?” The Gracious One saw with the divine eye which is purified and surpasses than of (normal) men that the group-of-five monks were dwelling near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana.⁹⁴

[7: The Abstainer Upaka]

Then the Gracious One, having dwelt for as long as he liked left on walking tour for Bārāṇasī.⁹⁵ The Abstainer⁹⁶ Upaka saw the Gracious One going along the highway between the Bodhi (tree) and Gayā,⁹⁷ and after seeing (him), he said this to the Gracious One: “Your

⁹⁴ Uruvelā, where the Buddha Awakened, was in Magadha, whereas Bārāṇasī was the capital of the neighbouring state of Kāśi.

⁹⁵ Jā Nid says this took place on the morning of the 14th day of the fortnight, which would only give the Buddha a day to reach Isipatana, about 250 km away; Mahāvastu is more realistic, giving much more detail which, when we inspect it would mean the Buddha took at least a week to make the journey, see *Uruvilvā to Ṛṣipatana* elsewhere on this website.

⁹⁶ He belonged to the Ājīvaka sect founded by Gosāla Makkhaliputta, one of the six famous teachers in Lord Buddha’s time. The title of the sect indicates that they were known to have special rules in regard to their livelihood (*ājīva*), and abstained from taking support from various people or in various circumstances.

⁹⁷ According to Mahāvastu the meeting took place at Cundadvīlā, which is mentioned elsewhere in the Pāḷi texts as Cundavīlā.

The Great Chapter

faculties, friend,⁹⁸ are very clear, purified is your skin and bright, on account of whom, friend, did you go forth or who is your teacher, or what Dhamma do you prefer?” After this was said, the Gracious One addressed the Abstainer Upaka with verses:

“All-Conquering, All-Wise am I,⁹⁹
Undefined in regard to all things,
Having given up everything, liberated through the destruction of
craving,
Having deep knowledge myself, who should I point to (as
Teacher)?¹⁰⁰

There is no Teacher for me,¹⁰¹ no one like me is found,
There is no person equal to me in the world with its gods.
I am a Worthy One in the world, I am the Unsurpassed Teacher,
I am the One Perfect Sambuddha, cool and passionless.

⁹⁸ *Āyuso* is a contraction of *āyasmanto*, a plural form, normally used politely when addressing an individual.

⁹⁹ First verse = Dhp 353. Comm: *All-Conquering* means he stood having conquered all states in the three grounds (of existence), *All-Wise* means he knew and understood all states in the four grounds (including Emancipation).

¹⁰⁰ Comm: *who should I point to* means what other should I point to saying, this is my Teacher?

¹⁰¹ The commentary makes clear that this refers to being a Teacher of the Supermundane state, of course the Bodhisatta is not forgetting his mundane teachers.

I. The First Teachings

I go to Kāsi's city¹⁰² to set the Dhamma-Wheel rolling,
I will beat the drum of the Deathless in a world that is blind.”

“It is as if you claim, friend, you are a Worthy One, an Infinite Victor!”¹⁰³

“There are surely Victors like me,¹⁰⁴ who have attained the destruction of the pollutants.

I have been victorious over all wicked things, therefore, Upaka, I am a Victor.”

When this was said, the Abstainer Upaka, after saying: “It may be so, friend,”¹⁰⁵ shaking his head, and taking the wrong path,¹⁰⁶ went away.

[8: The Meeting at Isipatana]

Then the Gracious One, while walking gradually on walking tour approached Bārāṇasī and the group-of-five monks at the Deer Park in

¹⁰² Kāsi is the state of which Bārāṇasī was the capital.

¹⁰³ This is apparently said incredulously, although the words themselves do not really make it clear.

¹⁰⁴ This sounds odd here after the claims to uniqueness above.

¹⁰⁵ The form *Huveyya* is a dialectical form that has been preserved here, which probably marks it as an authentic remembrance. It is missing from Mahāvastu though.

¹⁰⁶ *Wrong path* is evidently mentioned here in contrast to the *Noble Path*, which is soon to be introduced.

The Great Chapter

Isipatana.¹⁰⁷ The group-of-five monks saw the Gracious One coming from afar and after seeing (him), they resolved among themselves (on this course of action): “This Ascetic Gotama who is coming, friends, is luxuriant, forsaking the striving he has gone back to luxury. He should certainly not be worshipped or stood up for, nor should his bowl and robe be taken, however, we can prepare a seat - if he wishes he will sit down.”

As the Gracious One approached the group-of-five monks, the group-of-five monks were unable to continue with their own agreement,¹⁰⁸ and after going out to meet the Gracious One, one took the Gracious One’s bowl and robe, one prepared the seat, one placed the water (for washing) the feet, the foot-stool, and the foot-stand, and the Gracious One sat down on the prepared seat, and while sitting the Gracious One washed his feet.

Then they addressed the Gracious One by name and by the word ‘friend’. After this was said, the Gracious One said this to the group-of-five monks: “Do not address the Gracious One by name, monks,

¹⁰⁷ Mahāvastu and Lalitavistara again have more detail. Apparently the Buddha met some yakkhas on the way; and had an encounter with a ferryman when he needed to cross the river Ganges, but having no money he crossed by supernatural power (see *From Uruvilva to R̥ṣipatana* elsewhere on this website); this incident is said to have led to King Bimbisāra abolishing fares for monks on ferries.

¹⁰⁸ According to Jā Nid this was because the Buddha was pervading them with loving-kindness (*mettā*).

I. The First Teachings

and by the word ‘friend’, the Realised One is a Worthy One, a Perfect Sambuddha, lend an ear, monks, I will instruct you about the attainment of the Deathless,¹⁰⁹ I will teach the Dhamma, (and) following the path as it has been preached, after no long time you will (attain) that good for which young men of good family rightly go forth from the home to the homeless life, that unsurpassed conclusion to the spiritual life, and will dwell having known, experienced, and attained it yourselves in this very life.”

After this was said, the group-of-five monks said this to the Gracious One: “But you, friend Gotama,¹¹⁰ by that (ascetic) lifestyle, that practice, that difficult way of living, did not arrive at a state beyond (ordinary) human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight. So how can you now, luxuriant, forsaking the striving, gone back to luxury, attain a state beyond (ordinary) human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight?”

After this was said, the Gracious One said this to the group-of-five monks: “The Realised One, monks, is not luxuriant, is not forsaking the striving, and has not gone back to luxury. The Realised One is a

¹⁰⁹ Comm: *the Deathless Emancipation attained by me is what is meant*; which refers the clause back to himself, though one might have thought it meant the Buddha intends teaching the others the Path to the Deathless Emancipation, in the Pāḷi it can be read either way.

¹¹⁰ They are still using *āvuso* and his clan name, even though told not to because they are still unconvinced of the Buddha’s achievement.

The Great Chapter

Worthy One, a Perfect Sambuddha, lend an ear, monks, I will instruct you about the attainment of the Deathless, I will teach the Dhamma, (and) following the path as it has been preached, after no long time (you will attain) that good for which young men of good family rightly go forth from the home to the homeless life, that unsurpassed conclusion to the spiritual life, and will dwell having known, experienced, and attained it yourselves in this very life.”

For a second time the group-of-five monks said this to the Gracious One: “But you, friend Gotama, by that (ascetic) lifestyle, that practice, that difficult way of living, did not arrive at a state beyond (ordinary) human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight. So how can you now, luxuriant, forsaking the striving, gone back to luxury, attain a state beyond (ordinary) human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight?”

For a second time, the Gracious One said this to the group-of-five monks: “The Realised One, monks, is not luxuriant, is not forsaking the striving, and has not gone back to luxury. The Realised One is a Worthy One, a Perfect Sambuddha, lend an ear, monks, I will instruct you about the attainment of the Deathless, I will teach the Dhamma, (and) following the path as it has been preached, after no long time (you will attain) that good for which young men of good family rightly go forth from the home to the homeless life, that unsurpassed conclusion to the spiritual life, and will dwell having known, experienced, and attained it yourself in this very life.”

I. The First Teachings

For a third time the group-of-five monks said this to the Gracious One: “But you, friend Gotama, by that (ascetic) lifestyle, that practice, that difficult way of living, did not arrive at a state beyond (ordinary) human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight. So how can you now, luxuriant, forsaking the striving, gone back to luxury, attain a state beyond (ordinary) human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight?”

After this was said, the Gracious One said this to the group-of-five monks: “Are you aware of my having spoken to you like this before?”

“Certainly not, venerable Sir.”¹¹¹

“The Realised One is a Worthy One□ , a Perfect Sambuddha, lend an ear, monks, I will instruct you about the attainment of the Deathless, I will teach the Dhamma, (and) following the path as it has been preached, after no long time (you will attain) that good for which young men of good family rightly go forth from the home to the homeless life, that unsurpassed conclusion to the spiritual life, and will dwell having known, experienced, and attained it yourself in this very life,” and the Gracious One was able to persuade the group-of-five

¹¹¹ Here they address the Buddha as *Bhante*, rather than *āvuso*, marking their conviction that he really has attained Sambodhi, and their willingness to listen to him with respect.

monks.¹¹² Then the group-of-five monks listened to the Gracious One, they lent an ear, (so as) to attend with their mind to deep knowledge.

[9: The Discourse Setting the Dhamma Wheel Rolling]¹¹³

Then the Gracious One addressed the group-of-five monks, saying: “There are these two extremes, monks, that one who has gone forth ought not to associate with,

which is this: devotion and clinging to the pleasure in sense pleasures,

which is low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, and not connected with the goal;

and this: devotion to self-mortification,

which is painful, ignoble, and not connected with the goal.

Not having approached either of these two extremes, monks, the middle practice was awakened to by the Realised One, which produces vision, produces knowledge, and which leads to peace, deep knowledge, Complete Awakening, and Emancipation.

¹¹² Comm: *was able to persuade them: “I am a Buddha”.*

¹¹³ Cf. SN 56, Saccasamyuttam, 11. Jā Nid: *sitting on the best of Buddha seats that had been prepared, at the conjunction of the Uttarāsāḷha constellation, surrounded by 180,000,000 Brahmās, after addressing the Group-of-Five elders, he taught the Discourse Setting the Dhamma Wheel Rolling.*

I. The First Teachings

Now what is this middle practice, monks, that was awakened to by the Realised One, which produces vision,¹¹⁴ produces knowledge, and which leads to peace, deep knowledge, Complete Awakening, and Emancipation? It is this Eightfold Noble Path, as follows:

right view
right thought
right speech
right action
right livelihood
right endeavour
right mindfulness
right concentration.¹¹⁵

This is the middle practice, monks, that was awakened to by the Realised One, which produces vision, produces knowledge, and which leads to peace, deep knowledge, Complete Awakening, and Emancipation.

¹¹⁴ Comm: *said in reference to the eye of wisdom.*

¹¹⁵ The Eightfold Noble Path is sometimes organised into three sections or groups: virtue (*sīla*): right speech, action and livelihood; mastery of mind (*samādhi*): right endeavour, mindfulness and concentration; and wisdom (*paññā*): right view and thought.

[The Four Noble Truths]

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of suffering:

birth is suffering

also old age is suffering

also sickness is suffering

also death is suffering

being joined to what is not dear is suffering

being separated from what is dear is suffering

also not to obtain what one longs for is suffering

in brief, the five constituent parts (of mind and body) that provide fuel for attachment are suffering.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the arising of suffering: it is that craving which leads to continuation in existence, which is connected with enjoyment and passion, greatly enjoying this and that, as follows:

craving for sense pleasures

craving for continuation

craving for discontinuation.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the complete fading away and cessation without remainder of that craving - liberation, letting go, release, and non-adherence.

I. The First Teachings

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the practice leading to the end of suffering, it is this Eightfold Noble Path, as follows:

right view

right thought

right speech

right action

right livelihood

right endeavour

right mindfulness

right concentration.

[Realisation]

“This is the noble truth of suffering” - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of suffering” refers (i.e. suffering itself) ought to be fully known¹¹⁶ - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

¹¹⁶ The syntax of this section in Pāḷi is very roundabout and not a little awkward. The translation is no better, as to maintain consistency, we have to circumlocute to avoid saying (just below): *This noble truth of the arising of suffering ought to be given up*, which makes it sound as if the truth ought to be given up, rather than what causes the arising.

The Great Chapter

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of suffering” refers has been fully known - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

“This is the noble truth of the arising of suffering” - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the arising of suffering” refers (i.e. craving) ought to be given up - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the arising of suffering” refers has been given up, to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

“This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering” - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering” refers (i.e. Emancipation) ought to be experienced - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

I. The First Teachings

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering” refers has been experienced - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

“This is the noble truth of the practice going to the cessation of suffering” - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the practice leading to the end of suffering” refers (i.e. the practice itself) ought to be developed - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the practice leading to the end of suffering” refers has been developed - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

[Declaring the Awakening]

For as long as to me, monks, in regard to these four noble truths - turned like this, in three ways, twelvefold - knowledge and insight as it really is was not quite clear, for that long, monks, I did not declare to the world with its gods, Māra, and Brahmā, to this generation, with

The Great Chapter

its ascetics and brāhmaṇas, princes and men, that I was a Full and Perfect Sambuddha with unsurpassed complete awakening.

But when to me, monks, in regard to these four noble truths - turned like this, in three ways, twelvefold - knowledge and insight as it really is was quite clear then, monks, I did declare to the world with its gods, Māra, and Brahmā, to this generation, with its ascetics and brāhmaṇas, princes and men, that I was a Full and Perfect Sambuddha with unsurpassed complete awakening. To me knowledge and insight arose:

Sure is my liberation of mind
this is my last birth
now there is no continuation of existence.”

[The First Attainment]

The Gracious One said this, and the group-of-five monks were uplifted and greatly rejoiced in what was said by the Gracious One. Moreover, as this sermon was being given, to the venerable Koṇḍañña the dust-free, stainless, Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:¹¹⁷

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

¹¹⁷ Comm: *together with 180,000,000 divinities he was established in the Fruit of Stream-Entry*. Jā Nid and Mahāvastu agree with this number.

I. The First Teachings

[The Gods Rejoice]

Now when the Dhamma Wheel was set rolling by the Gracious One the Earth gods¹¹⁸ let loose a cry:

“Near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel has been set rolling by the Gracious One, and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brāhmaṇa or by a god or by a Māra or by a Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Earth gods the gods called the Four Great Kings let loose a cry:

“Near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel has been set rolling by the Gracious One, and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brāhmaṇa or by a god or by a Māra or by a Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the gods called the Four Great Kings the Tāvatiṃsa gods let loose a cry:

“Near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel has been set rolling by the Gracious One, and it

¹¹⁸ In the enumeration of the 31 Planes of Existence the *Bhumṃ devā* are not normally counted as a separate group, but are included in the realm of the Four Great Kings.

The Great Chapter

cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brāhmaṇa or by a god or by a Māra or by a Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Tāvatiṃsa gods the Yāma gods let loose a cry:

“Near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel has been set rolling by the Gracious One, and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brāhmaṇa or by a god or by a Māra or by a Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Yāma gods the Tusita gods let loose a cry:

“Near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel has been set rolling by the Gracious One, and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brāhmaṇa or by a god or by a Māra or by a Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Tusita gods the Nimmāṇarati gods let loose a cry:

“Near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel has been set rolling by the Gracious One, and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brāhmaṇa or by a god or by a Māra or by a Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Nimmāṇarati gods the Paranimmitavasavatti gods let loose a cry:

I. The First Teachings

“Near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel has been set rolling by the Gracious One, and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brāhmaṇa or by a god or by a Māra or by a Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Paranimmitavasavatti gods the Brahmakāyika gods¹¹⁹ let loose a cry:

“Near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel has been set rolling by the Gracious One, and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brāhmaṇa or by a god or by a Māra or by a Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Thus at that moment, at that second, that cry reached as far as the Brahmā worlds, and this ten-thousand world-element moved, wavered, and shook, and great and measureless light became manifest in the world, transcending the godly power of the gods. Then the Gracious One uttered this inspired utterance:

“Koṇḍañña surely knows, Koṇḍañña surely knows.”

Thus to the venerable Koṇḍañña came the name Añña Koṇḍañña (Koṇḍañña, he-who-knows).

¹¹⁹ All the gods so far belong to the Sensual World, but the *Brahmakāyikā devā*, of which there are 16 kinds (all listed separately in the Safeguard version of this discourse), belong to the Form World.

[10: Further Attainments]

Then the venerable Aññā Koṇḍañña, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher’s teaching, said this to the Gracious One: “May I receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may I receive the full ordination.”

“Come, monk,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was this venerable one’s full ordination.¹²⁰

Then the Gracious One gave advice and instruction with a Dhamma talk to the remaining monks. Then to the venerable Vappa and to the venerable Bhaddiya as the Gracious One gave advice and instruction with a Dhamma talk the dust-free, stainless, Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

¹²⁰ He is therefore the first monk is the dispensation, and was ordained with the *ehi-bhikkhu* formula.

I. The First Teachings

They, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma,¹²¹ understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher's teaching, said this to the Gracious One: "May we receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination."

"Come, monks," said the Gracious One, "the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering." That was these venerable ones' full ordination.

Then the Gracious One, living on (those two) monks' food gave advice and instruction with a Dhamma talk to the remaining monks, and the six monks subsisted on whatever, after walking for alms-food, the three monks brought them.¹²² Then to the venerable Mahānāma and to the venerable Assaji as the Gracious One gave advice and instruction with a Dhamma talk the dust-free, stainless, Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

¹²¹ According to the commentary and Jā Nid Vappa attained on the first day after Vesākha, and Bhaddiya on the second, but it is hard to reconcile this with the text which treats them both together. There is a similar problem with Mahānāma and Assaji below, who are said by the commentary to have attained on the third and fourth days of the waning moon. That they were ordained in pairs strongly suggests that they attained at the same time.

¹²² Horner takes this line as a quotation meaning this was the instruction and advice he gave them, but I think this misses the point.

The Great Chapter

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

They, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher’s teaching, said this to the Gracious One: “May we receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination.”

“Come, monks,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was these venerable ones’ full ordination.

[11: The Discourse about the Characteristic of Non-Self] (The First Arahants)

Then the Gracious One addressed the group-of-five monks (saying):

“Bodily form, monks, is not Self,¹²³ for if this bodily form, monks, were Self this bodily form would not lead to affliction, and regarding bodily form it might be possible (to say): ‘Let my bodily form be thus, let my bodily form be not thus.’ But because bodily form, monks, is

¹²³ It is the supposed Higher or Cosmic Self that is being denied. The first proof of lack of Self in this sense is that we do not have ultimate control over the constituent parts (*khandha*).

I. The First Teachings

not Self, therefore bodily form does lead to affliction, and regarding bodily form it is not possible (to say): ‘Let my bodily form be thus, let my bodily form be not thus.’

Feeling is not Self, for if this feeling, monks, were Self this feeling would not lead to affliction, and regarding feeling it might be possible (to say): ‘Let my feeling be thus, let my feeling be not thus.’ But because feeling, monks, is not Self, therefore feeling does lead to affliction, and regarding feeling it is not possible (to say): ‘Let my feeling be thus, let my feeling be not thus.’

Perception is not Self, for if this perception, monks, were Self this perception would not lead to affliction, and regarding perception it might be possible (to say): ‘Let my perception be thus, let my perception be not thus.’ But because perception, monks, is not Self, therefore perception does lead to affliction, and regarding perception it is not possible (to say): ‘Let my perception be thus, let my perception be not thus.’

(Mental) processes¹²⁴ are not Self, for if these (mental) processes, monks, were Self these (mental) processes would not lead to affliction, and regarding (mental) processes it might be possible (to say): ‘Let my (mental) processes be thus, let my (mental) processes be not thus.’ But because (mental) processes, monks, are not Self, therefore (mental)

¹²⁴ This is given in the plural, whereas the others are all in the singular form.

The Great Chapter

processes do lead to affliction, and regarding (mental) processes it is not possible (to say): ‘Let my (mental) processes be thus, let my (mental) processes be not thus.’

Consciousness is not Self, for if this consciousness, monks, were Self this consciousness would not lead to affliction, and regarding consciousness it might be possible (to say): ‘Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus.’ But because consciousness, monks, is not Self, therefore consciousness does lead to affliction, and regarding consciousness it is not possible (to say): ‘Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus.’”

What do you think of this, monks: “(Is) bodily form permanent or impermanent?” “Impermanent, venerable Sir.” “But that which is impermanent, (is) that unpleasant or pleasant?” “Unpleasant, venerable Sir.” “But that which is unpleasant and changeable, is it proper to regard it thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my Self?’ ” “Certainly not, venerable Sir.”¹²⁵

“(Is) feeling permanent or impermanent?” “Impermanent, venerable Sir.” “But that which is impermanent, (is) that unpleasant or pleasant?” “Unpleasant, venerable Sir.” “But that which is unpleasant

¹²⁵ It is interesting that the second argument against the concept of a Self relies on the *notion of suitability* to uphold its truth.

I. The First Teachings

and changeable, is it proper to regard it thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my Self?’ ” “Certainly not, venerable Sir.”

“(Is) perception permanent or impermanent?” “Impermanent, venerable Sir.” “But that which is impermanent, (is) that unpleasant or pleasant?” “Unpleasant, venerable Sir.” “But that which is unpleasant and changeable, is it proper to regard it thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my Self?’ ” “Certainly not, venerable Sir.”

“(Are) (mental) processes permanent or impermanent?” “Impermanent, venerable Sir.” “But that which is impermanent, (is) that unpleasant or pleasant?” “Unpleasant, venerable Sir.” “But that which is unpleasant and changeable, is it proper to regard it thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my Self?’ ” “Certainly not, venerable Sir.”

“(Is) consciousness permanent or impermanent?” “Impermanent, venerable Sir.” “But that which is impermanent, (is) that unpleasant or pleasant?” “Unpleasant, venerable Sir.” “But that which is unpleasant and changeable, is it proper to regard it thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my Self?’ ” “Certainly not, venerable Sir.”

“Therefore monks, whatever bodily form (there is) in the past, future or present, internal or external, gross or fine, inferior or excellent, whether far or near, regarding all form: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my Self,’ in just this way, as it really is, it should be seen with full wisdom.

The Great Chapter

Whatever feeling (there is) in the past, future or present, internal or external, gross or fine, inferior or excellent, whether far or near, regarding all feeling: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my Self,' in just this way, as it really is, it should be seen with full wisdom.

Whatever perception (there is) in the past, future or present, internal or external, gross or fine, inferior or excellent, whether far or near, regarding all perception: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my Self,' in just this way, as it really is, it should be seen with full wisdom.

Whatever (mental) processes (there are) in the past, future or present, internal or external, gross or fine, inferior or excellent, whether far or near, regarding all (mental) processes: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my Self,' in just this way, as it really is, it should be seen with full wisdom.

Whatever consciousness (there is) in the past, future or present, internal or external, gross or fine, inferior or excellent, whether far or near, regarding all consciousness: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my Self,' in just this way, as it really is, it should be seen with full wisdom.

Seeing in this way, monks, the learned, Noble disciple, grows tired of bodily form, and tired of feeling, and tired of perception, and tired of (mental) processes, and tired of consciousness, through tiredness he

I. The First Teachings

becomes dispassionate, through dispassion he is liberated, in liberation, there is the knowledge that such is liberation:

‘Destroyed is (re)birth
accomplished is the spiritual life
done is what ought to be done
there is no more of this mundane state - this he knew.’

The Gracious One said this, and the group-of-five monks were uplifted and greatly rejoiced in what was said by the Gracious One.

Moreover, as this sermon was being given, the group-of-five monks’ minds were liberated from the pollutants, without attachment, and at that time there were six Worthy Ones in the world.

The First Section for Recital (is Finished)

[II: Progress of the Sāsana]

12: Yasa’s Going Forth

Then at that time at Bārāṇasī there was a delicate young man of good family, Yasa by name,¹²⁶ a merchant’s son. There were three palaces for him: one for the winter time, one for the summer time, and one for the rainy season.¹²⁷ During the four months in the rainy season palace, while a female¹²⁸ musical ensemble was entertaining him, he did not descend to the bottom of the palace. Then while the young man Yasa, possessed of and endowed with the five strands of sensual pleasure, was being entertained he fell asleep first, and his retinue fell asleep afterwards, and all night an oil-lamp burned.

Then the young man Yasa, after waking first, saw his retinue sleeping, one with a lute in her armpit, another with a small drum on her neck, another with a drum on her chest, another with hair dishevelled, another dribbling, another muttering, (so that) it seemed as if there was a cemetery close at hand. Having seen (this) the danger became clear to him, and his mind was established in world-weariness.

¹²⁶ Called *Yaśoda* in Mahāvastu (see e.g. 3.405).

¹²⁷ This story of the palaces and the reason for Yasa leaving home seems to have been later applied to the Bodhisatta’s own story.

¹²⁸ Lit: *non-male*.

II. Progress of the Sāsana

Then the young man Yasa uttered this exalted utterance: “Tribulation indeed, ruination indeed!” Then the young man Yasa, after donning his golden slippers, went to the door of his dwelling. Divine beings¹²⁹ opened the door (thinking): “Let there be no obstacle to the going-forth of the young man Yasa from the home to the homeless life.” Then the young man Yasa went to the city gate. Divine beings opened the gate (thinking): “Let there be no obstacle to the going-forth of the young man Yasa from the home to the homeless life.” Then the young man Yasa approached the Deer Park at Isipatana.

Then at that time, towards the time of dawn, after rising, the Gracious One was walking in the open air. The Gracious One saw the young man Yasa coming while still far away, and after seeing (him) and descending from the walkway, he sat down on the prepared seat. Then the young man Yasa, not far from the Gracious One uttered this exalted utterance: “Tribulation indeed, ruination indeed!” Then the Gracious One said this to the young man Yasa: “This, Yasa, is not tribulation, this is not ruination, come, Yasa, sit down and I will teach Dhamma to you.”

Then the young man Yasa (thinking): ‘It seems this is not tribulation, this is not ruination’, joyful, uplifted, after taking off his golden slippers, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One, he sat down on one side. To the

¹²⁹ Lit: *non-human beings*.

The Great Chapter

young man Yasa, sitting at one side, the Gracious One spoke about the gradual teaching, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation, (these) he explained.

When the Gracious One knew that the young man Yasa had a ready mind, a pliable mind, an open mind, an uplifted mind, a confident mind, he explained to him the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path. Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to the young man Yasa on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:¹³⁰

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

¹³⁰ Jā Nid says that he became a Stream-Enterer (*Sotāpanna*) that night and became a Worthy One the next day. Th. 117 records Yasa’s verse on this occasion: *well-perfumed, well-clothed, adorned with all (my) ornaments, I attained the three knowledges - I have followed the advice of the Buddha.*

[13: Yasa’s father]

Then the young man Yasa’s mother, having ascended the palace, and not finding¹³¹ the young man Yasa approached the merchant householder, and after approaching the merchant householder, she said this: “Your son Yasa, householder, cannot be found.”

Then the merchant householder, after sending scouts on horses to the four directions, himself approached the Deer Park at Isipatana.

The merchant householder saw the cast-off golden sandals, and after seeing (them) he went after him.

The Gracious One saw the merchant householder, coming while still far away, and after seeing (him), this occurred to the Gracious One: “Now what if I were to so arrange it with my psychic powers that while the merchant householder is sitting here he could not see the young man Yasa sitting here?” Then the Gracious One so arranged it with his psychic powers.

Then the merchant householder approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he said this to the Gracious One: “Has the Gracious One, venerable Sir, seen the young man Yasa?” “Sit, householder, and it may be that while you are sitting here you will see the young man

¹³¹ Lit: *not seeing*.

The Great Chapter

Yasa sitting here.” Then the merchant householder (thought): “It seems that while sitting here I will see the young man Yasa sitting here,” and joyful, uplifted, after worshipping the Gracious One, he sat down on one side.

To the merchant householder, sitting at one side the Gracious One spoke about the gradual teaching, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation, (these) he explained. When the Gracious One knew that the merchant householder had a ready mind, a pliable mind, an open mind, an uplifted mind, a confident mind, he explained to him the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to the merchant householder on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

Then the merchant householder, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher’s teaching, said this to the Gracious One:

II. Progress of the Sāsana

“Excellent, venerable Sir! Excellent, venerable Sir! Just as, venerable Sir, one might set upright what has been overturned, or open up what has been closed, or show a path to one who is lost, or carry an oil lamp into the darkness, (thinking): ‘those with vision will see forms’, just so has the Dhamma been explained by the Gracious One in countless ways. I go, venerable Sir, to the Gracious One for refuge, and to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks.¹³² Please bear it in mind, Gracious One, that I am a lay follower who has gone for refuge from today forward for as long as I have the breath of life,” and he became the first lay disciple in the world with the three(-refuge) formula.

Then while Dhamma was being taught to the young man Yasa’s father as (Yasa) was reflecting on the stage (he had reached), just as it was seen, as it was understood, his mind was liberated from the pollutants without attachment. Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “While Dhamma was being taught to the young man Yasa’s father as (Yasa) was reflecting on the stage (he had reached), just as it was seen, as it was understood, his mind was liberated from the pollutants without attachment.

¹³² At this point there was no bhikkhunī saṅgha, but it seems this formula was still in use even after that saṅgha was formed, which is traditionally placed by Theravāda tradition in the 6th year after the Awakening.

The Great Chapter

It is impossible that the young man Yasa could go back to enjoying the low life of sensual pleasures in the way he formerly did when he was at home. Now what if I were to allay my psychic powers?" Then the Gracious One allayed his psychic powers.

Then the merchant householder saw the young man Yasa sitting (there), and after seeing (him), he said this to the young man Yasa: "Your Mother, dear Yasa, is taken up with lamenting and grieving, give life to your Mother!" Then the young man Yasa looked up at the Gracious One.

Then the Gracious One said this to the merchant householder: "What do you think of this, householder, for the young man Yasa, with a trainee's knowledge, with a trainee's insight, who saw the Dhamma, just as you have, (but) as he was reflecting on the stage (he had reached), just as it was seen, as it was understood, his mind was liberated from the pollutants without attachment. Is it possible that he could go back to enjoying the low life of sensual pleasures in the way he formerly did when he was at home?"

"Certainly not, venerable Sir."

"But for the young man Yasa, householder, with a trainee's knowledge, with a trainee's insight, he saw the Dhamma, just as you have, (and) as he was reflecting on the stage (he had reached), just as it was seen, as it was understood, his mind was liberated from the pollutants without attachment. It is impossible that the young man

II. Progress of the Sāsana

Yasa could go back to enjoying the low life of sensual pleasures in the way he formerly did when he was at home.”

“It is a gain for the young man Yasa, venerable Sir, it is a great gain, venerable Sir, for the young man Yasa, that the young man Yasa’s mind is liberated from the pollutants without attachment. May the Gracious One, venerable Sir, consent to me (offering him) a meal today, together with the young man Yasa as the ascetic who attends on him.”¹³³ The Gracious One consented by maintaining silence.

Then the merchant householder, having understood the Gracious One’s consent, having worshipped and circumambulated the Gracious One, went away. Then the young man Yasa not long after the merchant householder had gone away¹³⁴ said this to the Gracious One: “May I receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may I receive the full ordination.”

¹³³ Lit: *follows after him*, which sounds unidiomatic in English, the meaning is that he attends on him.

¹³⁴ This is a locative absolute construction, with past tense meaning, see Syntax, p.236. para c.

“Come, monk,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was this venerable one’s full ordination, and at that time there were seven Worthy Ones in the world.

Yasa’s Going Forth is Finished

[14: Yasa’s Mother and his Former Wife]

Then the Gracious One, after dressing in the morning time, and picking up his bowl and robe, went with the venerable Yasa as the ascetic who attends on him to the merchant householder’s home, and after approaching he sat down on the prepared seat. Then the venerable Yasa’s Mother¹³⁵ and his former wife¹³⁶ approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One, they sat down on one side.

The Gracious One spoke about the gradual teaching to them, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation, (these) he explained. When the Gracious

¹³⁵ The Aṅguttaranikāya commentary (AA 14.7, Sujātavatthu) says this was Sujāta, who had offered milk-rice to the Bodhisatta just before his Awakening, and that she was named the foremost of the female lay followers (*upāsikā*) to take refuge.

¹³⁶ Lit: *former second*.

II. Progress of the Sāsana

One knew that they had ready minds, pliable minds, open minds, uplifted minds, confident minds, he explained to him the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to them on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

They, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher’s teaching, said this to the Gracious One:

“Excellent, venerable Sir! Excellent, venerable Sir! Just as, venerable Sir, one might set upright what has been overturned, or open up what has been closed, or show a path to one who is lost, or carry an oil lamp into the darkness, (thinking): ‘those with vision will see forms’, just so has the Dhamma been explained by the Gracious One in countless ways. We go, venerable Sir, to the Gracious One for refuge, and to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks. Please bear it in mind, Gracious One, that we are female lay followers who have gone for refuge from today forward for as long as we have the breath

The Great Chapter

of life,” and they became the first female lay disciples in the world with the three(-refuge) formula.

Then Yasa’s Mother and Father and former wife having with their own hands served and satisfied the Gracious One and the venerable Yasa with excellent food and drinks,¹³⁷ when the Gracious One had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, sat down on one side. Then the Gracious One, after Yasa’s Mother and Father and former wife had been instructed, roused, enthused, and cheered with a Dhamma talk, having risen from the seat, went away.

¹³⁷ Sometimes translated as *solid and soft* (food) (e.g. Horner). Ajahn Ṭhānissaro (BMC 1) suggests that *bhojanīya* = *staple food*, and *khādanīya* = *non-staple food*. I have previously tried using this and other translations, but the idiomatic thing to say in English is *food and drinks*, which although it doesn’t accurately translate the Pāḷi, does get the meaning across.

15: The Going-Forth of (Yasa's) Four Householder Friends

Four of the venerable Yasa's householder friends, sons of good families of greater and lesser merchants in Bārāṇasī, (named) Vimala, Subāhu, Puṇṇaji and Gavampati¹³⁸ heard: "The young man Yasa, it seems, after shaving off his hair and beard, and donning brown garments,¹³⁹ has gone forth from the home to the homeless life." After hearing (it), this occurred to them: "This is not an inferior Dhamma and Discipline, not an inferior going-forth in which the young man Yasa, after shaving off his hair and beard, and donning brown garments, has gone forth from the home to the homeless life."

They approached the venerable Yasa, and after approaching and worshipping the venerable Yasa, they stood on one side. Then the venerable Yasa took those four householder friends and approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One, he sat down on one side. While sitting on one side the venerable Yasa said this to the Gracious One: "These, venerable Sir, are four of my householder friends sons of good families of greater and lesser merchants in Bārāṇasī, (named) Vimala, Subāhu, Puṇṇaji

¹³⁸ Apart from Gavampati, for whom see Th. 38, this is the only mention of these monks in the Canon.

¹³⁹ It is not clear what colour *kāsāya* really was, as the dictionaries mention *red, ochre, yellow and brown*. According to CPD (s.v. *kasāya*) it was made from the juice of myrobalan. It is interesting that the word used in these stock phrases is *vattha, garments* or *clothes*, rather than *cīvara, robes*.

The Great Chapter

and Gavampati, please advise them, Gracious One, please instruct them.”

The Gracious One spoke about the gradual teaching to them, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation, (these) he explained. When the Gracious One knew that they had ready minds, pliable minds, open minds, uplifted minds, confident minds, he explained to them the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to them on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

They, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher’s teaching, said this to the Gracious One: “May we receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination.” “Come, monks,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was these venerable ones’ full ordination.

II. Progress of the Sāsana

Then the Gracious One gave advice and instruction with a Dhamma talk to those monks. As the Gracious One gave advice and instruction with a Dhamma talk their minds were liberated from the pollutants, without attachment, and at that time there were eleven Worthy Ones in the world.

16: The Going-Forth of the Fifty Householder Friends

About fifty of the venerable Yasa’s householder friends, sons of the traditional leading families¹⁴⁰ in the State heard: “The young man Yasa, it seems, after shaving off his hair and beard, and donning brown garments, has gone forth from the home to the homeless life.” After hearing (it), this occurred to them: “This is not an inferior Dhamma and Discipline, not an inferior going-forth in which the young man Yasa, after shaving off his hair and beard, and donning brown garments, has gone forth from the home to the homeless life.”

They approached the venerable Yasa, and after approaching and worshipping the venerable Yasa, they sat down on one side. Then the venerable Yasa took those fifty householder friends and approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One, he sat down on one side. While sitting on one side the venerable Yasa said this to the Gracious One: “These, venerable Sir,

¹⁴⁰ Comm: *ancient and not-so-ancient on account of their lineage is the meaning.*

The Great Chapter

are about fifty of my householder friends sons of the traditional leading families in the State, please advise them, Gracious One, please instruct them.”

The Gracious One spoke about the gradual teaching to them, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation, (these) he explained. When the Gracious One knew that they had ready minds, pliable minds, open minds, uplifted minds, confident minds, he explained to them the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to them on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

They, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher’s teaching, said this to the Gracious One: “May we receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination.” “Come, monks,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-

II. Progress of the Sāsana

proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was these venerable ones’ full ordination.

Then the Gracious One gave advice and instruction with a Dhamma talk to those monks. As the Gracious One gave advice and instruction with a Dhamma talk their minds were liberated from the pollutants, without attachment, and at that time there were sixty-one Worthy Ones in the world.

The Going Forth of the Fifty Householder Friends is Finished

17: The Story about Māra¹⁴¹

Then the Gracious One addressed the monks, (saying): “I am liberated from all snares, monks, both divine and human, you are also liberated from all snares, monks, both divine and human. Go on a walk,¹⁴² monks, for the benefit of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, benefit, and happiness of gods and men. Do not let two go by one (way),¹⁴³ teach the Dhamma, monks, (which is) good in the beginning, good in the

¹⁴¹ Cf. *Dutiyamārapāsasuttaṃ* in *Mārasaṃyuttaṃ*, SN1.4.5.

¹⁴² Lit: *walk a walk*, which is a common sort of construction in Pāḷi, but unidiomatic in English. We can infer from the injunction that the Rainy Season is now over and the monks are free to wander around the countryside.

¹⁴³ Following the commentarial paraphrase.

The Great Chapter

middle, good in the end, with its meaning, with its (proper) phrasing; explain the spiritual life which is complete, full and pure, there are beings with little dust on the eyes who are perishing through not hearing the Dhamma, there will be those who will understand the Dhamma. I will go, monks, to Uruvelā and Senāni Village in order to teach the Dhamma.”

Then the Wicked Māra approached the Gracious One, and after approaching the Gracious One he spoke this verse:

“You are bound with all the snares, both divine and human,
You are bound in great bonds, you are not free from me, ascetic!”

“I am liberated from all snares, both divine and human,
I am liberated from the great bonds: you are brought low, End-Maker!”

“The snare is in the very space the mind travels through,
Therefore it is in bondage, you are not free from me, ascetic!”

“Forms, sounds, scents, tastes, tangibles delight the mind,
(But) for me there is no desire: you are brought low, End-Maker!”

Then the Wicked Māra (understood): “The Gracious One knows me, the Fortunate One knows me!” and pained, depressed, he vanished right there.

The Story about Māra is Finished

18: The Story of Full Ordination through Going to the Three Refuges

Then at that time monks from various districts, from various states, were bringing those seeking the going-forth and seeking the full ordination, (thinking): “The Gracious One will give these the going-forth, will give them full ordination,” and therefore the monks became tired, as did also those seeking the going-forth and seeking the full ordination. Then when the Gracious One had gone into solitude, into seclusion, this reflection arose in his mind: “Now monks from various districts, from various states, bring those seeking the going-forth and seeking the full ordination, (thinking): ‘The Gracious One will give these the going-forth, will give them full ordination,’ and therefore the monks become tired, as do also those seeking the going-forth and seeking the full ordination. What if I were to give permission to the monks, (saying): ‘Now you, monks, in whatever district, in whatever state, may give the going-forth, may give the full ordination’?”

Then the Gracious One, having risen from seclusion in the evening time, for this cause, for this reason, after assembling the Community of monks, and giving them a talk on Dhamma, addressed the monks (saying): “Here, monks, having gone into solitude, into seclusion, this reflection arose in my mind: ‘Now monks from various districts, from various states, bring those seeking the going-forth and seeking the full ordination, (thinking): “The Gracious One will give these the going-forth, will give them full ordination,” and therefore the monks

The Great Chapter

became tired, as also do those seeking the going-forth and seeking the full ordination. What if I were to give permission to the monks, (saying): “Now you, monks, in whatever district, in whatever state, may give the going-forth, may give the full ordination”?”

Now I give permission to you, monks, in whatever district, in whatever state, you may give the going-forth, may give the full ordination. And in this way, monks, you should give the going-forth, should give the full ordination: first, after making them shave off hair and beard, don brown garments, arrange the upper robe on one shoulder, worship the monks’ feet, sit on their heels, and holding their hands in respectful salutation, you should say to them, speak thus:

‘I go to the Buddha for refuge
I go to the Dhamma for refuge
I go to the Sangha for refuge

For a second time I go to the Buddha for refuge
For a second time I go to the Dhamma for refuge
For a second time I go to the Sangha for refuge

For a third time I go to the Buddha for refuge
For a third time I go to the Dhamma for refuge
For a third time I go to the Sangha for refuge.’

II. Progress of the Sāsana

I give permission, monks, for the going-forth and the full ordination through going to the three refuges.”¹⁴⁴

The Story of Full Ordination through Going to the Three Refuges is Finished

19: The Second Story about Māra¹⁴⁵

Then the Gracious One, having stayed for the Rains Retreat,¹⁴⁶ addressed the monks, (saying): “I, monks, through wise application of thought, through wise endeavour, have attained supreme liberation, have experienced supreme liberation; you also, monks, through wise application of thought, through wise endeavour, have attained supreme liberation, have experienced supreme liberation.”

Then the Wicked Māra approached the Gracious One, and after approaching the Gracious One he spoke this verse:

¹⁴⁴ The commentary gives a long explanation of the procedure for this ordination, which explains that this gives both the going-forth and full ordination, providing that both the ordainee and the preceptor are pure, and the procedure is correctly followed.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Paṭhamamārapāsasuttam in Mārasamyuttam, SN1.4.4, where the order of the sections is reversed.

¹⁴⁶ The mention here of the end of the Rains Retreat must mean that this section is misplaced, or, more likely, a variation of the First Story about Māra, as that formed the basis for the Buddha sending out the sixty monks on pilgrimage, which implies that the Rains Retreat had already finished.

The Great Chapter

“You are bound with Māra’s snares, both divine and human,
You are bound in Māra’s bonds, you are not free from me,
ascetic!”

“I am liberated from Māra’s snares, both divine and human,
I am liberated from Māra’s bonds: you are brought low, End-
Maker!”

Then the Wicked Māra (understood): “The Gracious One knows me,
the Fortunate One knows me!” and pained, depressed, he vanished
right there.

The Second Story about Māra is Finished

20: The Tale of the Good Group of Friends

Then the Gracious One, having dwelt in Bārāṇasī as long as he liked,
left on a walking tour for Uruvelā.¹⁴⁷ Then the Gracious One, having
gone down from the road, approached a certain jungle thicket,¹⁴⁸ and
after approaching and entering that jungle thicket, he sat down at the
root of a certain tree.

¹⁴⁷ This is where he had attained Awakening before coming to Bārāṇasī and
Isipatana. It is strange indeed that the Buddha seems to have made this
journey alone.

¹⁴⁸ Named as *Kappāsiya* in Jā Nid.

II. Progress of the Sāsana

Then at that time a group of thirty good friends,¹⁴⁹ together with their wives,¹⁵⁰ were amusing themselves in that jungle thicket. One, who was not married,¹⁵¹ had for that reason brought along a harlot.¹⁵² Then that harlot, while they were amusing themselves heedlessly, having taken his belongings, ran away.

Then those friends, doing their friend a service, were searching for that woman and wandering around in that jungle thicket. They saw the Gracious One sitting at the root of a certain tree, and after seeing (him) they approached the Gracious One, and after approaching they said this to the Gracious One: “Can the Gracious One, venerable Sir, see a woman?”

“But why, young men, (look for) a woman?”

¹⁴⁹ At the beginning of the commentary to the Kaṭhinakkhandhaka they are said to have been 30 brothers having the Kosalan king as father.

¹⁵⁰ In Mahāvastu this group are all said to be batchelors and they only bring along one harlot, who is named as *Upārdha Kasikā*, which indicates that she was from a farming background.

¹⁵¹ Lit: *not a husband*.

¹⁵² Literally *vesī* means a woman belonging to the third caste, but the word had come to mean a *prostitute* or a *harlot*. If Mahāvastu is correct about the name, then she would actually belong to the *sudda* caste.

The Great Chapter

“Here, venerable Sir, we, a group of thirty good friends, together with our wives, were amusing ourselves in this jungle thicket. One, who was not married, had for that reason brought along a harlot. Then that harlot, venerable Sir, while we were amusing ourselves heedlessly, having taken his belongings, ran away. Therefore we, venerable Sir, doing our friend a service, are searching for that woman and wandering around in this jungle thicket.”

“What do you think of this, young men, what is better for you: that you should search for a woman, or that you should search for yourselves?”¹⁵³ “This is better for us, venerable Sir, that we should search for ourselves.” “Then, young men, be seated, I will teach the Dhamma to you.” “Certainly, venerable Sir,” said that group of good friends, and after worshipping the Gracious One, they sat down on one side.

The Gracious One spoke about the gradual teaching to them, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation, (these) he explained.

¹⁵³ Horner: *seek for the self*; which gives the wrong impression, as though they were to *seek for their Higher Self*. The word *attānam* however is plural and no indication of *the Self* is given in the text.

II. Progress of the Sāsana

When the Gracious One knew that they had ready minds, pliable minds, open minds, uplifted minds, confident minds, he explained to them the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to them on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:¹⁵⁴

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

They, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher’s teaching, said this to the Gracious One: “May we receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination.”

¹⁵⁴ Comm: *to some arose the path of Stream-Entry, to some Once-Returning, to some Non-Returning.*

The Great Chapter

“Come, monks,”¹⁵⁵ said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was these venerable ones’ full ordination.¹⁵⁶

The Tale of the Good Group of Friends is Finished

The Second Section for Recital (is Finished)

¹⁵⁵ Notice that the Buddha is still giving the *ehi-bhikkhu* ordination, even after the new going-for-refuge ordination procedure has been introduced. Indeed even much later he will give Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna the *ehi-bhikkhu* ordination also, see below.

¹⁵⁶ Jā Nid mentions that these too were sent off to teach in the different directions.

[III: The Miracles at Uruvelā]¹⁵⁷

21: The First Miracle (The Dragon-King - Prose)

Then the Gracious One while walking gradually on walking tour arrived at Uruvelā. Then at that time at Uruvelā there lived three yogis:¹⁵⁸ known as Uruvelakassapa, Nadīkassapa, and Gayākassapa.¹⁵⁹ Of these, the yogi Uruvelakassapa was the leader, guide, chief, director, and instructor of five hundred yogis. The yogi Nadīkassapa was the leader, guide, chief, director, and instructor of three hundred yogis. The yogi Gayākassapa was the leader, guide, chief, director, and instructor of two hundred yogis.

Then the Gracious One approached the yogi Uruvelakassapa's ashram, and after approaching he said this to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: "If it is not troublesome to you, Kassapa, we¹⁶⁰ would stay for one night in

¹⁵⁷ This section with its miracle-working and supernatural elements stands out from the rest of the narrative which seems in many ways to be so realistic.

¹⁵⁸ Literally: *one with a tangled mass of hair, a matted hair ascetic*. I use *yogi* to be concise.

¹⁵⁹ All the names arise from the place names where they dwelt: Kassapa at *Uruvelā*, Kassapa at the River (*Nadī*, i.e. *Nerañjarā*), and Kassapa at *Gayā*. The name *Kassapa* (Skt: *Kāśyapa*) itself is a brahminical clan name.

¹⁶⁰ This is the so-called *royal we*, a plural that is used politely in many languages when talking about oneself.

The Great Chapter

the sacrificial firehouse.”¹⁶¹ “It is not troublesome to me, Great Ascetic, (but) there is a fierce, venomous, poisonous, Dragon-King here, having psychic power, he should not (be allowed to) harass you.”

For a second time the Gracious One said this to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “If it is not troublesome to you, Kassapa, we would stay for one night in the sacrificial firehouse.” “It is not troublesome to me, Great Ascetic, (but) there is a fierce, venomous, poisonous, Dragon-King here, having psychic power, he should not (be allowed to) harass you.”

For a third time the Gracious One said this to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “If it is not troublesome to you, Kassapa, we would stay for one night in the sacrificial firehouse.” “It is not troublesome to me, Great Ascetic, (but) there is a fierce, venomous, poisonous, Dragon-King here, having psychic power, he should not (be allowed to) harass you.”

“It is all right, he will not harass me, come now, Kassapa, allow me the sacrificial firehouse.” “Dwell (there), Great Ascetic, according to your pleasure.”

Then the Gracious One, after entering the sacrificial firehouse and preparing a grass covering, sat down, having folded his legs crosswise, set his body straight, and established mindfulness at the front. Then

¹⁶¹ SED: *agní-grha*, house or place for keeping the sacred fire.

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

the Dragon saw that the Gracious One had entered, and after seeing (him), pained, depressed, he belched out smoke.

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Now what if I, without having destroyed this Dragon’s tegument, skin, flesh, muscle, bone, or bone-marrow, were to overcome (the Dragon’s) power with (my) power?” Then the Gracious One so arranged it with his psychic powers that he (also) belched out smoke. Then that Dragon, unbearably angry, blazed forth. The Gracious One, having attained the fire-element, also blazed forth, and both of them burned so bright it was as if the sacrificial firehouse was on fire, in flames, was burning down.

Then those yogis, having surrounded the sacrificial firehouse, said this: “The Great Ascetic is surely intelligent,¹⁶² but he is harassed by the Dragon.” Then the Gracious One, with the passing of that night, without harming that Dragon’s tegument, skin, flesh, muscle, bone, or bone-marrow, after overcoming (the Dragon’s) power with (his own) power and dropping him into his bowl, showed (him) to the yogi Uruvelakassapa, (saying): “This is your Dragon, Kassapa, his power was overcome by (my) power.”

¹⁶² This meaning for *abhirūpa* is attested in Sanskrit, and seems much more appropriate than *handsome*, *beautiful* in the context.

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since he can overcome this fierce, venomous, poisonous, Dragon-King’s psychic power with (his own) power, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.”

22: The First Miracle¹⁶³
(The Dragon-King - Verse)

Near the (river) Nerañjarā the Gracious One said this to
Uruvelakassapa:

“If it is not troublesome to you, Kassapa, we would live for this
moonlight night in the fire shelter.”

“It is not troublesome to me, Great Ascetic, but seeking your
comfort I (would) prevent you,
(For) there is a fierce, venomous, poisonous, Dragon-King here,
having psychic power - he should not (be allowed to) harass you!”

“It is all right, he will not harass me, come now, Kassapa, allow me
the sacrificial firehouse.”

Having understood that “(permission is) given”, not daunted he
entered, unafraid.

¹⁶³ This is the same story told again, but in verse. Comm: *near the (river) Nerañjarā the Gracious One, etc. (these) verses were placed here later.*

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

Having seen the Seer enter, the Snake-Dragon, depressed, belched out smoke.

With intent and gladdened mind the Human-Dragon also belched out smoke right there.

Unbearably angry, the Snake-Dragon blazed forth like fire.

Skilled in the fire-element, the Human-Dragon also blazed forth right there,

They both burned so brightly that the yogis surveying the sacrificial firehouse, (said):

“The Great Ascetic is surely intelligent, but he is harassed by the Dragon.”

With the passing of the night, the Dragon’s flames were destroyed,

But the multi-coloured flames of the One of Psychic Power remained.

Then there were blue, red, crimson, yellow, and quartz-coloured Multi-coloured flames on the body of Aṅgīrasa.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ DPPN: *a name applied to the Buddha several times in the Piṭakas ... Buddhaghosa says that “it means emitting rays of various hues from the body” ... It is, however, well-known that, according to Vedic tradition, the Gautamas belong to the Aṅgīrasa tribe (see Vedic Index: Gotama); the word, as applied to the Buddha, therefore, is probably a patronymic, in which case we have another example of a Kṣatriya tribe laying claim to a brāhmaṇa Gotra.*

The Great Chapter

After putting (him) in his bowl, he showed the Snake-Dragon to the brāhmaṇa, (saying):

“This is your Dragon, Kassapa, his psychic power was overcome by (my) power.”

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa convinced by this psychic miracle of the Gracious One, said this to the Gracious One: “Live right here, Great Ascetic, I (will give) a constant supply of food to you.”

The First Miracle (is Finished)

23: The Second Miracle (The Four Great Kings)

Then the Gracious One, not far from the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s ashram, dwelt in a certain jungle thicket. Then the Four Great Kings,¹⁶⁵ towards the end of the night, having lit up the whole of that jungle thicket with their surpassing beauty, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One, they stood at the four directions like a great mass of fire.

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he said this to

¹⁶⁵ They live in the lowest of the deva realms directly above the human world, and have control over the yakkhas, nāgas, kumbhaṇḍas and gandhabbas.

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

the Gracious One: “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready. Who were those, Great Ascetic, towards the end of the night, who, having lit up the whole of that jungle thicket with their surpassing beauty, approached you, and after approaching and worshipping you, stood at the four directions like a great mass of fire?”

“Those, Kassapa, were the Four Great Kings, who approached me to listen to the Dhamma.”¹⁶⁶ Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since even the Four Great Kings will approach him to listen to the Dhamma, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.”

Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

The Second Miracle (is Finished)

24: The Third Miracle (Sakka, the Lord of the Gods)

Then Sakka, the Lord of the Gods,¹⁶⁷ towards the end of the night, having lit up the whole of that jungle thicket with his surpassing beauty, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and

¹⁶⁶ This is the infinitive-like dative.

¹⁶⁷ He lives in *the heavenly realm of the thirty-three gods*, which stands just above the realm of the Four Great Kings.

The Great Chapter

worshipping the Gracious One, he stood at one side like a great mass of fire, (having colours) more brilliant, and more excellent, than the former colours.

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he said this to the Gracious One: “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready. Who was that, Great Ascetic, towards the end of the night, who, having lit up the whole of that jungle thicket with his surpassing beauty, approached you, and after approaching and worshipping you, stood at one side like a great mass of fire, (having colours) more brilliant, and more excellent, than the former colours.” “That, Kassapa, was Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, who approached me to listen to the Dhamma.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since even Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, will approach him to listen to the Dhamma, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.” Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

The Third Miracle (is Finished)

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

25: The Fourth Miracle (Brahmā Sahampati)

Then Brahmā Sahampati,¹⁶⁸ towards the end of the night, having lit up the whole of that jungle thicket with his surpassing beauty, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One, he stood at one side like a great mass of fire, (having colours) more brilliant, and more excellent, than the former colours.

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, a□ the Gracious One, and after approaching he said this to the Gracious One: “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready. Who was that, Great Ascetic who, towards the end of the night, having lit up the whole of that jungle thicket with his surpassing beauty, approached you, and after approaching and worshipping you, stood at one side like a great mass of fire, (having colours) more brilliant, and more excellent, than the former colours.” “That, Kassapa, was Brahmā Sahampati, who approached me to listen to the Dhamma.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since even Brahmā Sahampati will approach him to listen to the Dhamma, but he is surely not a Worthy

¹⁶⁸ According to the commentary he was the most senior of the Mahā Brahmās, living in one of the Form Worlds.

One like I am.” Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

The Fourth Miracle (is Finished)

26: The Fifth Miracle

(Mind-Reading)

Then at that time the yogi Uruvelakassapa had arranged for a great sacrifice, and almost the whole (population) of Aṅga and Magadha, having gathered abundant food and drinks, had a desire to attend. Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Now I have arranged for a great sacrifice, and almost the whole (population) of Aṅga and Magadha, having gathered abundant food and drinks, will attend. If the Great Ascetic performs a powerful miracle in the midst of the people his gain and honour will increase, and my gain and honour will decrease. Surely the Great Ascetic should not come on the morrow.”

Then the Gracious One, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s mind, after approaching Northern Kuru, gathering alms from there, and eating them at lake Anotatta, made his dwelling right there for the day. Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching, he said this to the Gracious One: “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready. Why did you not come yesterday, Great Ascetic, we remembered you, (thinking): ‘Why does the Great Ascetic not come? A portion of the food and drinks was set aside for you.’”

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

“Didn’t this occur to you, Kassapa: ‘Now I have arranged for a great sacrifice, and almost the whole (population) of Aṅga and Magadha, having gathered abundant food and drinks, will attend. If the Great Ascetic performs a powerful miracle in the midst of the people his gain and honour will increase, and my gain and honour will decrease. Surely the Great Ascetic should not come on the morrow’? Then I, Kassapa, knowing with my mind the reflection that had arisen in your mind, after approaching Northern Kuru, gathering alms from there, and eating them at lake Anotatta, made my dwelling right there for the day.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since he can even know (my) mind with (his) mind, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.” Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

The Fifth Miracle (is Finished)

[27: The Rag-Robe Miracle]

Then at that time there was a rag-robe that had arisen to the Gracious One. Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Now where can I wash this rag-robe?” Then, Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the Gracious One’s mind, having dug a lake with his hand, said this to the Gracious One: “May the Gracious One, venerable Sir, wash the rag-robe here.”

The Great Chapter

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Now on what can I beat this rag-robe?” Then, Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the Gracious One’s mind, set up a great rock, (saying): “May the Gracious One, venerable Sir, beat the rag-robe here.”

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Now having grabbed hold of what can I emerge (from the lake)?” Then a god who was living in an Arjuna (tree),¹⁶⁹ knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the Gracious One’s mind, bent down a branch, (saying): “May the Gracious One, venerable Sir, having grabbed hold here emerge (from the lake).”

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Now on what can I stretch out this rag-robe (for drying)?” Then, Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the Gracious One’s mind, set up a great rock, (saying): “May the Gracious One, venerable Sir, stretch out the rag-robe here.”

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching, he said this to the Gracious One: “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready. Now how is it, Great Ascetic, this lake was not here formerly, (and yet) this lake is here? This rock was not set up here formerly: this rock was set

¹⁶⁹ *Terminalia arjuna*, a medicinal tree of the order *Myrtales*.

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

up by whom? This branch of the Arjuna (tree) was not bent down formerly, (and yet) this branch is bent down (now)? ”

“Here, Kassapa, a rag-robe arose to me. Then, Kassapa, this occurred to me: ‘Now where can I wash this rag-robe?’ Then, Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, Kassapa, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in my mind, having dug a lake with his hand, said this to me: ‘May the Gracious One, venerable Sir, wash the rag-robe here,’ the lake was dug by the divine being himself with his own hand.

Then this, Kassapa, occurred to me: ‘Now on what can I beat this rag-robe?’ Then, Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, Kassapa, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in my mind, set up a great rock, (saying): ‘May the Gracious One, venerable Sir, beat the rag-robe here,’ the rock was set up by the divine being himself.

Then, Kassapa, this occurred to me: ‘Now having grabbed hold of what can I emerge (from the lake)?’ Then, Kassapa, a god who was living in an Arjuna (tree), knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in my mind, bent down a branch, (saying): ‘May the Gracious One, venerable Sir, having grabbed hold here emerge (from the lake),’ this Arjuna (tree-spirit) gave a hand himself.

Then, Kassapa, this occurred to me: ‘Now on what can I stretch out this rag-robe (for drying)?’ Then, Kassapa, Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in my mind, set up a great rock, (saying): ‘May the Gracious One, venerable

The Great Chapter

Sir, stretch out the rag-robe here,' the rock was set up by this divine being himself.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since even Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, does (him) service, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.” Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

[28: The Rose-Apple Miracle]

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he announced the time, (saying): “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready.” “You go ahead, Kassapa, I am coming.” After sending away the yogi Uruvelakassapa, picking a fruit from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named,¹⁷⁰ and arriving earlier, he sat down in the sacrificial firehouse.

The yogi Uruvelakassapa saw the Gracious One sitting in the sacrificial firehouse, and after seeing (him), he said this to the Gracious One: “By what path, Great Ascetic, did you come, I set out earlier than you, (but) you, arriving earlier, are (already) sitting down in the sacrificial firehouse.”

¹⁷⁰ This means specifically the Rose-Apple tree that grows on Mount Meru in the Himalayas.

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

“Here, Kassapa, after sending you away, picking a fruit from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, I sat down in the sacrificial firehouse. This is the Rose-Apple fruit, Kassapa, endowed with (good) colour, scent, and taste, if you wish, you can eat (it).”

“Enough, Great Ascetic, you surely brought it, you should surely eat it.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since after sending me away earlier, picking a fruit from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, he can sit down in the sacrificial firehouse, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.” Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

[29: The Mango Miracle]

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he announced the time, (saying): “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready.” “You go ahead, Kassapa, I am coming.” After sending away the yogi Uruvelakassapa, picking a fruit from a Mango (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, he sat down in the sacrificial firehouse.

The Great Chapter

The yogi Uruvelakassapa saw the Gracious One sitting in the sacrificial firehouse, and after seeing (him), he said this to the Gracious One: “By what path, Great Ascetic, did you come, I set out earlier than you, (but) you, arriving earlier, are (already) sitting down in the sacrificial firehouse.” “Here, Kassapa, after sending you away, picking a fruit from a Mango (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, I sat down in the sacrificial firehouse. This is the Mango fruit, Kassapa, endowed with (good) colour, scent, and taste, if you wish, you can eat (it).”

“Enough, Great Ascetic, you surely brought it, you should surely eat it.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since after sending me away earlier, picking a fruit from a Mango (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, he can sit down in the sacrificial firehouse, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.” Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

[30: The Emblic Myrobalan Miracle]

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he announced the time, (saying): “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready.” “You go ahead, Kassapa, I am coming.” After sending away the yogi

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

Uruvelakassapa, picking a fruit from an Emblic Myrobalan (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, he sat down in the sacrificial firehouse.

The yogi Uruvelakassapa saw the Gracious One sitting in the sacrificial firehouse, and after seeing (him), he said this to the Gracious One: “By what path, Great Ascetic, did you come, I set out earlier than you, (but) you, arriving earlier, are (already) sitting down in the sacrificial firehouse.” “Here, Kassapa, after sending you away, picking a fruit from an Emblic Myrobalan (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, I sat down in the sacrificial firehouse. This is the Emblic Myrobalan fruit, Kassapa, endowed with (good) colour, scent, and taste, if you wish, you can eat (it).”

“Enough, Great Ascetic, you surely brought it, you should surely eat it.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since after sending me away earlier, picking a fruit from an Emblic Myrobalan (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, he can sit down in the sacrificial firehouse, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.” Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

[31: The Yellow Myrobalan Miracle]

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he announced the time, (saying): “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready.” “You go ahead, Kassapa, I am coming.” After sending away the yogi Uruvelakassapa, picking a fruit from a Yellow Myrobalan (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, he sat down in the sacrificial firehouse.

The yogi Uruvelakassapa saw the Gracious One sitting in the sacrificial firehouse, and after seeing (him), he said this to the Gracious One: “By what path, Great Ascetic, did you come, I set out earlier than you, (but) you, arriving earlier, are (already) sitting down in the sacrificial firehouse.” “Here, Kassapa, after sending you away, picking a fruit from a Yellow Myrobalan (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and arriving earlier, I sat down in the sacrificial firehouse. This is the Yellow Myrobalan fruit, Kassapa, endowed with (good) colour, scent, and taste, if you wish, you can eat (it).”

“Enough, Great Ascetic, you surely brought it, you should surely eat it.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since after sending me away earlier, picking a fruit from a Yellow Myrobalan (tree) not far from the Rose-Apple (tree), (after which) the Rose-Apple Island is named, and

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

arriving earlier, he can sit down in the sacrificial firehouse, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.” Then the Gracious One, having eaten the yogi Uruvelakassapa’s food, dwelt on in that very jungle thicket.

[32: The Coral Tree Flower Miracle]

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, with the passing of that night, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching he announced the time, (saying): “It is time, Great Ascetic, the meal is ready.” “You go ahead, Kassapa, I am coming.” After sending away the yogi Uruvelakassapa, going to the Tāvātimsa (Heaven), picking a Coral tree flower, and arriving earlier, he sat down in the sacrificial firehouse.

The yogi Uruvelakassapa saw the Gracious One sitting in the sacrificial firehouse, and after seeing (him), he said this to the Gracious One: “By what path, Great Ascetic, did you come, I set out earlier than you, (but) you, arriving earlier, are (already) sitting down in the sacrificial firehouse.” “Here, Kassapa, after sending you away, going to the Tāvātimsa (Heaven), picking a Coral tree flower, and arriving earlier, I sat down in the sacrificial firehouse. This is the Coral tree flower, Kassapa, endowed with (good) colour and scent, if you wish, you can take (it).”

“Enough, Great Ascetic, you surely brought it, you should surely take it.”

The Great Chapter

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since after sending me away earlier, going to the Tāvatiṃsa (Heaven), picking a Coral tree flower, and arriving earlier, he can sit down in the sacrificial firehouse, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.”¹⁷¹

[33: The Sacred Fire Miracles]

Then at that time those yogis who wanted to tend the sacred fires were not able to chop the firewood. Then this occurred to those yogis: “No doubt it is because of the Great Ascetic’s psychic power that we are not able to chop the firewood.” Then the Gracious One said this to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Let the firewood be chopped, Kassapa.” “Let it be chopped, Great Ascetic,” and more than five hundred pieces of firewood were chopped.

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since (on his say so) firewood can be chopped, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.”

* * *

¹⁷¹ The follow-up phrase which in the preceding accounts appears at this location, to the effect that the Gracious One, having eaten Kassapa’s food, dwelt on in the jungle thicket, is missing from here on.

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

Then at that time those yogis who wanted to tend the sacred fires were not able to light the fires. Then this occurred to those yogis: “No doubt it is because of the Great Ascetic’s psychic power that we are not able to light the sacred fires.” Then the Gracious One said this to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Let the sacred fires be lit, Kassapa.” “Let them be lit, Great Ascetic,” and more than five hundred sacred fires were lit.

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since (on his say so) sacred fires can be lit, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.”

* * *

Then at that time those yogis, after tending the sacred fires, were not able to put the sacred fires out. Then this occurred to those yogis: “No doubt it is because of the Great Ascetic’s psychic power that we are not able to put out the sacred fires.” Then the Gracious One said this to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Let the sacred fires be put out, Kassapa.” “Let them be put out, Great Ascetic,” and more than five hundred sacred fires were put out.

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since (on his say so) sacred fires can be put out, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.”

[34: The Coal-Pan Miracle]

Then at that time those yogis, in the cold Winter nights, in between ‘the eights’, at the time of the snowfall, in the river Nerañjarā, were plunging in, and plunging out, were plunging in and out. Then the Gracious One created about five hundred coal-pans, where those yogis, after emerging, warmed (themselves). Then this occurred to those yogis: “No doubt it is because of the Great Ascetic’s psychic power that these coal-pans were created.”

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since he can create so many coal-pans for them, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.”

[35: The Island Miracle]

Then at that time a great cloud poured down out of season, and a great flood-water arose, and in that area where the Gracious One was living the (whole) place became submerged with water. Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “Now what if I, having risen above the water on all sides, were to walk (on an island) in the middle on dusty ground?” Then the Gracious One, having risen above the water on all sides, walked (on an island) in the middle of dusty ground.

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa (thinking): ‘May the Great Ascetic not be carried away by water.’ with a boat and a great many yogis went to that place in the area where the Gracious One was living. The yogi Uruvelakassapa saw that the Gracious One, having risen above the

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

water on all sides, was walking (on an island) in the middle of dusty ground, and after seeing (it), he said this to the Gracious One: “Are you here, Great Ascetic?” “It is I, Kassapa,” and after rising up into the sky, he reappeared in the boat.

Then this occurred to the yogi Uruvelakassapa: “Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, since even the water cannot carry him away, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.”

[36: The Ordination of Kassapa and his Followers]

Then this occurred to the Gracious One: “For a long time this will occur to that foolish fellow: ‘Powerful and majestic is this Great Ascetic, but he is surely not a Worthy One like I am.’ Now what if I were to cause spiritual anxiety to this yogi?” Then the Gracious One said this to the yogi Uruvelakassapa “You are certainly not a Worthy One, Kassapa. Nor have you entered the path to Worthiness. This practice of yours is not one whereby you could be a Worthy One, or one who has entered the path to Worthiness.”

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa, having fallen with his head at the Gracious One’s feet, said this to the Gracious One: “May I receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may I receive the full ordination.” “But you Kassapa, are the leader, guide, chief, director and instructor of five hundred yogis, you should them give permission and they can do whatever they are thinking.”

The Great Chapter

Then the yogi Uruvelakassapa approached those yogis, and after approaching he said this to those yogis: “I wish to live the spiritual life under the Great Ascetic, you, dear friends, can do whatever you are thinking.” [They replied:] “For a long time, friend, we have had confidence in the Great Ascetic, if you, friend, will live the spiritual life under the Great Ascetic, all of us will live the spiritual life under the Great Ascetic.”

Then those yogis, after throwing their hair,¹⁷² locks, pole and basket and sacred fire equipment into the water, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and falling with their heads at the feet of the Gracious One, they said this to the Gracious One: “May we receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination.”

“Come, monks,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was these venerable ones’ full ordination.

[37: The Ordination of the Other Yogis]

The yogi Nadīkassapa saw the hair, locks, pole and basket and sacred fire equipment floating in the water, and after seeing (them), this occurred to him: “Let there be no danger for my brothers,” and he

¹⁷² Lit: *mixing their hair, mixing their locks, etc. in the water*, which sounds odd, even in Pāḷi.

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

sent yogis, (saying): “Go and find out about my brothers,” and he together with three hundred yogis approached the venerable Uruvelakassapa, and after approaching he said this to the venerable Uruvelakassapa: “Is this better, Kassapa?” “Yes, friend, this is better.”

Then those yogis, after throwing their hair, locks, pole and basket and sacred fire equipment into the water, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and falling with their heads at the feet of the Gracious One, they said this to the Gracious One: “May we receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination.”

“Come, monks,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was these the venerable ones’ full ordination.

The yogi Gayākassapa saw the hair, locks, pole and basket and sacred fire equipment floating in the water, and after seeing (them), this occurred to him: “Let there be no danger for my brothers,” and he sent yogis, (saying): “Go and find out about my brothers,” and he together with two hundred yogis approached the venerable Uruvelakassapa, and after approaching he said this to the venerable Uruvelakassapa: “Is this better, Kassapa?” “Yes, friend, this is better.”

Then those yogis, after throwing their hair, locks, pole and basket and sacred fire equipment into the water, approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and falling with their heads at the feet of the Gracious One, they said this to the Gracious One: “May we receive

The Great Chapter

the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination.”

“Come, monks,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.” That was these the venerable ones’ full ordination.

Through¹⁷³ the Gracious One’s determining five hundred pieces of firewood that were not chopped were chopped, fires that were not lit were lit, that were not put out were put out, (and) five hundred coal-pans were created. In this way there were three and a half thousand miracles.

38: The Instruction About Burning

Then the Gracious One, having dwelt at Uruvelā for as long as he liked, left on walking tour for Gayā’s Head, together with a great Community of monks, with a thousand monks all of whom were formerly yogis. There the Gracious One dwelt near Gayā, on Gayā’s Head together with a thousand monks.

There the Gracious One addressed the monks, (saying): “All is burning, monks. What all is burning, monks? The eye is burning,

¹⁷³ These lines seem to be misplaced and really should appear earlier in the story after the events they refer to.

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

monks, forms are burning,¹⁷⁴ eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, and whatever feeling arises dependent on eye-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, that also is burning.

With what is it burning? It is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion. It is burning with birth, with old age and death, with griefs, with lamentations, with pains, with sorrows, and with despairs, I say.

The ear is burning, sounds are burning, ear-consciousness is burning, ear-contact is burning, and whatever feeling arises dependent on ear-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, that also is burning.

With what is it burning? It is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion. It is burning with birth, with old age and death, with griefs, with lamentations, with pains, with sorrows, and with despairs, I say.

The nose is burning, scents are burning, nose-consciousness is burning, nose-contact is burning, and whatever feeling arises dependent on

¹⁷⁴ The analysis that follows here is of the internal and external sense-spheres (*āyatanāni*) skilfully applied to the fire-worshippers, showing what is really burning, and what it is burning with.

The Great Chapter

nose-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, that also is burning.

With what is it burning? It is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion. It is burning with birth, with old age and death, with griefs, with lamentations, with pains, with sorrows, and with despairs, I say.

The tongue is burning, tastes are burning, tongue-consciousness is burning, tongue-contact is burning, and whatever feeling arises dependent on tongue-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, that also is burning.

With what is it burning? It is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion. It is burning with birth, with old age and death, with griefs, with lamentations, with pains, with sorrows, and with despairs, I say.

The body is burning, tangibles are burning, body-consciousness is burning, body-contact is burning, and whatever feeling arises dependent on body-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, that also is burning.

With what is it burning? It is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion. It is burning with birth, with old age and death, with griefs, with lamentations, with pains, with sorrows, and with despairs, I say.

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

The mind is burning, thoughts are burning, mind-consciousness is burning, mind-contact is burning, and whatever feeling arises dependent on mind-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, that also is burning.

With what is it burning? It is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion. It is burning with birth, with old age and death, with griefs, with lamentations, with pains, with sorrows, and with despairs, I say.

Seeing this, monks, the learned Noble disciple grows weary of the eye, grows weary of forms, grows weary of eye-consciousness, grows weary of eye-contact, and whatever feeling that arises dependent on eye-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, he also grows weary of that.

He grows weary of the ear, grows weary of sounds, grows weary of ear-consciousness, grows weary of ear-contact, and whatever feeling that arises dependent on ear-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, he also grows weary of that.

He grows weary of the nose, grows weary of scents, grows weary of nose-consciousness, grows weary of nose-contact, and whatever feeling that arises dependent on nose-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, he also grows weary of that.

He grows weary of the tongue, grows weary of tastes, grows weary of tongue-consciousness, grows weary of tongue-contact, and whatever

The Great Chapter

feeling that arises dependent on tongue-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, he also grows weary of that.

He grows weary of the body, grows weary of tangibles, grows weary of body-consciousness, grows weary of body-contact, and whatever feeling that arises dependent on body-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, he also grows weary of that.

He grows weary of the mind, grows weary of thoughts, grows weary of mind-consciousness, grows weary of mind-contact, and whatever feeling that arises dependent on mind-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, he also grows weary of that, through weariness he becomes dispassionate, through dispassion he is liberated, in liberation, there is the knowledge that such is liberation:

‘Destroyed is (re)birth
accomplished is the spiritual life
done is what ought to be done
there is no more of this mundane state - this he knows.’

III. The Miracles at Uruvelā

Moreover, as this sermon was being given, those one thousand monks' minds were liberated from the pollutants, without attachment.¹⁷⁵

The Instruction About Burning is Finished

The Miracles at Uruvelā (are Finished)

The Third Section for Recital is Finished

¹⁷⁵ According to Mahāvastu the Buddha converted another 250 yogis who were followers of Upasena (perhaps this means Sāriputta's brother, who later became a monk); he also taught the *Chapter of the Thousands* of the Dharmapada in Uruvilvakāśyapa's ashram before leaving for Rājagṛha.

[IV: In Rājagaha]

39: The Meeting with King Bimbisāra

Then the Gracious One, having dwelt at Gayā's Head for as long as he liked, left on walking tour for Rājagaha, together with a great Community of monks, with a thousand monks all of whom were formerly yogis.¹⁷⁶ Then the Gracious One, walking gradually on walking tour, went and entered Rājagaha. There the Gracious One dwelt near Rājagaha, by the Suppatiṭṭha Shrine in the Palmyra Wood.¹⁷⁷

The Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra heard:¹⁷⁸ “The ascetic Gotama, the Sakyan Son, who has gone forth from the Sakya family, has arrived in Rājagaha, and is dwelling near Rājagaha, by the Suppatiṭṭha Shrine in the Palmyra Garden. But about that Gracious One Gotama this beautiful report has gone round:

¹⁷⁶ Note that again no mention is made of the monks who ordained at Bārāṇasī.

¹⁷⁷ Comm: *Tāluyyāne*; *laṭṭhi* normally means a sapling, so *Sapling Wood* would be another translation, in Mahāvastu the name is given as *Yaṣṭivana*, which supports the alternative translation. It appears from the Commentary that the banyan tree itself was known as the *Suppatiṭṭha Cetiya* (*Suppatiṭṭha = Well-Established*).

¹⁷⁸ Jā Nid says he heard from the Park Keeper.

IV. In Rājagaha

‘Such is he, the Gracious One, the Worthy One, the Perfect Sambuddha,
the one endowed with understanding and good conduct,
the Fortunate One, the one who understands the worlds,
the unsurpassed guide for those people who need taming,
the Teacher of gods and men, the Buddha, the Gracious One.’

This world with its gods, Māra, and Brahmā, this generation, with its ascetics and brāhmaṇas, princes and men, he makes known, after gaining deep knowledge for himself. He teaches the Dhamma (which is) good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end; with its meaning, with its (proper) phrasing; and explains the spiritual life which is complete, full and pure. But the sight of such Worthy Ones is good.”

Then the Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra, surrounded by twelve myriads of brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One, he sat down at one side. Of those twelve myriads of brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha, some, after worshipping the Gracious One, sat down on one side. Some exchanged greetings with the Gracious One, and after exchanging polite and courteous greetings, sat down on one side. Some, after raising their hands in respectful salutation to the Gracious One, sat down on one side. Some, after announcing their name and family to the Gracious One, sat down on one side. Some, while keeping silent, sat down on one side.

The Great Chapter

Then this occurred to those twelve myriads of brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha: “How is it: does the Great Ascetic live the spiritual life under Uruvelakassapa, or does Uruvelakassapa live the spiritual life under the Great Ascetic?”

Then the Gracious One, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the minds of the Magadhan brāhmaṇas and householders, addressed the venerable Uruvelakassapa with a verse:

“Having seen what did you, one of Uruvelā,
Who spoke of austerity,¹⁷⁹ give up the sacrificial fire?
I ask you the reason for this, Kassapa,
Why did you give up the fire sacrifice?”

“The sacrifices speak of forms, sounds,
And also tastes, sensuality, and women.
Having understood that in the attachments ‘this is a stain’,
I therefore take no delight in offerings and sacrifices.”

“If your mind takes no delight, Kassapa,” said the Gracious One,
“In forms, sounds and also tastes,
Then where in the world with its gods and men,
Does your mind take delight, Kassapa, speak about this.”

¹⁷⁹ The commentary offers two explanations of these words, either it means Kassapa was spoken of as austere, or that he recommended austerity. I prefer the latter as that is what is in need of explanation.

IV. In Rājagaha

“Having seen the state of peace, free of attachments,
(That) nothingness, unattached to the sensual realm,
The Unchangeable,¹⁸⁰ unknown to others,
I therefore take no delight in offerings and sacrifices.”¹⁸¹

Then the venerable Uruvelakassapa, after rising from his seat, arranging his outer robe on one shoulder, and falling with his head at the feet¹⁸² of the Gracious One, said to the Gracious One:¹⁸³ “The Gracious One is my Teacher, venerable Sir, I am his disciple, the Gracious One is my Teacher, venerable Sir, I am his disciple.”¹⁸⁴ Then this occurred to those twelve myriads of brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha: “Uruvelakassapa lives the spiritual life under the Great Ascetic.”

Then the Gracious One, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the minds of the Magadhan brāhmaṇas and householders, spoke about the gradual teaching to them, that is to say: talk about

¹⁸⁰ Lit: *that which does not become other.*

¹⁸¹ Mahāvastu has these verses (with some variations) and follows them with several more unrecorded in the Pāḷi, which appear to be late additions.

¹⁸² Nidāna: *at the foot-stool.*

¹⁸³ Nidāna: *after having risen into the sky seven times the height of seven Palmyra trees.*

¹⁸⁴ Nidāna says the Buddha took the opportunity to preach the Mahānārada-kassapa-jātaka (Jā 544) at this point, which describes how he converted Kassapa in a previous life.

The Great Chapter

giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation, (these) he explained. When the Gracious One knew that they had ready minds, pliable minds, open minds, uplifted minds, confident minds, he explained to them the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.¹⁸⁵

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to eleven myriads of the Magadhan brāhmaṇas and householders,¹⁸⁶ with Bimbisāra at their head on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:¹⁸⁷

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

and one myriad (of them) made known their state as lay-followers.

¹⁸⁵ The Pāḷi texts only give this synopsis, but Mahāvastu records a talk at this point, which is reproduced elsewhere on this website as The Fourth Discourse of the Buddha.

¹⁸⁶ This number is confirmed by Mahāvastu (3.449), but the latter text omits the mention that one myriad more became lay-followers, mentioning instead that twelve myriads of the coachmen and drivers became lay-followers. See the end of The Fourth Discourse of the Buddha.

¹⁸⁷ Comm: *knowledge of the Path of Stream-Entry*.

IV. In Rājagaha

Then the Māgadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher's teaching, said this to the Gracious One:

“Formerly, venerable Sir, when I was a boy I had five wishes¹⁸⁸ which are fulfilled for me now.¹⁸⁹ Formerly, venerable Sir, when I was a boy this occurred to me:

‘Oh, may I be anointed (King) in the Kingdom’ - this was my first wish, venerable Sir, which has been fulfilled for me now.

‘May a Worthy One, a Perfect Sambuddha enter into my realm’ - this was my second wish, venerable Sir, which has been fulfilled for me now.

‘May I attend on that Gracious One’ - this was my third wish, venerable Sir, which has been fulfilled for me now.

‘May that Gracious One teach me the Dhamma’ - this was my fourth wish, venerable Sir, which has been fulfilled for me now.

¹⁸⁸ Comm: *assāsaka* means desires, wishes is the meaning.

¹⁸⁹ Lit: *are successful, have taken effect.*

The Great Chapter

‘May I understand that Gracious One’s Dhamma’ - this was my fifth wish, venerable Sir, which has been fulfilled for me now.

Formerly, venerable Sir, when I was a boy I had these five wishes and these I am successful in now.

Excellent, venerable Sir! Excellent, venerable Sir! Just as, venerable Sir, one might set upright what has been overturned, or open up what has been closed, or show a path to one who is lost, or carry an oil lamp into the darkness, (thinking): ‘those with vision will see forms’, just so has the Dhamma been explained by the Gracious One in countless ways. I go, venerable Sir, to the Gracious One for refuge, and to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks. Please bear it in mind, Gracious One, that I am a lay follower who has gone for refuge from today forward for as long as I have the breath of life. May the Gracious One consent, reverend Sir, to me (offering him) a meal on the morrow, together with the Community of monks.”

The Gracious One consented by maintaining silence. Then the Māgadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra, having understood the Gracious One’s consent, after rising from his seat, worshipping and circumambulating the Gracious One, went away.

[40: The Donation of the Bamboo Wood]

Then the Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra, with the passing of that night, having had excellent food and drinks made ready, had the time announced to the Gracious One, (saying): “It is time, reverend Sir, the meal is ready.”

Then the Gracious One, having dressed in the morning time, after taking up his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha, together with a great Community of monks, with a thousand monks all of whom were formerly yogis.

Then at that time Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, having created (for himself) the form of a young brāhmaṇa, went ahead of the Community of monks with the Buddha at its head singing these verses:¹⁹⁰

The Tamed One with the Tamed, with the former yogis,
the Liberated One with the Liberated,
The Gracious One who has skin like a golden coin has entered
Rājagaha.

¹⁹⁰ Jā Nid explains that the whole citizenry of Rājagaha (1,800,000) had come out to the Laṭṭhivana and were blocking the road. Sakka’s seat in Tāvatiṃsa became hot and he understood the Buddha might not get his meal, so he descended and opened up the way, praising the Buddha as he went.

The Great Chapter

The Freed One with the Freed, with the former yogis,
the Liberated One with the Liberated,
The Gracious One who has skin like a golden coin has entered
Rājagaha.

The One Gone Beyond with those Gone Beyond, with the former
yogis,
the Liberated One with the Liberated,
The Gracious One who has skin like a golden coin has entered
Rājagaha.

The Peaceful One with the Peaceful, with the former yogis,
the Liberated One with the Liberated,
The Gracious One who has skin like a golden coin has entered
Rājagaha.

The One of Ten Abidings, Ten Strengths, knowing the Ten Things,
endowed with Ten,¹⁹¹
The Gracious One surrounded by the ten-hundred has entered
Rājagaha.”

¹⁹¹ Comm: *the One of Ten Abidings* means the one who has lived in the Ten Noble Abidings, *knowing the Ten Things* means knowing the ten courses of action, *endowed with Ten* means endowed with the ten factors of the one beyond training.

IV. In Rājagaha

This occurred to the people, after seeing Sakka, the Lord of the Gods: “Handsome, indeed is this young brāhmaṇa, beautiful, indeed is this young brāhmaṇa, pleasing, indeed is this young brāhmaṇa, now just who is this young brāhmaṇa?”

After this was said, Sakka, the Lord of the Gods, addressed those people with a verse:

“He who is firm, tamed in every way, pure, a person unmatched,
A Worthy One, a Fortunate One - I am his attendant in the world.”

Then the Gracious One approached the Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra’s residence, and after approaching he sat down on the prepared seat, together with the Community of monks. Then the Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra, after serving and satisfying with his own hand the Community of monks with the Buddha at its head with excellent food and drinks, when the Gracious One had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, sat down on one side.

While sitting on one side this occurred to the Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra: “Now where can the Gracious One dwell that is neither too far from a village nor too near, easy for coming and going, approachable for people who desire (to hear the Dhamma), uncrowded during the day, with little sound at night, little noise, which has a lonely atmosphere, lying hidden away from men, which is suitable for seclusion?”

The Great Chapter

Then this occurred to the Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra: “This Bamboo Wood garden of ours is neither too far from the village nor too near, easy for coming and going, approachable for people who desire (to hear the Dhamma), uncrowded during the day, with little sound at night, little noise, which has a lonely atmosphere, lying hidden away from men, which is suitable for seclusion. Now what if I were to give the Bamboo Wood garden to the Community of monks with the Buddha at its head?”

Then the Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra having taken a golden water vessel, dedicated (it) to the Gracious One, (saying): “Can I give this Bamboo Wood garden, venerable Sir, to the Community of monks with the Buddha at its head?”

The Gracious One accepted the park.¹⁹² Then the Gracious One, after instructing, rousing, enthusing, and cheering the Magadhan King Seniya Bimbisāra with a Dhamma talk, having risen from his seat, went away. Then the Gracious One, with this as the basis, after giving a Dhamma talk, addressed the monks, (saying): “I allow, monks, a park.”

¹⁹² Jā Nid: *with the acceptance of that park, (knowing): “the roots of the Buddha’s Dispensation have taken hold,” the great Earth shook. In the Land of the Rose Apples, apart from the Bamboo Wood, the great Earth never shook on the acceptance of a dwelling place.*

41: The Story of the Going-Forth of Sāriputta and Moggallāna

Then at that time the wanderer Sañjaya¹⁹³ was living near Rājagaha together with a great assembly of wanderers, with two hundred and fifty wanderers. Then at that time Sāriputta and Moggallāna were living the spiritual life under the wanderer Sañjaya, and there was an agreement amongst themselves: “Whoever attains the Deathless first, he should inform the other.”¹⁹⁴

Then the venerable Assaji, having dressed in the morning time, after taking up his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms, pleasing in going forwards, in going back, in looking ahead, in looking around, in bending, in stretching, having downcast eyes, and endowed with good posture.

The wanderer Sāriputta saw the venerable Assaji walking for alms in Rājagaha, pleasing in going forwards, in going back, in looking ahead, in looking around, in bending, in stretching, having downcast eyes, and endowed with good posture, and having seen (him), this occurred to him: “Of those in the world who are Worthy or have entered the

¹⁹³ Apparently to be identified with Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, one of the six famous teachers in Lord Buddha’s time, who taught a radical scepticism.

¹⁹⁴ The comm. explains that seeking the Deathless the two friends had joined Sañjaya’s Wanderers, but soon realised that the essence (*sāra* = *Nibbāna*) was not to be found there, so they made the above pact.

The Great Chapter

path to Worthiness this monk is a certain one of them. Now what if I, having approached this monk, were to ask: ‘On account of whom, friend, did you go forth, who is your teacher, what Dhamma do you prefer?’ ”

Then this occurred to the wanderer Sāriputta: “This is the wrong time to ask the monk, he has entered amongst the houses for alms. Now what if I were to follow along closely behind¹⁹⁵ this monk with a desire (to find) the path he has found?”

Then the venerable Assaji, after walking for alms in Rājagaha and taking his alms food, went back. Then the wanderer Sāriputta approached the venerable Assaji, and after approaching he exchanged greetings with the venerable Assaji, and after exchanging polite and courteous greetings, he stood on one side. While standing on one side the wanderer Sāriputta said this to the venerable Assaji: “Your faculties, friend, are very clear, purified is your skin and bright, on account of whom, friend, did you go forth, who is your teacher, what Dhamma do you prefer?”

“There is, friend, a Great Ascetic, a Sakyan Son, who has gone forth from the Sakya family, on account of that Gracious One I went forth,

¹⁹⁵ Word repetition normally signifies emphasis in Pāli: *piṭṭhito* = *behind*, *piṭṭhito piṭṭhito* = *closely behind*.

IV. In Rājagaha

that Gracious One is my Teacher, that Gracious One's Dhamma I prefer.”

“But what is the doctrine of the venerable's Teacher, what does he say?”

“I am new, friend, one not long gone forth, recently come to this Dhamma and Discipline,¹⁹⁶ I am not able to teach the Dhamma at length, but I can explain the meaning to you in brief.” Then the wanderer Sāriputta said this to the venerable Assaji: “Friend,

Speak little or much, but tell the meaning to me,

The meaning is useful to me, what to do with many words?”¹⁹⁷

Then the venerable Assaji recited this Dhamma instruction to the wanderer Sāriputta:

¹⁹⁶ This Assaji is always identified as one of the group-of-five disciples, who listened to the Discourse that Set the Dhamma Wheel Rolling and became a Worthy One while listening to the Discourse on the Characteristic of Non-Self --- he was one of the five most senior disciples in the Saṅgha. It is hard to reconcile these facts with his self-characterisation here. Also there is no mention of Assaji accompanying the Buddha to Rājagaha. Assaji must have been a common name at the time, and I think it likely we are dealing with a different Assaji here to the one whom we met in Isipatana.

¹⁹⁷ *Byaṅjana* literally means *syllable* in this context.

The Great Chapter

“Whatever things¹⁹⁸ have a cause and source, their cause the Realised One has told,
And also that which is their cessation¹⁹⁹ - such is the Great Ascetic’s doctrine.”

Then to the wanderer Sāriputta, after hearing this Dhamma instruction, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

And he said: “This really is the Dhamma if you have penetrated the Sorrowless State, unseen through many myriads of past aeons.”

Then the wanderer Sāriputta approached the wanderer Moggallāna. The wanderer Moggallāna saw the wanderer Sāriputta coming while still far away, and after seeing (him), he said this to the wanderer Sāriputta: “Your faculties, friend, are very clear, purified is your skin and bright, have you, friend, attained the Deathless?”

“Yes, friend, I have attained the Deathless.”

¹⁹⁸ Comm: *the five constituents (of mind and matter making up a human being).*

¹⁹⁹ Regarding this famous verse the commentary points out that the first line refers to the Truth of Suffering the second to the Arising of Suffering, and the third to the Cessation of Suffering.

IV. In Rājagaha

“But how did you, friend, attain the Deathless?”

“Here, friend, I saw the monk Assaji walking for alms in Rājagaha, pleasing in going forwards, in going back, in looking ahead, in looking around, in bending, in stretching, having downcast eyes, and endowed with good posture, and having seen (him), this occurred to me: ‘Of those in the world who are Worthy or have entered the path to Worthiness this monk is one of them.’ Now what if I, having approached this monk, were to ask: “On account of whom, friend, did you go forth, who is your teacher, what Dhamma do you prefer?”

Then this, friend, occurred to me: “This is the wrong time to ask the monk, he has entered amongst the houses for alms. Now what if I were to follow along close behind this monk with a desire to find out the path?” Then, friend, the monk Assaji, after walking for alms in Rājagaha, and taking his alms food, went back.

Then I, friend, approached the monk Assaji, and after approaching I exchanged greetings with the monk Assaji, and after exchanging polite and courteous greetings, I stood on one side. While standing on one side, friend, I said this to the monk Assaji: “Your faculties, friend, are very clear, purified is your skin and bright, on account of whom, friend, did you go forth, who is your teacher, what Dhamma do you prefer?”

“There is, friend, a Great Ascetic, the Sakyan Son, who has gone forth from the Sakya family, on account of that Gracious One I went forth,

The Great Chapter

that Gracious One is my Teacher, that Gracious One's Dhamma I prefer.”

“But what is the doctrine of the venerable's Teacher, what does he say?”

“I am new, friend, not long gone forth, recently come to this Dhamma and Discipline, I am not able to teach the Dhamma at length, but I can explain the meaning to you in brief.”

Then, friend, I said this to the venerable Assaji: “Friend,

Speak little or much, but tell the meaning to me,
The meaning is useful to me, what to do with many words?”

Then, friend, the monk Assaji recited this Dhamma instruction:

“Whatever things have a cause and source, their cause the Realised One told,
And also that which is their cessation - such is the Great Ascetic's doctrine.”

Then to the wanderer Moggallāna, after hearing this Dhamma instruction, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

And he said: “This really is the Dhamma if you have penetrated the Sorrowless State, unseen through many myriads of past aeons.”

IV. In Rājagaha

Then the wanderer Moggallāna said this to the wanderer Sāriputta: “Let us go, friend, to the Gracious One, the Gracious One is the Teacher for us.”

“These two hundred and fifty wanderers, friend, are living here depending on us, looking to us, we should get their permission, then whatever they will think that they will do.”

Then Sāriputta and Moggallāna approached those wanderers, and after approaching, they said this to those wanderers: “We are going, friends, to the Gracious One, the Gracious One is the Teacher for us.”

“We are living here depending on you, venerable ones, looking to you, venerable ones, if you venerable ones will live the spiritual life under the Great Ascetic all of us will surely live the spiritual life under the Great Ascetic.”

Then Sāriputta and Moggallāna approached the wanderer Sañjaya, and after approaching, they said this to the wanderer Sañjaya: “We are going, friend, to the Gracious One, the Gracious One is our Teacher.” “Enough, friend, don’t go, the three of us will look after this group.”²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ I.e. he is offering them joint leadership of the group.

The Great Chapter

For a second time Sāriputta and Moggallāna said this to the wanderer Sañjaya: “We are going, friend, to the Gracious One, the Gracious One is our Teacher.” “Enough, friend, don’t go, the three of us will look after this group.”

For a third time Sāriputta and Moggallāna said this to the wanderer Sañjaya: “We are going, friend, to the Gracious One, the Gracious One is our Teacher.” “Enough, friend, don’t go, the three of us will look after this group.”

Then Sāriputta and Moggallāna taking those two hundred and fifty wanderers approached the Bamboo Wood. But the wanderer Sañjaya right there threw up hot blood from his mouth.

The Gracious One saw Sāriputta and Moggallāna coming while still far away, and having seen (them), he addressed the monks, (saying): “These two companions who are coming, Kolita and Upatissa, will be my pair of Chief Disciples, an auspicious pair.”

After (they had) attained deep knowledge in the realm of unsurpassed liberation with the destruction of attachments²⁰¹

The Teacher then spoke about them in the Bamboo Wood, (saying):

²⁰¹ This phrase is a locative absolute, not as *extraordinary* as Rhys-Davids makes out.

IV. In Rājagaha

“These two companions who are coming, Kolita and Upatissa
Will be my pair of Chief Disciples, an auspicious pair.”

Then Sāriputta and Moggallāna approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and falling with their heads at the feet of the Gracious One, they said this to the Gracious One: “May we receive the going-forth, venerable Sir, in the presence of the Gracious One, may we receive the full ordination.”

“Come, monks,” said the Gracious One, “the Dhamma has been well-proclaimed, live the spiritual life for the complete ending of suffering.”²⁰² That was these the venerable ones’ full ordination.²⁰³

42: The Going-Forth of the Well-Known (Sons of Good Families)

Then at that time many well-known sons of good families from Magadha were living the spiritual life under the Gracious One. People were grumbling, moaning, cursing: “The Ascetic Gotama’s method is making (families) childless, the Ascetic Gotama’s method is causing

²⁰² Comm: *the Elder Mahāmogallāna was established in Worthiness within seven days, the Elder Sāriputta within half a month.*

²⁰³ The commentary explains that at the time of the Buddha Anomadassī there were two ascetics named Sarada and Sirīvaḍḍha who, seeing that Buddha’s Chief Disciples, aspired to be Chief Disciples themselves, and later were reborn and became Sāriputta and Mahāmogallāna respectively.

The Great Chapter

breakage and loss,²⁰⁴ the Ascetic Gotama’s method is family-smashing, now through him a thousand yogis have gone forth, and these two-hundred and fifty of Sañjaya’s wanderers have gone forth,²⁰⁵ and these many well-known sons of good families from Magadha are (all) living the spiritual life under the Ascetic Gotama,” and having seen the monks, they scolded them with this verse:

“The Great Ascetic has come to Giribbaja²⁰⁶ in Magadha
After leading off all those under Sañjaya, who will he lead off
now?”

The monks heard those people grumbling, moaning, cursing. Then those monks informed the Gracious One of it. “This noise will not last long, monks, it will last for only seven days, and with the passing of seven days it will disappear. Therefore, monks, whoever scolds you with this verse:

“The Great Ascetic has come to Giribbaja in Magadha
After leading off all those under Sañjaya, who will he lead off
now?”

²⁰⁴ Comm: *whatever fathers went forth, those (families) suffered breakage and loss, and (the women) became widows.*

²⁰⁵ Notice that again there is no mention of those who went forth in Bārāṇasī.

²⁰⁶ Another name for Rājagaha. Cf. Pabbajāsuttam of Suttanipāta (Sn 3.4): *the Buddha went to Rājagaha, to Giribbaja of the Magadhans.*

IV. In Rājagaha

you scold them back with this verse:

“The Great Heros, the Realised Ones, lead with the True Dhamma,
By the Dhamma²⁰⁷ they are leading, why be jealous of the wise?”

Then at that time people, after seeing the monks, scolded them with this verse:

“The Great Ascetic has come to Giribbaja in Magadha
After leading off all those under Sañjaya, who will he lead off
now?”

and the monks scolded those people back with this verse:

“The Great Heros, the Realised Ones, lead with the True Dhamma,
By the Dhamma they are leading, why be jealous of the wise?”
“It seems the people and ascetics (are led) with Dhamma by the
Sakyan son,

they are not led by what is not Dhamma.”

²⁰⁷ The commentary has an interesting note here explaining that this word can be taken as having locative, genitive, or instrumental sense, giving the meanings: *in the Dhamma, for the Dhamma, or by the Dhamma*; however the form is an instrumental and I translate it as such.

The Great Chapter

That noise lasted only seven days, and with the passing of those seven days it disappeared.

The Going Forth of Sāriputta and Moggallāna is Finished

The Fourth Section for Recital is Finished