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LAST DAYS OF THE BUDDHA



The Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta
of the Pāli Canon

LAST DAYS OF THE BUDDHA

The Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta

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The Mahā-Parinibbāṇa Sutta
Being the 16th text of the
Dīgha-Nikāya



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Translated from the
Pāli Canon

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The cover picture is of a Gandhara sculpture, 2nd to 4th cent. C. E. It depicts the grief of worldlings, contrasted with the composure of Arahats, at the death of the Buddha (pp. 78 & 79 of the text).

14735-

“Suppose, Ānanda, the river Ganges had become full to the brim, ford and all, drinkable for crows, and a weakly man approached thinking: ‘By the strength of my arms, I shall cut across, and safely reach beyond!’—but he would not be able to do so.

Even so, Ānanda, he who rejoices not when the dissolution of personality is being proclaimed, is not pleased with it, does not settle down to it, and feels not released, such a one is comparable to that weakly man.”

Majjhima Nikāya No. 64

FOREWORD

The new translation of the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta which is offered here is a work of collaboration, but is based upon a text prepared by Sister Vajira, of Germany, to whom credit for the initial work must be given. The final revision of the text was done by Mr. Francis Story (the Anagarika P. Sugatananda). The notes and references which, it is hoped, will help in the understanding of the text, have been contributed by the Ven'ble Nyānaponika Mahā Thera, much of the material for them being taken from the Pāli Commentary.

Every effort has been made to give a faithful rendering of the original Pāli. The greater part of the Sutta is straightforward narrative; but it also includes references to profound aspects of the Dhamma, which have to be understood in their precise meaning if the full import of the Buddha's last exhortations is to be conveyed. In the choice which inevitably arises between terminological exactitude and literary form, the translators have endeavoured to preserve the former with as little sacrifice as possible of the latter. Those who understand the difficulties of Pāli translation will appreciate that this is no easy task, and will readily overlook the absence of those literary graces which only a freer rendering would have permitted.

As in previous translations, some repetitions have been omitted, and some repetitive passages condensed.

Buddhist Publication Society.

INTRODUCTION

Of the 34 discourses (suttas) that make up the *Dīgha Nikāya* (Collection of Long Discourses), ours, the 16th, is the longest, and so altogether maintains the first place where length is concerned.

It preserves the principal feature of the Buddhist sutta, insofar as it is, like others, a rehearsal of events as they have been witnessed. On account of its unique composition, however, it is, more than other suttas, capable not only of winning the affection of the pious Buddhist, as it naturally does, but also of attracting the general reader, since it is indeed a fine specimen of sacred universal literature.

It gives a good general idea of the Buddha's Teaching, too, even though it hardly offers anything that is not found—and often more extensively dealt with in other suttas.

At the end of his life, after almost half a century's ministry, the Master had long since taught all that was necessary for attaining the ideal. During the last period his primary concern, therefore, was to impress on his followers the necessity of unflinchingly putting into practice those very same Teachings; an appeal that could, of course, hardly fail in stirring their hearts more than ever before.

The Sangha came, indeed, to witness the greatest event in its history, and was keenly aware of it, especially since the Master had announced his *Parinibbāna* three months ahead. The impression on the *bhikkhus* who flocked to him in large numbers as he was pressing northward, was tremendous, and could not fail to be reflected vividly in the oral account.

(The Buddhist canon was originally, as is well-known, altogether oral.) Because of its particular import and abundance, this material was soon formed into one body; and so our sutta came to be.

In this connection, it is hardly possible not to remember gratefully the venerable Ānanda. His share in the preservation of the Master-word is paramount to any other bhikkhu's, and his figure is inseparable from our texts. This was to become manifest for all time in the Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta, which is plainly unimaginable without him. For it is Ānanda, and again Ānanda, whom the Master addresses, having tested for twenty-five years his sure grasp and brilliant memory, and also his indefatigable personal devotion. But Ānanda, too, here more than elsewhere, by his constant queries, worries and amazements, becomes without intending it, a central figure beside the Master himself, which undoubtedly increases the attractiveness of the text. Thus, then, Ānanda, gentle and pleasant as his name, and yet almost throughout his career incurring the reproach of the brethren, was immortalized, along with his beloved Master, and, as we may add—along with his strange position between praise and blame, assuming mystic character in the third chapter.

The third chapter, almost exclusively, is devoted to depicting the circumstances connected with the Master's relinquishment of life, which is the dramatic culmination of events. It overwhelmingly drives home the purely metaphysical significance of the Parinibbāna, or, at least, ought to do so. For the Buddha neither succumbed to his fatal illness, nor did he give way to the appeal of Māra (which is identical with the non-appeal of Ānanda), but, sovereignly let go of existence,

at a timely hour; just as he, forty-five years earlier, on becoming fully enlightened, had duly taken upon himself the wearisome task of teaching men. This fact is most thought-provoking, and, consistently, leads to the conclusion that, by his Parinibbāna, indeed, the Buddha bore the last, and highest possible testimony to his Teaching, which permits of no lingering inclination to self-preservation and continuance, but on the contrary reaches the highest exultation ending it all. The Master's Parinibbāna is, therefore, the one sorrowful event in the history of Buddhism that turns out, in its true meaning, to be really the most blissful.

SISTER VAJIRA

Ceylon,
May 1961.

I

THUS HAVE I HEARD:

Once the Bhagavā¹ dwelt at Rājagaha, on the hill called Vultures' Peak. At that time the king of Magadha, Ajātasattu, son of the Videha queen², desired to make war against the Vajjis. He spoke in this fashion: 'These Vajjis, powerful and glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, I shall utterly destroy them.'

2. And Ajātasattu, the king of Magadha, addressed his chief Minister, the brahmana Vassakāra, saying: 'Come, brahmana, betake yourself to the Bhagavā, pay homage in my name at the feet of the Bhagavā, wish him good health, strength, ease, vigour and comfort, and speak thus: "O Lord, Ajātasattu, the king of Magadha, desires to wage war against the Vajjis. He has spoken in this fashion: 'These Vajjis, powerful and glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, I shall utterly destroy them.'" And whatever the Bhagavā should answer you, keep it well in mind and make it known to me; for Tathāgatas³ do not speak falsely.'

3. 'Very well, Sire,' said the brahmana Vassakāra in assent to Ajātasattu, the king of Magadha. And he ordered a large number of magnificent carriages to be made ready, himself mounted one and, accompanied by the rest, drove out from Rājagaha towards Vultures' Peak. He went by carriage as far as the carriage could make its way, then, dismounting, approached the Bhagavā on foot. After exchanging courteous greetings with the Bhagavā, together with many pleasant words, he sat down at one side and addressed the Bhagavā thus: 'Venerable Gotama, the king of Magadha pays homage at the feet of the venerable Gotama and wishes him good health, strength, ease, vigour and comfort. He desires to wage war against the Vajjis, and has spoken in this fashion: "These Vajjis, powerful and glorious as they are, I shall annihilate them, I shall make them perish, I shall utterly destroy them."

Conditions of a Nation's Welfare⁴

4. At that time the Venerable Ānanda⁵ was standing behind the Bhagavā, fanning him. And the Bhagava addressed the Venerable Ānanda thus: 'What have you heard, Ānanda; do the Vajjis have frequent gatherings, and are their meetings well attended?'

'I have heard, Lord, that this is so.'

'So long, Ānanda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

'What have you heard, Ānanda; do the Vajjis assemble and disperse peacefully, and attend to their affairs in concord?'

'I have heard, Lord, that they do.'

'So long, Ānanda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.'

‘What have you heard, Ānanda; do the Vajjis neither enact new decrees nor abolish existing ones, but proceed in accordance with their ancient constitutions?’

‘I have heard, Lord, that they do.’

‘So long, Ānanda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.’

‘What have you heard, Ānanda; do the Vajjis show respect, honour, esteem and veneration towards their elders and deem it worth while to listen to them?’

‘I have heard, Lord, that they do.’

‘So long, Ānanda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.’

‘What have you heard, Ānanda; do the Vajjis refrain from abducting women and maidens of good families, and detaining them?’

‘I have heard, Lord, that they refrain from doing so.’

‘So long, Ānanda; as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.’

‘What have you heard, Ānanda; do the Vajjis show respect, honour, esteem and veneration towards their shrines, both those within the city and those outside it, and do they not deprive them of the due offerings as given and made to them formerly?’

‘I have heard, Lord, that they do venerate their shrines, and that they do not deprive them of their offerings.’

‘So long, Ānanda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.’

‘What have you heard, Ānanda; do the Vajjis duly protect and guard the Holy Ones, so that those

who have not come to the realm yet, might do so, and those already come might live there in peace?’

‘I have heard, Lord, that they do.’

‘So long, Ānanda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline.’

5. And the Bhagavā addressed the brahmana Vassakāra in these words ‘Once, Brahmana, I dwelt at Vesālī, at the Sarandada shrine, and there it was that I taught the Vajjis these seven conditions leading to (a nation’s) welfare.⁶ So long, Brahmana, as these endure among the Vajjis, and the Vajjis are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.’

Thereupon the brahmana Vassakāra spoke thus to the Bhagavā: ‘If the Vajjis, venerable Gotama, were endowed with only one or the other of these conditions leading to welfare, their growth, truly, would have to be expected, not their decline. What then of all the seven! No harm, indeed, can be done to the Vajjis in battle by Magadha’s king, Ajātasattu, except through treachery or discord. Well, then, venerable Gotama, we will take our leave, for we have much to perform, much work to do.’

‘As it now seems fit to you, Brahmana.’ And the brahmana Vassakāra, the chief Minister of Magadha, approving of the Bhagavā’s words and delighted by them, rose from his seat and departed.

Welfare of the Bhikkhus

6. Then the Bhagavā, soon after Vassakāra’s departure, addressed the venerable Ānanda thus: ‘Go now, Ānanda, and assemble in the hall of audience as many bhikkhus as live round about Rājagaha.’

‘Very well, Lord.’ And the venerable Ānanda, having done as he was requested, announced to the Bhagavā: ‘Assembled is the community of bhikkhus, O Lord. Now be it as the Bhagavā deems fit.’

Thereupon the Bhagavā rose from his seat, went up to the hall of audience, there took his appointed seat, and addressed the bhikkhus thus: ‘Seven conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, Bhikkhus, Listen and pay heed to what I say.’

‘So be it, Lord.’

‘The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, Bhikkhus, so long as they assemble frequently and in large numbers; meet and disperse peacefully and attend to the affairs of the Sangha in concord; so long as they appoint no new rules, and abolish not the existing ones, but proceed in accordance with the code of training (Vinaya) laid down; so long as they show respect, honour, esteem and veneration towards the elder bhikkhus, those of long standing, long gone forth, the fathers and leaders of the Sangha, and deem it worth while to listen to them; so long as they do not come under the power of the craving that leads to fresh becoming; so long as they cherish the forest depths for their dwelling and individually establish themselves in mindfulness, so that virtuous brethren of the Order who have not come yet, might do so, and those already come might live in peace; - so long, Bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.’

7. ‘Seven further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, Bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I say.’

‘So be it, Lord.’

‘The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, Bhikkhus, so long as they do not delight in, are not pleased with and are not fond of activities, of talk, of sleep and of company; so long as they do not harbour, do not come under, the spell of evil desires, have no bad friends, associates or companions; and so long as they do not stop half way, on account of some trifling achievement. So long, Bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.’

8. ‘Seven further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, Bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I say.’

‘So be it, Lord.’

Seven Good Qualities 7

‘The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, Bhikkhus, so long as they shall have faith, so long as they have moral shame and are afraid of misconduct, are proficient in learning, are resolute, mindful and wise. So long, Bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the Bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.’

9. ‘Seven further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, Bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I say.’

‘So be it, Lord.’

Seven Factors of Enlightenment 8

‘The growth of bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, bhikkhus, so long as they cultivate the Factors of Enlightenment, that is: mindfulness,

Investigation into the phenomena, energy, bliss, tranquillity, concentration and equanimity. So long, Bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.'

10 'Seven further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, Bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I say.'

'So be it, Lord.'

Seven Perceptions

'The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, Bhikkhus, so long as they cultivate the perception of Impermanence, of Egolessness, of (the body's) Impurity, of (the body's) Wretchedness, of Relinquishment, of Dispassion and of Cessation. So long, Bhikkhus, as these seven conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.'

11. 'Six further conditions leading to welfare I shall set forth, Bhikkhus. Listen and pay heed to what I say.'

'So be it, Lord.'

Six Conditions to be Remembered⁹

'The growth of the bhikkhus is to be expected, not their decline, Bhikkhus, so long as they attend on each other with loving-kindness in deed, word and thought, both openly and in private; so long as in respect of what they receive as due offerings, even to

the contents of their bowl, they do not make use of them without sharing them with virtuous members of the community; so long as, in company with their brethren, they train themselves, openly and in private, in the rules of conduct, which are complete and perfect, spotless and pure, which are liberating, praised by the wise, uninfluenced (by mundane concerns) and favourable to concentration of mind; and in company with their brethren preserve, openly and in private, the insight that is noble and liberating, and leads him who acts upon it to the utter destruction of suffering. So long, Bhikkhus, as these six conditions leading to welfare endure among the bhikkhus, and the bhikkhus are known for it, their growth is to be expected, not their decline.'

Counsel to the Bhikkhus

12. And the Bhagavā, living at Rājagaha, at the hill called Vulture's Peak, often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus:

'Such and such is virtue;¹⁰ such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration¹⁰ when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom¹⁰ when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints¹¹ of Lust, of Becoming, and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.'

13. When the Bhagavā had stayed at Rājagaha as long as he pleased, he addressed the venerable Ānanda thus: 'Come, Ānanda, let us repair to Ambalatthika.'

'So be it, Lord.'

And the Bhagavā took up his abode at Ambalatthika, together with a large community of bhikkhus.

14. At Ambalatthika the Bhagavā came to stay in the king's resthouse; and there, too, the Bhagavā often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus:

‘Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of Lust, of Becoming, and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.’

15. When the Bhagavā had stayed at Ambalatthika as long as he pleased, he addressed the venerable Ānanda thus: ‘Come, Ānanda, let us repair to Nālanda.’

‘So be it, Lord.’

And the Bhagavā took up his abode at Nālanda, together with a large community of bhikkhus, and came to stay in the mango grove of Pāvārika.

Sāriputta's Lion's Roar

16. Then the venerable Sāriputta betook himself to the Bhagavā, respectfully greeted him, sat down at one side, and spoke thus to the Bhagavā:

‘This faith, Lord, I have in the Bhagavā: that there has not been, there will not be, nor is there now, another recluse or brahmana more exalted in Enlightenment than the Bhagavā.’

‘Lofty indeed is this speech of yours, Sāriputta, and lordly! A bold utterance, a veritable sounding of the lion's roar! But how is this, Sāriputta? Those

Arahats, those Fully Enlightened Ones of times gone by—do you have direct personal knowledge of all those Bhagavās, as to how they conducted themselves,¹² how they meditated,¹³ how they knew,¹⁴ how they spent their lives,¹⁵ how they were emancipated?¹⁶

‘Not so, Lord.’

‘Then how is this, Sāriputta? Those Arahats, those Fully Enlightened Ones of times to come—do you have direct personal knowledge of all those Bhagavās, as to how they will conduct themselves, how they will meditate, how they will know, how they will spend their lives, how they will be emancipated?’

‘Not so, Lord.’

‘Then how is this, Sāriputta? Of me, who am at present the Arahāt, the Fully Enlightened One, do you have direct personal knowledge as to how I conduct myself, how I meditate, how I know, how I spend my life, how I am emancipated?’

‘Not so, Lord.’

‘Then it is clear, Sāriputta, that you have no such direct personal knowledge of the Arahats, the Fully Enlightened Ones of times past, to come, and present. How then dare you set forth a speech so lofty and lordly, an utterance so bold, a veritable sounding of the lion’s roar, saying: “This faith, Lord, I have in the Bhagavā: that there has not been, there will not be, nor is there now, another recluse or brahmana more exalted in Enlightenment than the Bhagavā”?’

17. ‘No such direct personal knowledge, indeed, is mine, Lord, of the Arahats, the Fully Enlightened Ones of times past, to come, and present; and yet, I have come to know the lawfulness of the Teaching. Suppose,

Lord, a king's frontier fortress, strongly fortified, with strong ramparts and turrets, had a single gate. And that there were a gate-keeper, intelligent, experienced and prudent, who would keep out the stranger, but allow the friend to enter. And, as he patrols the path that leads all round the fortress he does not perceive a hole or fissure in the rampart even enough to allow a cat to slip through. So he comes to the conclusion: "Whatsoever grosser living things are to enter or leave this city, they will all have to do so just by this gate." In the same way, verily, Lord, I have come to know the lawfulness of the Teaching.

'For, Lord, the Arahats, the Fully Enlightened Ones of times gone by, all those Bhagavās had abandoned the Five Hindrances,¹⁷ the mental defilements that weaken insight; had well established their minds in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness;¹⁸ had duly cultivated the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and were fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment.

And, Lord, the Arahats, Fully Enlightened Ones of times to come, all those Bhagavās will abandon the Five Hindrances, the mental defilements that weaken insight; will well establish their mind in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness; will duly cultivate the Seven Factors of Enlightenment and will be fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment.

'And the Bhagavā too, Lord, being at present the Arahāt, the Fully Enlightened One has abandoned the Five Hindrances, the mental defilements that weaken insight; has well established his mind in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness; has duly cultivated the Seven Factors of Enlightenment and is fully enlightened, In unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment.'

18. And also in Nālandā, in the mango grove of Pāvārika, the Bhagavā often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus:

‘Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of Lust, of Becoming, and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.’

19. When the Bhagavā had stayed at Nālandā as long as he pleased, he addressed the venerable Ānanda thus: ‘Come, Ānanda, let us repair to Pāṭaligāma.’

‘So be it, Lord.’

And the Bhagavā took up his abode at Pāṭaligāma, together with a large community of bhikkhus.

20. Then the devotees of Pāṭaligāma came to know: ‘The Bhagavā, they say, has arrived at Pāṭaligāma.’ And they approached the Bhagavā, respectfully greeted him, sat down at one side, and addressed the Bhagavā thus: ‘May it please the Bhagavā, Lord, to visit our council hall.’ And by his silence the Bhagavā consented.

21. Knowing the Bhagavā’s consent, the devotees of Pāṭaligāma rose from their seats, respectfully saluted the Bhagavā and, keeping their right sides towards him, departed for the council hall. Then they prepared the council hall by covering the floor all over, arranging seats and water, and placing an oil lamp. Having done this, they returned to the Bhagavā, respectfully greeted him, and standing at one side, announced: ‘Ready, Lord, is the council hall, with the floor covered all over, seats and water prepared and an oil lamp placed. Now be it, Lord, as the Bhagavā deems fit.’

22. And the Bhagavā got ready, and taking bowl and robe, betook himself to the council hall, together with the company of bhikkhus. After rinsing his feet, the Bhagavā entered the council hall and took his seat close to the middle pillar, facing east. The community of bhikkhus, after rinsing their feet, also entered the council hall and took seats near the western wall, facing east, so that the Bhagavā was before them. And the devotees of Pāṭaligāma, after rinsing their feet and entering the council hall, sat down near the eastern wall, facing west, so that the Bhagavā was in front of them.

The Fruits of an Immoral and a Moral Life

23. Thereupon, the Bhagavā addressed the devotees of Pāṭaligāma thus: 'The immoral man, householders, through his falling away from virtue, encounters five perils: great loss of wealth, through his heedlessness; an evil reputation; a timid and troubled demeanour in every society, be it that of nobles, priests, householders or ascetics; death in bewilderment; and, at the breaking up of the body after death, rebirth in a realm of misery, in an unhappy state, in the nether world, in hell.

24. 'Five blessings, householders, accrue to the righteous man, through his practice of virtue: great increase of wealth, through his diligence; a favourable reputation; a confident deportment, without timidity, in every society, be it that of nobles, priests, householders, or ascetics; a serene death; and, at the breaking up of the body after death, rebirth in a happy state, in a heavenly world.

25. And the Bhagavā spent much of the night

instructing the devotees of Pāṭaligāma in the Teaching, rousing, edifying and gladdening them; after which he dismissed them, saying: 'The night is far advanced, householders; do now as seems to you fit.'

'So be it, Lord ' And the devotees of Pāṭaligāma rose from their seats, respectfully saluted the Bhagavā and, keeping their right sides towards him, departed. And the Bhagavā, soon after their departure, retired into privacy,

26. At that time, Sunīdha and Vassakāra, the Chief Ministers of Magadha, were building a fortress at Pāṭaligāma in defence against the Vajjis. And deities in large numbers, counted in thousands, had taken possession of sites at Pāṭaligāma. In the region where deities of great power prevailed, officials of great power were bent on constructing edifices; and where deities of medium and lesser power prevailed, officials of medium and lesser power were bent on constructing edifices.

27. And the Bhagavā beheld with the heavenly eye, pure and transcending the faculty of men, the deities, counted in thousands, where they had taken possession of sites in Pāṭaligāma. And, rising before the night was spent, towards dawn, the Bhagavā addressed the venerable Ānanda thus: 'Who is it, Ānanda, that is erecting a city at Pāṭaligāma?'

'Sunīdha and Vassakāra, Lord, the Chief Ministers of Magadha, are building a fortress at Pāṭaligāma, in defence against the Vajjis.'

28. 'It is, Ānanda, as if Sunīdha and Vassakāra had taken counsel with the Gods of the Thirty-three. For I beheld, Ānanda, with the heavenly eye, pure and transcending the faculty of men, a large number of

deities, counted in thousands, that have taken possession of sites at Pāṭaligāma. In the region where deities of great power prevail, officials of great power are bent on constructing edifices; and where deities of medium and lesser power prevail, officials of medium and lesser power are bent on constructing edifices. Truly, Ānanda, as far as the Aryan race extends, and trade routes spread, this will be the foremost city, Pāṭaliputta, a trade-centre.¹⁹ But Pāṭaliputta, Ānanda, will be assailed by three perils—fire, water and dissension ’

29. Then Sunīdha and Vassakāra betook themselves to the Bhagavā, and after courteous greetings to the Bhagavā, and exchanging many pleasant words, stood at one side and addressed the Bhagavā thus: ‘May it please the venerable Gotama to accept our invitation for tomorrow’s meal, together with the community of bhikkhus.’ And by his silence the Bhagavā consented.

30. Knowing the Bhagavā’s consent, Sunīdha and Vassakāra departed for their own abodes, where they had choice food, hard and soft, prepared. And when it was time, they announced to the Bhagavā: ‘It is time, venerable Gotama; the meal is ready.’

Thereupon, the Bhagavā got ready in the forenoon, and taking bowl and robe, betook himself, together with the community of bhikkhus, to the abode of Sunīdha and Vassakāra, where he took the seat prepared for him. And Sunīdha and Vassakāra themselves attended on the community of bhikkhus, headed by the Buddha, and served them with choice food, hard and soft. When the Bhagavā had finished his meal, and removed his hand from his bowl, they took low seats and sat down at one side.

31. And the Bhagavā thanked them with these stanzas :

‘Wherever he may dwell, the prudent man
Ministers to the chaste and virtuous;
And having to these worthy ones made gifts,
His merit with the local devas shares;
And so revered, they honour him in turn,
Are gracious to him even as a mother
Is towards her own, her only son;
And he who thus enjoys the devas’ grace
And is by them beloved, good fortune sees.’

32. After which, the Bhagavā rose from his seat and departed.

Crossing of the Ganges

Then Sunīdha and Vassakāra followed behind the Bhagavā, step by step, saying: ‘Through whichever gate the Recluse Gotama will depart today, that we will name the Gotama-gate; and the ford by which he will cross the river Ganges shall be the Gotama-ford.’ And so it came to pass, where the gate was concerned.

33. But when the Bhagavā proceeded to the river Ganges, it was full to the brim, so that crows could drink from it. And some people went in search of a boat or float, while others tied up a raft, because they desired to get across. But the Bhagavā, as quickly as a strong man might stretch out his bent arm, or draw in his outstretched arm, vanished from this side of the river Ganges, and came to stand on the yonder side.

34. And the Bhagavā beheld the people who desired to cross searching for a boat or float, whilst others were binding rafts. And then the Bhagavā, beholding

them thus, gave forth the solemn utterance :

They who have bridged the ocean vast,
Leaving the lowlands far behind,
While others still their frail rafts bind,
Are saved by wisdom unsurpassed.

II

1. Now the Bhagavā spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying : ‘Come, Ānanda, let us go to Koṭigāma.’ ‘So be it, O Lord.’ And the Bhagavā took up his abode at Koṭigāma together with a large community of bhikkhus.

The Four Noble Truths

2. And the Bhagavā addressed the bhikkhus, saying: ‘It is through not realizing, Bhikkhus, through not penetrating the Four Noble Truths, that this long course of birth and deaths has been passed through and undergone by me as well as by you. What are these four? They are the Noble Truth of Suffering; the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering; the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering; and the Noble Truth of the Way to the Cessation of Suffering.

‘But now, Bhikkhus, that these have been realized and penetrated, cut off is the craving for existence, exhausted is that which leads to renewed being, and there is no fresh becoming.’

3. Thus was it said by the Bhagavā. And the Happy One, the Master, further said :

‘Through seeing not the Fourfold Noble Truths,
Long was the weary path from birth to birth.
When these are known, removed is rebirth’s cause,
The root of sorrow plucked; then ends rebirth.’

4. And also at Koṭigāma the Bhagavā often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: ‘Such and such is virtue, such and such is concentration, and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of Lust, of Becoming, and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.’

5. When the Bhagavā had stayed at Koṭigāma as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: ‘Come, Ānanda, let us go to Nadikā.’ ‘So be it, O Lord.’ And the Bhagavā took up his abode in Nadikā, together with a large community of bhikkhus, staying in the Brick House.

The Four Specific Attainments

6. Then the Venerable Ananda approached the Bhagavā, and after greeting him respectfully, sat down at one side. And he said to the Bhagavā: ‘Here in Nadikā, O Lord, there have passed away the bhikkhu Sālha and the bhikkhuni Nandā. Likewise there have passed away the layman Sudatta and the laywoman Sujātā; likewise the laymen Kakhuda, Kālinga, Nikata, Kaṭissabha, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, and Subhadda. What is their destiny, O Lord? What is their future state?’

7. ‘The bhikkhu Sālha, Ānanda, through the destruction of the taints in this very lifetime has attained to

the taint-free deliverance of mind, has attained deliverance through wisdom, having directly known and realised it by himself.²⁰

‘The bhikkhuni Nandā, Ānanda, through the destruction of the Five Lower Fetters (that bind beings to the world of the senses) and having arisen spontaneously (among the Suddhavāsa deities), will come to final cessation in that very place, and is not liable to return from that world.’²¹

‘The layman Sudatta, Ānanda, through the destruction of the Three Fetters (self-belief, doubt, and faith in the efficacy of rituals and observances), and the lessening of lust, hatred and delusion, has become a Once-returner, bound to make an end of suffering after having returned but once more to this world.’²²

‘The laywoman Sujātā, Ānanda, through the destruction of the Three Fetters has become a Stream-enterer, and is safe from falling into the states of misery, is assured, and bound for Enlightenment.’²³

‘The layman Kakudha, Ānanda, through the destruction of the Five Lower Fetters (that bind beings to the world of the senses), and having arisen spontaneously (among the Suddhavāsa deities), will come to final cessation in that very place, and is not liable to return from that world.

‘So it is with Kālinga, Nikāṭa, Kaṭissabha, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, Bhadda and Subhadda, and with more than fifty laymen in Nadikā. More than ninety laymen who have passed away in Nadikā, Ānanda, through the destruction of the Three Fetters, and a lessening of lust, hatred and delusion, have become Once-returners and are bound to make an end of suffering after having returned but once more to this world.

‘More than five hundred laymen who have passed away in Nadikā, Ānanda, through the complete destruction of the Three Fetters have become Stream-enterers, and are safe from falling into the states of misery, are assured, and bound for Enlightenment.’

‘The Mirror of Truth’

8. ‘But truly, Ānanda, it is nothing strange that a human being should die. But if each time it happens you should come to the Tathāgata and ask about them in this manner, indeed it would be troublesome to him. Therefore, Ānanda, I will give you the Teaching called “the Mirror of Truth”, possessing which the noble disciple, should he so desire, can declare of himself: “Hell is for me no more, no rebirth as animal or ghost, nor in any realm of woe. A Stream-enterer am I, safe from falling into the states of misery; assured am I, and bound for Enlightenment.”

9. ‘And what, Ānanda, is that Teaching, called “the Mirror of Truth”, possessing which the noble disciple may thus declare of himself?

‘In this case, Ānanda, the noble disciple possesses unwavering faith in the Buddha, thus—“The Blessed One is the Holy One, the Fully-Enlightened, the Perfect in Knowledge and conduct, the Happy One, the Knower of the World, the paramount Trainer of Beings, the Teacher of Gods and Men, the Enlightened One, the Blessed”. He possesses unwavering faith in the Teaching, thus:— “Well propounded by the Bhagavā is the Teaching, evident, timeless,²⁴ inviting to investigation, leading to emancipation, to be comprehended by the wise, each for himself.” He possesses unwavering faith in the Bhagavā’s Order of

Monks, thus:— “Well faring is the Bhagavā’s Order of Monks, righteously, wisely and dutifully: that is to say, the Four Pairs of Men, the Eight Classes of Personalities. Thus, verily, is the Bhagavā’s Order of Monks: worthy of honour, of hospitality, of offerings and veneration—the supreme field for meritorious deeds in the world.” And he possesses virtues that are dear to the Noble Ones, complete and perfect, spotless and pure; which are liberating, praised by the wise, uninfluenced (by worldly concerns) and favourable to concentration of mind.

10. ‘This, Ānanda, is the Teaching called “the Mirror of Truth”, whereby the noble disciple may thus know of himself: “Hell is for me no more, nor rebirth as animal or ghost, nor in any realm of woe. A Stream-enterer am I, safe from falling into the states of misery; assured am I, and bound for enlightenment.”’

11. And also in Nadikā, in the Brick House, the Bhagavā often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: ‘Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of Lust, of Becoming and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.’

12. When the Bhagavā had stayed in Nadikā as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: ‘Come, Ānanda, let us go to Vesālī.’ ‘So be it, O Lord.’ And the Bhagavā took up his abode in Vesālī, together with a large community of bhikkhus, and stayed in Ambapālī’s grove.

Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension

13. Then the Bhagavā addressed the bhikkhus, saying: 'Mindful should you dwell, Bhikkhus, clearly comprehending; thus I exhort you.

14. 'And how, Bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu mindful? When he dwells contemplating body in the body, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world; and when he dwells contemplating feeling in the feelings, mind in the mind, and mental objects in the mental objects, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world, then is he said to be mindful.

15. 'And how, Bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu have clear comprehension? When he remains fully aware of his coming and going, his looking forward and his looking away, his bending and stretching, his wearing of his robe and carrying of his bowl, his eating and drinking, masticating and savouring, his defecating and urinating, his walking, standing, sitting, lying down, going to sleep, or keeping awake, his speaking or being silent, then is he said to have clear comprehension.

'Mindful should you dwell, Bhikkhus, clearly comprehending; thus I exhort you.'

Ambapālī and the Licchavis

16. Then Ambapālī the courtesan came to know: 'The Bhagavā, they say, has arrived at Vesālī, and is staying in my mango grove.' And she ordered a large number of magnificent carriages to be made ready, mounted one of them herself, and, accompanied by the rest, drove out from Vesālī towards her park. She went by carriage as far as the carriage could go, then alighted;

and approaching the Bhagavā on foot, she respectfully greeted him and sat down at one side. And the Bhagavā instructed Ambapālī, the courtesan, in the Teaching, and aroused, edified, and gladdened her.

17. Thereafter, Ambapālī the courtesan spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: 'May it please the Bhagavā, O Lord, to accept my invitation for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus.' And by his silence the Bhagavā consented.

Sure, then, of the Bhagavā's consent, Ambapālī the courtesan rose from her seat, respectfully saluted the Bhagavā, and, keeping her right side towards him, took her departure.

18. Then the Licchavis of Vesālī came to know: 'The Bhagavā, they say has arrived at Vesālī, and is staying in Ambapālī's grove.' And they ordered a large number of magnificent carriages to be made ready, each mounted one, and, accompanied by the rest, drove out from Vesālī. Now, of those Licchavis, some were in blue, with raiment and ornaments all of blue, whilst others were in yellow, red and white.

19. And it so happened that Ambapālī the courtesan drove up against the young Licchavis, axle by axle, wheel by wheel and yoke by yoke. Thereupon the Licchavis exclaimed, 'Why do you drive up against us in this fashion, Ambapālī?'

'Thus it is, indeed, my Princes, and not otherwise! For the Bhagavā is invited by me for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus!'

'Give up the meal, Ambapālī, for a hundred thousand!'

But she replied: 'Even if you were to give me

Vesālī, Sirs, together with its tributary lands, I would not give up a meal of such importance !'

Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers in annoyance. 'See, friends ! We are defeated by this mango lass ! We are utterly outdone by this mango lass !' But they continued on their way to Ambapālī's grove.

20. And the Bhagavā beheld the Licchavis from afar, as they drove up. Then he spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: 'Those of you, Bhikkhus, who have not yet seen the Thirty-three gods, may behold the assembly of the Licchavis, and may gaze on them, for they are comparable to the assembly of the Thirty-three gods.'

21. Then the Licchavis drove their carriages as far as the carriages, could go then, alighted; and approaching the Bhagavā on foot, they respectfully greeted him and sat down at one side. And the Bhagavā instructed the Licchavis in the Teaching, and aroused, edified and gladdened them.

22. Thereafter, the Licchavis spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: 'May it please the Bhagavā, O Lord, to accept our invitation for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus.' 'The invitation for tomorrow's meal, Licchavis, has been accepted by me from Ambapālī the courtesan.'

Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers in annoyance. 'See, friends ! We are defeated by this mango lass ! We are utterly outdone by this mango lass !' And then the Licchavis, approving of the Bhagavā's words and delighted with them, rose from their seats, respectfully saluted him, and, keeping their right sides towards him, took their departure.

23. Then Ambapāli, after the night had passed, had choice food, hard and soft, prepared in her park, and announced it to the Bhagavā: 'It is time, O Lord; the meal is ready.' Thereupon the Bhagavā got ready in the forenoon, and taking bowl and robe betook himself, together with the community of bhikkhus, to Ambapāli's dwelling, and there took the seat prepared for him. And Ambapāli herself attended on the community of bhikkhus, headed by the Buddha, and served them with choice food, hard and soft.

24. And when the Bhagavā had finished his meal and had removed his hand from his bowl, she took a low seat, and placing herself at one side, spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: 'This park, O Lord, I offer to the community of bhikkhus, headed by the Buddha!' And the Bhagavā accepted the park. He then instructed Ambapālī in the Teaching, and having aroused, edified and gladdened her, he rose from his seat and departed.

25. And also at Vesālī, in Ambapāli's grove, the Bhagavā often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: 'Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of Lust, of Becoming, and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.'

26. When the Bhagavā had stayed in Ambapāli's grove as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: 'Come, Ānanda, let us go to the village of Beluva.' 'So be it, O Lord.' And the Bhagavā took up his abode in the village of Beluva, together with a

large community of bhikkhus.

The Bhagavā's Deadly Sickness

27. At that time the Bhagavā spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: 'Go now, Bhikkhus, and seek shelter anywhere in the neighbourhood of Vesāli where you are welcome, among acquaintances and friends, and there spend the rainy season. As for me, I shall spend the rainy season in this very place, in the village of Beluva.' 'So be it, O Lord,' the bhikkhus said.

28. But when the Bhagavā had entered upon the rainy season there arose in him a severe illness, and sharp and deadly pains came upon him. And the Bhagavā endured them mindfully, clearly comprehending, and unperturbed.

29. Then it occurred to the Bhagavā: 'Not befitting would it be, if I should come to the final passing away without addressing those who attended on me, without taking leave of the community of bhikkhus. Then let me suppress this illness by strength of will, resolve to maintain the life-process, and live on.'

30. And the Bhagavā suppressed the illness by strength of will, resolved to maintain the life-process, and lived on. So it came about that the Bhagavā's illness was allayed.

31. And the Bhagavā recovered from that illness; and soon after his recovery he came out from his dwelling place and seated himself in the shade of the building, on a seat prepared for him. Then the Venerable Ānanda approached the Bhagavā, and respectfully greeted him. And seating himself at one side he spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: 'Fortunate is it for me, O Lord, to see the Bhagavā at ease again! Fortunate is it for me,

○ Lord, to see the Bhagavā recovered! For truly, Lord, when I beheld the Bhagavā's sickness it was as though my own body became weak as a creeper, everything around became dim to me and my senses failed me. Yet, Lord, some little comfort still I had, in the thought that the Bhagavā would not come to his final passing away until he had given some last instructions respecting the community of bhikkhus.'

32. Thus spoke the Venerable Ānanda, but the Bhagavā answered him, saying: 'What more does the community of bhikkhus expect from me, Ānanda? I have set forth the Teaching without making any distinction of esoteric and exoteric doctrine; there is nothing, Ānanda, with regard to the teachings that the Tathāgata holds to the last with the close fist of a teacher who keeps some things back. Whosoever may think that it is he who should lead the community of bhikkhus, or that the community depends upon him, such a one, indeed, would have to give last instructions respecting them. But, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has no such idea as that it is he who should lead the community of bhikkhus, or that the community depends upon him. So what instructions should he have to give respecting the community of bhikkhus?

'Now I am frail, Ānanda, old, aged, far gone in years. This is my eightiest year, and my life is spent. Even as an old cart, Ānanda, is held together with much difficulty, so the body of the Tathāgata is kept going only with supports. It is only, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata, disregarding external objects,²⁵ with the cessation of certain feelings²⁶ attains to and abides in the Signless Concentration of Mind,²⁷ that his body is more comfortable.

33. 'Therefore, Ānanda, be ye an island unto yourselves, a refuge unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Teaching as your island, the Teaching your refuge, seeking no other refuge.

'And how, Ānanda, is a bhikkhu an island unto himself, a refuge unto himself, seeking no external refuge; with the Teaching as his island, the Teaching his refuge, seeking no other refuge ?

34. 'When he dwells contemplating body in the body, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world; he dwells contemplating feeling in the feelings, mind in the mind, and mental objects in the mental objects, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world, then, truly, he is an island unto himself, a refuge unto himself, seeking no external refuge; having the Teaching as his island and refuge, seeking no other refuge.

35. 'Those bhikkhus of mine, Ānanda, who now, or after I am gone, abide as an island unto themselves, as a refuge unto themselves, seeking no other refuge; having the Teaching as their island and refuge, seeking no other refuge; it is they who will become the highest,²⁸ if they have the desire to learn.'

III

I. Then the Bhagavā, getting ready in the forenoon, took bowl and robe and went into Vesālī for alms. After the almsround and meal, on his return, he spoke

to the Venerable Ānanda, saying, 'Take up a mat, Ānanda, and let us spend the day at Cāpala shrine.' 'So be it, O Lord.' And the Venerable Ānanda took up a mat and followed behind the Bhagavā, step by step.

2. And the Bhagavā betook himself to Cāpala shrine and sat down on the seat prepared for him. And when the Venerable Ānanda had seated himself at one side, after respectfully saluting the Bhagavā, the Lord said to him, 'Pleasant, Ānanda, is Vesālī; pleasant are the shrines of Udena, Gotamaka, Sattambaka, Bahuputta, Sarandada and Cāpala!'

3. And the Bhagavā said: 'Whosoever, Ānanda, has developed, practised, employed, strengthened, maintained, scrutinised and brought to perfection the Four Constituents of Psychic Power, could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it.²⁹ The Tathāgata, Ānanda, has done so. Therefore the Tathāgata, Ānanda, could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it.'

4. But the Venerable Ānanda was unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting, given by the Bhagavā. As though his mind was influenced by Māra, he did not beseech the Bhagavā: 'May the Bhagavā remain, O Lord! May the Happy One remain, O Lord, throughout the world-period! For the welfare and happiness of mankind, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit wellbeing and happiness of gods and men!'

5. And when for a second and third time the Bhagavā repeated his words, the Venerable Ānanda remained silent.

6. Then the Bhagavā said to the Venerable Ānanda:

‘Go now, Ānanda, and do as seems fit to you.’ ‘Even so, O Lord.’ And the Venerable Ānanda, rising from his seat, respectfully saluted the Bhagavā, and, keeping his right side towards him, took his seat under a tree at some little distance away.

Māra’s Appeal

7. And when the Venerable Ānanda had gone away, Māra, the Evil One, approached the Bhagavā. And standing at one side he spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: ‘Now, O Lord, let the Bhagavā come to his final passing away; let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time is come, indeed, for the Parinibbāna of the Lord.

‘For the Bhagavā, O Lord, spoke these words to me: “I shall not come to my final passing away, O Evil One, until my bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and lay women, have come to be true disciples—wise, well-disciplined, apt and learned, preservers of the Teaching, living according to the Teaching, abiding by the appropriate conduct, and having learned the Master’s word, are able to expound it, to preach it, proclaim it, establish it, reveal it, explain it in detail and make it clear; until they, when adverse opinions arise, shall be able to refute them thoroughly and well, and to preach this convincing and liberating Teaching.”’³⁰

8. ‘And now, O Lord, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen have become the Bhagavā’s disciples, in just this way. So, O Lord, let the Bhagavā come to his final passing away, let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time is come, indeed, for the Parinibbāna of the Lord.

‘For the Bhagavā, O Lord, spoke these words to

me: "I shall not come to my final passing away, O Evil One, until this Holy Life taught by me shall become successful, prosperous, far-renowned, popular and widespread, until it is well proclaimed among gods and men." And this too has come to pass, just in this very way. So, O Lord, let the Bhagavā come to his final passing away, let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time is come, indeed, for the Parinibbāna of the Lord!

The Bhagavā Relinquishes His Life

9. When this was said, the Bhagavā spoke to Māra, the Evil One, saying: 'Trouble yourself not, Evil One. Before long the Parinibbāna of the Tathāgata will come about. Three months hence, the Tathāgata will utterly pass away.'

10. And at the Cāpāla shrine the Bhagavā thus mindfully and clearly comprehending, renounced his will to live on.³¹ And upon the Lord's renouncing his will to live on, there came a tremendous earthquake, dreadful and astonishing, and thunder rolled across the heavens. And the Bhagavā beheld it with understanding, and made this solemn utterance:

'What causes life, unbounded or confined—³²
His process of becoming ³³—this the Sage
Renounces. With inward calm and joy he breaks,
As through a coat of mail, his own life's cause'.³⁴

11. Then it came to the mind of the Venerable Ānanda: 'Marvellous it is indeed, and most wonderful! The earth shakes mightily, tremendously! Dreadful and astonishing it is, how the thunders roll across the heavens! What could be the reason, what the cause,

that so mighty an earthquake should arise ?'

Eight Causes of Earthquakes

12. And the Venerable Ānanda approached the Bhagavā, and respectfully greeting him, seated himself at one side. Then he spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: 'Marvellous it is indeed, and most wonderful! The earth shakes mightily, tremendously! Dreadful and astonishing it is, how the thunders roll across the heavens! What could be the reason, what the cause, that so mighty an earthquake should arise?'

13. Then said the Bhagavā: 'There are eight reasons, Ānanda, eight causes, for a mighty earthquake to arise. What are those eight?'

'This great earth, Ānanda, is established upon liquid, the liquid upon the atmosphere, and the atmosphere upon space. And when, Ananda, mighty atmospheric disturbances take place, the liquid is agitated. And with the agitation of the liquid, tremors of the earth arise. These are the first reasons, the first causes, for the arising of mighty earthquakes.

14. 'Moreover, Ānanda, when an ascetic or holy man of great power, one who has gained mastery of his mind, or a deity who is mighty and potent, develops intense concentration on the delimited aspect of the earth-element, and to a boundless degree on the liquid element, he, too, causes the earth to tremble, quiver and shake. This is the second reason, the second cause, for the arising of mighty earthquakes.

15 - 20. 'And again, Ānanda, when the Bodhisatta departs from the Tusita realm and descends into the mother's womb, mindfully and clearly comprehending; and when the Bodhisatta comes out from the mother's

womb, mindfully and clearly comprehending; and when the Tathāgata becomes fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment; when the Tathāgata sets rolling the excellent Wheel of the Law; when the Tathāgata renounces his will to live on; and when the Tathāgata comes to pass away into the state of Nibbāna in which no element of clinging remains—then, too, Ānanda, this great earth trembles, quivers and shakes.

‘These, Ānanda, are the eight reasons, the eight causes, for a great earthquake to arise.’³⁵

Eight Assemblies

21. ‘Now, there are eight kinds of assemblies, Ānanda; that is to say, assemblies of nobles, brahmanas, householders, ascetics, of the Four Great Kings, of the Thirty-three Deities, of Māras and of Brahmas.

22 - 23. ‘And I recall, Ānanda, how I have attended each of these eight kinds of assemblies, amounting to hundreds. And before seating myself and starting the conversation or the discussion, I made my appearance resemble theirs, my voice resemble theirs. And so I taught them the Teaching, and roused, edified and gladdened them. Yet while I was speaking to them thus, they knew me not, and they would enquire of one another, saying: “Who is he that speaks to us? Is it a man or a god?”

‘Then, having taught them the Teaching, and roused, edified and gladdened them, I would straightway vanish. And of me who had vanished, too, they knew not, asking: “Who is he that has vanished? Is it a man or a god?”

‘And such, Ānanda, are the eight kinds of assemblies.

Eight Fields of Mastery ³⁶

24. 'Now, there are eight fields of mastery, Ānanda. What are those eight ?

25. 'When one, perceiving forms subjectively, ³⁷ sees small forms, beautiful or ugly, external to himself, ³⁹ and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are—this is the first Field of Mastery.

26. 'When one, perceiving forms subjectively, sees large forms, beautiful or ugly, external to himself, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are—this is the second Field of Mastery.

27. 'When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, ⁴⁰ sees small forms, beautiful or ugly, external to himself, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are—this is the third Field of Mastery.

28. 'When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees large forms, beautiful or ugly, external to himself, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are—this is the fourth Field of Mastery.

29. 'When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees forms external to himself that are blue, blue in colour, of a blue lustre like the blossoms of flax, or like fine Benares muslin which, burnished on both sides, is blue, blue in colour, of a blue lustre—when such a one sees forms external to himself that are blue, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are—this is the fifth Field of Mastery.

30. 'When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees forms external to himself that are yellow, yellow

in colour, of a yellow lustre like the Kanikāra blossom, or like fine Benares muslin which, burnished on both sides, is yellow, yellow in colour, of a yellow lustre—when such a one sees forms external to himself that are yellow, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are—this is the sixth Field of Mastery.

31. ‘When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees forms external to himself that are red, red in colour, of a red lustre like the Bandhujīvaka blossom, or like fine Benares muslin which, burnished on both sides, is red, red in colour, of a red lustre—when such a one sees forms external to himself that are red, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are—this is the seventh Field of Mastery.

32. ‘When one, not perceiving forms subjectively, sees forms external to himself that are white in colour, of a white lustre like the star called Osadhi, or like fine Benares muslin which, burnished on both sides, is white, white in colour, of a white lustre—when such a one sees forms external to himself that are white, and mastering them, is aware that he perceives and knows them as they are—this is the eighth Field of Mastery.

‘These, Ānanda, are the eight Fields of Mastery.’

Eight Liberations⁴¹

33. ‘Now, there are eight liberations, Ānanda. What are those eight?’

34. ‘Oneself having form,⁴² one perceives forms; this is the first Liberation.

35. ‘Being unaware of one’s own form, one perceives forms, external to oneself; this is the second Liberation.

36. 'Experiencing loveliness, one is intent upon it;⁴³ this is the third Liberation.

37. 'By utterly transcending the perceptions of matter, by the disappearance of the perceptions of sense-reaction, and by giving no attention to diversity-perceptions, one becomes aware of, attains to and abides in the Sphere of Infinite Space; this is the fourth Liberation.

38. 'By utterly transcending the Sphere of Infinite Space, one becomes aware of, attains to and abides in the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness; this is the fifth Liberation.

39. 'By utterly transcending the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, one becomes aware of, attains to and abides in the Sphere of No-thing-ness (Emptiness); this is the sixth Liberation.

40. 'By utterly transcending the Sphere of No-thing-ness, one attains to and abides in the Sphere of Neither-perception-nor-non-perception; this is the seventh Liberation.

41. 'By utterly transcending the Sphere of Neither-perception-nor-non-perception, one attains to and abides in the Cessation of Perception and Sensation.

42. 'These, Ānanda, are the eight Liberations.'

Māra's Former Temptation

43. 'There was a time, Ānanda, when I dwelt at Uruvela, on the bank of the Neranjara river, at the foot of the goatherds' banyan-tree, soon after my Supreme Enlightenment. And Māra, the Evil One, Ānanda, approached me, and standing at one side, spoke to me, saying: "Now, O Lord; let the Bhagavā

come to his final passing away, let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time is come, indeed, for the Parinibbāna of the Lord!”

44. ‘Then, Ānanda, I answered Māra, the Evil One, saying: “I shall not come to my final passing away, Evil One, until my bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and lay women, have come to be true disciples,—wise, well-disciplined, apt and learned, preservers of the Teaching, living according to the Teaching, abiding by appropriate conduct, and having learned the Master’s word, are able to expound it, to preach it, proclaim it, establish it, reveal it, explain it in detail and make it clear; until they, when adverse opinions arise, shall be able to refute them thoroughly and well, and to preach this convincing and liberating Teaching.

45. “I shall not come to my final passing away, Evil One, until this Holy Life taught by me shall become successful, prosperous, far-renowned, popular and widespread, until it is well proclaimed among gods and men”.

46. ‘And again today, Ānanda, at Cāpala shrine, Māra, the Evil One, approached me, and standing at one side, spoke to me, saying: “Now, O Lord, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen have come to be true disciples of the Bhagavā—wise, well-disciplined, apt and learned, preservers of the Teaching, living according to the Teaching, abiding by the appropriate conduct, and having learned the Master’s word, are able to expound it, to preach it, proclaim it, establish it, explain it in detail and make it clear; until they, when, adverse opinions arise, shall be able to refute them thoroughly and well, and to preach this convincing and liberating Teaching.

“And now, O Lord, this Holy Life taught by the Bhagavā has become successful, prosperous, far-renowned, popular and widespread, and it is well proclaimed among gods and men. Therefore, O Lord, let the Bhagavā come to his final passing away! Let the Happy One utterly pass away! The time is come, indeed, for the Parinibbāna of the Lord!”

47. ‘And then, Ānanda, I answered Māra, the Evil One, saying: “Trouble yourself not, Evil One. Before long the Parinibbāna of the Tathāgata will come about. Three months hence, the Tathāgata will utterly pass away.”’

48. ‘And in this way, truly, Ānanda, today at Cāpala Shrine the Tathāgata has renounced his will to live on.’

Ānanda's Appeal

49. At these words the Venerable Ānanda spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: ‘May the Bhagavā remain, O Lord! May the Happy One remain, O Lord, throughout the world-period! For the welfare and happiness of mankind, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, wellbeing and happiness of gods and men!’

50. And the Bhagavā answered, saying: ‘Enough, Ānanda. Do not entreat the Tathāgata, for the time is past, Ananda, for such entreaty.’

51-52. But for a second time and a third, the Venerable Ānanda said to the Bhagavā: ‘May the Bhagavā remain, O Lord! May the Happy One remain, O Lord, throughout the world-period! For the welfare and happiness of mankind, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, wellbeing and happiness of gods and men!’

53. Then said the Bhagavā: 'Have you faith, Ānanda, in the Enlightenment of the Tathāgata?' And the Venerable Ānanda replied, 'Yes, O Lord, verily have I.' 'Then how, Ānanda, can you persist against the Tathāgata, even up to the third time?'

54. Then the Venerable Ānanda said: 'This, O Lord, I have heard and learnt from the Bhagavā himself when the Bhagavā said to me: "Whosoever, Ānanda, has developed, practised, employed, strengthened, maintained, scrutinised and brought to perfection the Four Constituents of Psychic Power, could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it. The Tathāgata, Ānanda, has done so. Therefore the Tathāgata, Ānanda, could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it."'

55. 'And did you believe it, Ānanda?' 'Yes, O Lord, verily I did.'

'Then, Ānanda, the fault is yours. Herein have you failed, inasmuch as you were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting, given by the Tathāgata, and did not then entreat the Tathāgata to remain. For if you had done so, Ānanda, twice the Tathāgata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ānanda, the fault is yours; herein have you failed.'

56. At Rājagaha, Ānanda, when dwelling at Vultures' Peak, I spoke to you, saying: "Pleasant, Ānanda, is Rājagaha; pleasant is Vultures' Peak. Whosoever, Ānanda, has developed, practised, employed, strengthened, maintained, scrutinised and brought to perfection the Four Constituents of Psychic Power, could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it. The Tathāgata, Ānanda, has done so. Therefore

the Tathāgata, Ānanda, could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it.

57-58. 'So also at the Banyan Grove, at Robbers' Cliff, at the Sattapanni Cave on the Vebhāra mountain, at the Black Rock of Isigili, at the Serpents' Pool in Cool Forest, at the Tapoda Grove, at the Bamboo Grove in the Squirrels' Feeding-ground, at Jīvaka's Mango Grove and at the Small Nook in the Deer Park I spoke to you in the same words, saying, "Pleasant, Ānanda, is Rājagaha; pleasant are these places.

59. "Whosoever, Ānanda, has developed, practised, employed, strengthened, maintained, scrutinised and brought to perfection the Four Constituents of Psychic Power, could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it. The Tathāgata, Ānanda, has done so. Therefore, the Tathāgata, Ānanda, could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it."

'But you, Ānanda, were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting, given you by the Tathāgata, and did not entreat the Tathāgata to remain. For if you had done so, Ānanda, twice the Tathāgata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ānanda, the fault is yours; herein have you failed.

60-62. 'So also at Vesālī, Ānanda, at different times the Tathāgata has spoken to you, saying, "Pleasant, Ānanda, is Vesālī; pleasant are the shrines of Udena, Gotambaka, Sattambaka, Bahuputta, Sarandada and Cāpala! Whosoever, Ānanda, has developed, practised, employed, strengthened, maintained, scrutinised and brought to perfection the Four Constituents of Psychic Power, could, if he so desired, remain throughout

a world-period, or until the end of it. The Tathāgata, Ānanda, has done so. Therefore, Ānanda, the Tathāgata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period, or until the end of it.”

‘But you, Ānanda, were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting, given you by the Tathāgata, and did not entreat the Tathāgata to remain. For if you had done so, Ānanda, twice the Tathāgata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ānanda, the fault is yours; herein you have failed.

63. ‘Yet, Ānanda, have I not taught from the very beginning that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation and severance? Of that which is arisen, come into being, is compounded, and subject to decay, how can one say, “May it not come to dissolution!” There can be no such state of things. And of that, Ānanda, which the Tathāgata has finished with, that which he has relinquished, given up, abandoned and rejected—his will to live on—the Tathāgata’s word has been spoken, once for all: “Before long, the Parinibbāna of the Tathāgata will come about. Three months hence, the Tathāgata will utterly pass away.” And that the Tathāgata should withdraw his words for the sake of living on is an impossibility.

64. ‘So, then, Ānanda, let us go to the hall of the Gabled House, in the Great Forest.’ And the Venerable Ānanda replied, ‘So be it, O Lord.’

The Last Admonition

Then the Bhagavā, with the Venerable Ānanda, betook himself to the hall of the Gabled House, in the

Great Forest. And there he spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying : ‘Go now, Ānanda, and assemble in the Hall of Audience such of the bhikkhus as dwell in the neighbourhood of Vesālī.’

‘So be it, O Lord.’ And the Venerable Ānanda gathered such of the bhikkhus as dwelt in the neighbourhood of Vesālī, and assembled them in the Hall of Audience. And then, respectfully saluting the Bhagavā, and standing at one side, he said : ‘The community of bhikkhus is assembled, O Lord. Now let it be as the Bhagavā wishes.’

65. Thereupon, the Bhagavā entered the Hall of Audience, and taking the seat prepared for him he exhorted the bhikkhus, saying : ‘Now, O Bhikkhus, I say to you that these Teachings of which I have direct knowledge and which I have made known to you—these you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop and frequently practise, that the Life of Purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of mankind, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, wellbeing and happiness of gods and men.

‘And what, Bhikkhus, are these Teachings? Verily, they are the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Four Right Efforts, the Four Constituents of Psychic Power, the Five Faculties, the Five Powers, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path. These, Bhikkhus, are the Teachings of which I have direct knowledge, which I have made known to you, and which you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop and frequently practise, that the Life of Purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of mankind, out of compassion for the world,

for the benefit, wellbeing and happiness of gods and men.'

66. Then the Bhagavā said to the bhikkhus: 'So, Bhikkhus, I exhort you: All compounded things are subject to decay. Therefore strive with earnestness.⁴⁴ The time of the Tathāgata's Parinibbāna is near. Three months hence, the Tathāgata will utterly pass away.'

And having spoken these words, the Happy One, the Master, spoke again, saying:

'My years are now full ripe, the life span left
is short.

Departing, I go hence from you, relying on
myself alone.

Be earnest, then, O Bhikkhus, be mindful and
of virtue pure!

With firm resolve, guard your own mind!

Whoso untiringly pursues the Teaching and the
Rule,

Shall go beyond the round of births, and make
an end of suffering.'

IV

THE ELEPHANT'S LOOK

1. Then the Bhagavā, getting ready in the forenoon, took bowl and robe and went into Vesālī for alms. After the almsround and meal, on his return, he looked upon Vesālī with the elephant's look,⁴⁵ and said to Ānanda: 'This, Ānanda, is the last time that the Tathāgata will look upon Vesālī. Come, Ānanda, let us go to Bhandagāma.' 'So be it, O Lord.' And the

Bhagavā took up his abode at Bhandagāma, together with a large community of bhikkhus.

Four Main Divisions of the Teaching

2. And the Bhagavā addressed the bhikkhus saying: 'It is through not realizing, Bhikkhus, through not understanding four principles, that this long course of births and deaths has been passed through and undergone, by me as well as by you. What are those four? They are: Noble Virtue, Noble Concentration, Noble Wisdom and Noble Emancipation. But now, Bhikkhus, that these have been realized and penetrated, cut off is the craving for existence, exhausted is that which leads to renewed being, and there is no fresh becoming.'

3. And having spoken these words, the Happy One, the Master, spoke again, saying:

'Virtue, Concentration, Wisdom and Emancipation
unsurpassed—

These are the principles realized by Gotama, the
renowned;

And, knowing them, he, the Buddha, to his
monks has taught the Law.

He, the destroyer of suffering, the Master, the
Seer, is at peace.

4. And also at Bhandagāma the Bhagavā often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus; 'Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of Lust, of Becoming

and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.'

5-6. When the Bhagavā had stayed at Bhandagāma as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: 'Come, Ānanda, let us go to Hatthigāma.' 'So be it, O Lord.' And the Bhagavā took up his abode at Hatthigāma together with a large community of bhikkhus. And when the Bhagavā had stayed at Hatthigāma as long as he pleased, he took up his abode at Ambagāma, then at Jambugāma. And at each of these places the Bhagavā often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: 'Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of Lust, of Becoming, and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.'

And when the Bhagavā had stayed at Jambugāma as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: 'Come, Ānanda, let us go to Bhoganagara.' 'So be it, Lord.' And the Bhagavā took up his abode at Bhoganagara, together with a large community of bhikkhus, and stayed in the Ānanda shrine.

The Four Great Authorities

7. And there the Bhagavā addressed the bhikkhus, saying: 'Now, Bhikkhus, I shall make known to you the Four Great Authorities. Do you listen and pay heed to my words.' And those bhikkhus answered, saying, 'So be it, O Lord.'

8-11. Then the Bhagavā said: ‘In this fashion, Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu might speak: “Face to face with the Bhagavā, Brethren, I have heard and learnt thus: This is the Teaching and the Rule, the Master’s Dispensation;” or: “In an abode of such and such a name lives a community, with elders and a chief. Face to face with that community I have heard and learnt thus: This is the Teaching and the Rule, the Master’s Dispensation;” or “In an abode of such and such a name live many bhikkhus who are elders, who are learned, who have accomplished their course, are preservers of the Teaching, the Rule, and the Summaries. Face to face with those elders I have heard and learnt thus: This is the Teaching and the Rule, the Master’s Dispensation;” or: “In an abode of such and such a name lives a single bhikkhu who is an elder, who is learned, who has accomplished his course, is a preserver of the Teaching, the Rule and the Summaries. Face to face with that elder I have heard and learnt thus: this is the Teaching and the Rule, the Master’s Dispensation.”

‘In such a case, Bhikkhus, the declaration of such a bhikkhu is neither to be received with approval nor with scorn. Without approval, and without scorn, but carefully studying the sentences word by word, one should trace them in the Discourses, and verify them by the Rule. If they are neither traceable in the Discourses nor verifiable by the Rule, one must conclude thus: “Certainly, this is not the Bhagavā’s utterance; this has been misunderstood by that bhikkhu—or by that community, or those elders, or that elder.” In that way, indeed, Bhikkhus, you should reject it. But if the sentences concerned are traceable in the Discourses, and verifiable by the Rule, then one must conclude thus: “Certainly, this is the Bhagavā’s

utterance; this has been well understood by that bhikkhu—or by that community, or those elders, or that elder.” And in that way, Bhikkhus, you may accept it on the first, second, third or fourth authority.

‘These, Bhikkhus, are the Four Great Authorities for you to preserve.’

12. And also at Bhoganagara, at the Ānanda shrine, the Bhagavā often gave counsel to the bhikkhus thus: ‘Such and such is virtue; such and such is concentration; and such and such is wisdom. Great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct; great becomes the fruit, great is the gain of wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration; utterly freed from the taints of Lust, of Becoming, and of Ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.’

13. When the Bhagavā had stayed at Bhoganagara as long as he pleased, he spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: ‘Come, Ānanda, let us go to Pāva.’ ‘So be it, O Lord.’ And the Bhagavā took up his abode at Pāva; together with a great community of bhikkhus, and stayed in the mango grove of Cunda, who was by family a metalworker.

The Bhagavā's Last Meal

14. And Cunda, the metalworker, came to know: ‘The Bhagavā, they say, has arrived at Pāva, and is staying in my mango grove.’ And he approached the Bhagavā, and, having respectfully greeted him, sat down at one side. And the Bhagavā instructed Cunda, the metalworker, in the Teaching, and aroused, edified and gladdened him.

15. Then Cunda spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: ‘May

it please the Bhagavā, O Lord, to accept my invitation for tomorrow's meal, together with the community of bhikkhus!' And by his silence the Bhagavā consented.

16. Sure, then, of the Bhagavā's consent, Cunda, the metalworker, rose from his seat, respectfully saluted the Bhagavā, keeping his right side towards him, took his departure.

17. And Cunda, the metalworker, after the night had passed, had choice food, hard and soft, prepared in his abode, together with a quantity of Sukaramaddava,⁴¹ and announced it to the Bhagavā, saying: 'It is time, O Lord, the meal is ready.'

18. Thereupon, the Bhagavā, in the forenoon, having got ready, took bowl and robe and went with the community of bhikkhus to the house of Cunda, and there seated himself on the seat prepared for him. And he spoke to Cunda, saying: 'With the Sūkara-maddava you have prepared, Cunda, you may serve me; with the other food, hard and soft, you may serve the community of bhikkhus.'

'So be it, O Lord.' And with the Sūkara-maddava prepared by him, he served the Bhagavā; and with the other food, hard and soft, he served the community of bhikkhus.

19. Thereafter, the Bhagavā spoke to Cunda, saying. 'Whatsoever, Cunda, is left over of the Sūkara-maddava, that bury in a pit. For I do not see in all this world, with its gods, Māras and Brahmas, among the host of samanas and brahmanas, gods and men, one who could eat and entirely digest it, save the Tathāgata alone.'

And Cunda, the metalworker, answered the Bhagavā, saying: 'So be it, O Lord.' And what remained

over of the Sūkara-maddava, he buried in a pit.

20. Then he returned to the Bhagavā, respectfully greeted him, and sat down at one side. And the Bhagavā instructed Cunda, the metalworker, in the Teaching, and aroused, edified and gladdened him. After which he rose from his seat and departed.

21. And soon after the Bhagavā had eaten the meal provided by Cunda, the metalworker, a dire sickness fell upon him, even dysentery, and he suffered sharp and deadly pains. But the Bhagavā endured them mindfully, clearly comprehending, and unperturbed

22. Then the Bhagavā spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: 'Come, Ānanda, let us go to Kusināra.' And the Venerable Ānanda answered, 'So be it, O Lord.'

23. When he had eaten Cunda's food, I heard,
With fortitude the deadly pains he bore.
From the Sūkara-maddava a sore
And dreadful sickness came upon the Lord.
But, nature's pangs endured,—'Come, let us go
To Kusināra,' was his dauntless word.⁴²

The Clearing of the Waters

24. Now on the way the Bhagavā went aside from the highroad and stopped at the foot of a tree. And he said to the Venerable Ānanda, 'Fold my upper robe in four, I pray you, Ānanda, and lay it down. I am wearied, and would rest awhile.' 'So be it, O Lord.' And the Venerable Ānanda laid down the robe, folded in four.

25. And the Bhagavā seated himself on the seat prepared for him, and said to the Venerable Ānanda: 'Bring me some water, I pray you, Ānanda. I am athirst, and would drink.'

26. And the Venerable Ānanda answered the Bhagavā: 'But just now, O Lord, a great number of carts, even five hundred carts, have passed over, and the shallow water has been cut through by the wheels, so that it flows turbid and befouled. But the Kakudha river, O Lord, is quite close by, and its waters are clear, pleasant, cool and translucent. It is easily approachable, and delightfully placed. There the Bhagavā can quench his thirst and refresh his limbs.'

27-29. But a second time the Bhagavā made his request, and the Venerable Ānanda answered him as before. And then for the third time the Bhagavā said: 'Bring me some water, I pray you, Ānanda. I am athirst, and would drink.'

30. Then the Venerable Ānanda answered, saying, 'So be it, O Lord.' And he took the bowl and went to the stream. And the shallow water, which had been cut through by the wheels, so that it flowed turbid and befouled, became clear and settled down, became pure and pleasant as the Venerable Ānanda drew near.

31. Then to the Venerable Ānanda came the thought: 'Marvellous, most wonderful, indeed, is the power and glory of the Tathāgata!'

32. And he took up water in the bowl and carried it to the Bhagavā, and said: 'Marvellous, most wonderful, indeed, is the power and glory of the Tathāgata! For this shallow water, which had been cut through by the wheels, so that it flowed turbid and befouled, became clear and settled down, became pure and pleasant even as I drew near! Now let the Bhagavā drink the water! Let the Happy One drink!' And the Bhagavā drank the water.

Pukkusa the Malla

33. Now it so happened that one Pukkusa, of the Malla clan, who was a disciple of Ālāra Kālāma, was passing by on his way from Kusināra to Pāva.

34. And when he beheld the Bhagavā seated at the foot of a tree he approached him, respectfully greeted him, and sat down at one side. And he spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: ‘Marvellous it is, O Lord, most wonderful indeed it is, O Lord, the state of calmness wherein abide they who have gone forth from the world!

35. ‘For at one time, O Lord, Ālāra Kālāma was on a journey, and went aside from the highroad and seated himself at the wayside at the foot of a tree, to pass the heat of the day. And it came about, O Lord, that a great number of carts, even five hundred carts, passed by him, one by one. And then, O Lord, a certain man who was following behind that train of carts, approached and spoke to him, saying: “Did you, Sir, behold the great number of carts that passed you by?” And Ālāra Kalāma answered him, “I saw them not, Brother.” “But the noise, Sir, you surely heard?” “I heard it not, Brother.” Then that man asked him: “Then, Sir, perchance you slept?” “No, Brother, I was not sleeping.” “Then, Sir, you were conscious?” “Thus it was, Brother.” Then that man said: “Then, Sir, whilst conscious and awake you still did not behold the great number of carts, even five hundred carts, that passed you by, one after another, nor hear the noise? Why, Sir, your very robe is covered with the dust of them!” ‘And Ālāra Kalāma replied, saying, “So it is, Brother.”

36. ‘And to that man, O Lord, came the thought: “Marvellous it is, most wonderful indeed it is, the

state of calmness wherein abide they who have gone forth from the world !” And there arose in him great faith in Ālāra Kālāma, and he went his way.’

37. ‘Now what think you, Pukkusa? Which is the more difficult to do, the more difficult to meet with—that a man, whilst conscious and awake, should not behold a great number of carts, even five hundred carts, that passed him by, one after another, nor hear the noise,—or that one, conscious and awake, in the midst of a heavy rain, with thunder rolling, lightning flashing and thunderbolts crashing, should neither behold it nor hear the noise?’

38. ‘What, O Lord, are five hundred carts—nay, six, seven, eight, nine or ten hundred or even hundreds of thousands of carts—compared with this?’

39. ‘Now at one time, Pukkusa, I was staying at Ātumā, and had my abode in a barn there. And at that time there was a heavy rain, with thunder rolling, lightning flashing, and thunderbolts crashing. And two farmers who were brothers were killed close to the barn, together with four oxen. And a great crowd came forth from Ātumā to the spot where they were killed.

40. ‘Now at that time, Pukkusa, I had come out of the barn and was walking up and down before the door, in thought. And a certain man from the great crowd approached me, respectfully greeted me, and stood at one side.

41. ‘And I asked him: “Why, Brother, has this great crowd gathered together?” And he answered me: “Just now, O Lord, there was a heavy rain, with thunder rolling, lightning flashing, thunderbolts crashing. And two farmers who were brothers were

killed close by, together with four oxen. It is because of this that the great crowd has gathered. But where, O Lord, were you?"

"I was here, Brother." "Yet, O Lord, you did not see it?" "I saw it not, Brother." "But the noise, O Lord, you surely heard?" "I heard it not, Brother." Then that man asked me: "Then, O Lord, perchance you slept?" "No, Brother, I was not sleeping." "Then, O Lord, you were conscious?" "Thus it was, Brother." Then that man said: "Then, O Lord, whilst conscious and awake, in the midst of a heavy rain, with thunder rolling, lightning flashing, and thunderbolts crashing, you neither beheld it nor heard the noise?" And I answered him, saying, "I did not, Brother."

42. 'And to that man, Pukkusa, came the thought: "Marvellous it is, most wonderful indeed it is, the state of calmness wherein abide they who have gone forth from the world!" And there arose in him great faith in me, and he respectfully saluted me, and, keeping his right side towards me, he went his way.'

43. When this had been said, Pukkusa of the Malla clan said to the Bhagavā: 'The faith, O Lord, that I had in Ālāra Kalāma I now scatter to the mighty wind, I let it be carried away as by a flowing stream! Excellent, O Lord, most excellent, O Lord! It is as if, O Lord, one were to set upright what had been overthrown, or to reveal what had been hidden, or show the path to one who had gone astray, or to light a lamp in the darkness, that those having eyes might see,—even so has the Bhagava set forth the Teaching in many ways. And so, O Lord, I take my refuge in the Bhagavā, the Teaching and the Community of

Bhikkhus. May the Bhagavā accept me as his disciple, one who has taken refuge, unto the end of life!’

44. Then Pukkusa, of the Malla clan, spoke to a certain man, saying, ‘Bring me at once, Friend, two sets of golden-hued robes, burnished and ready for wear.’ And the man answered him: ‘So be it, Sir.’

45. And when the robes were brought, Pukkusa, of the Malla clan, offered them to the Bhagavā, saying, ‘May the Bhagavā, O Lord, out of compassion, accept this from me.’ And the Bhagavā said: ‘Robe me, then, in one, Pukkusa, and in the other robe Ānanda.’ ‘So be it, O Lord.’ And he thereupon robed the Bhagavā in one, and in the other he robed the Venerable Ānanda.

46. And then the Bhagavā instructed Pukkusa, of the Malla clan, in the Teaching, and aroused, edified and gladdened him. And after that, Pukkusa rose from his seat, respectfully saluted the Bhagavā, and, keeping his right side towards him, went his way.

47. And the Venerable Ānanda, soon after Pukkusa, of the Malla clan, had departed, arranged the set of golden-hued robes, burnished and ready for wear, about the body of the Bhagavā. But when the set of robes was so arranged about the body of the Bhagavā, it became as though faded, and its splendour dimmed.

48. And the Venerable Ānanda said to the Bhagavā: ‘Marvellous it is, O Lord, most wonderful indeed it is, how clear and radiant the skin of the Tathāgata appears! This set of golden-hued robes, burnished and ready for wear, O Lord, now that it is arranged about the body of the Bhagavā has become as though faded, its splendour dimmed!’

49. ‘It is so, Ānanda. There are two occasions,

Ānanda, whereon the skin of Tathāgata appears exceedingly clear and radiant. Which are those two? The night, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata becomes fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, Supreme Enlightenment, and the night, Ānanda, when the Tathāgata comes to his final passing away, into the state of Nibbana in which no element of clinging remains. These, Ānandā, are the two occasions on which the skin of the Tathāgata appears exceedingly clear and radiant.

51. 'And now today, in the last watch of this very night, Ānanda, in the Mallas' Sāla-grove, in the vicinity of Kusināra, between two Sāla trees, the Tathāgata will come to his Parinibbāna. So now, Ānanda, let us go to the Kakudha river.'

And the Venerable Ānanda answered the Bhagavā, saying, 'So be it, O Lord.'

52. Clad in Pukkusa's gift, the robes of gold,
The Master's form was radiant to behold.⁴⁷

At the Kakudha River

53. Then the Bhagavā betook himself to the Kakudha river, together with a great community of bhikkhus.

54. And he went down into the water and bathed himself and drank. And coming forth from the water again, he went to the Mango Grove, and there spoke to the Venerable Cundaka saying: 'Fold my upper robe in four, I pray you, Cundaka, and lay it down. I am wearied, and would rest awhile.' 'So be it, O Lord.' And Cundaka folded the robe in four and laid it down.

55. And the Bhagavā laid him down on his right side, in the lion's posture, resting one foot upon the other, and so disposed himself, mindfully, clearly comprehending, and with the time for rising held in mind.

And the Venerable Cundaka seated himself right in front of the Bhagavā.

56. The Buddha to Kakudha's river came,
 Where cool and limpid flows the pleasant stream;
 There laved in water clear his weary frame
 The Buddha—he in all the world supreme!
 And having bathed and drank, the Teacher
straight
 Crossed o'er, the bhikkhus thronging in his
wake.
 Discoursing holy truths, the Master great
 Towards the Mango Grove his path did take.
 There to the elder Cundaka he spoke:
 'Lay thou my robe in fourfold wise, I pray,'—
 Whereat the elder, swift as lightning stroke,
 Hastened the Teacher's bidding to obey.
 Far spent, the Lord then laid him on the mat,
 And Cunda on the ground before him sat.⁴⁷

Relieving Cunda's Remorse

57. Then the Bhagavā spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: 'It may come to pass, Ānanda, that someone will cause remorse to Cunda, the metal-worker, saying: "No gain is it to you, friend Cunda, but indeed a loss, that it was from you the Tathāgata took his last meal, and then came to his end." Then, Ānanda, the remorse of Cunda should be dispelled after this manner: "A gain is it to you, friend Cunda, a blessing, verily, that from you the Tathāgata partook of his last alms-meal, and then came to his end. For, O friend, face to face with the Bhagavā I have heard and learned: 'There are two offerings of food which are of equal fruition, of equal outcome, exceeding in grandeur the fruition and

result of any other offerings of food. Which two? The one partaken of by the Tathāgata on becoming fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment; and the one partaken of by the Tathāgata on coming to pass into the state of Nibbana wherein the elements of clinging do not arise. By his deed has the venerable Cunda accumulated that which makes for long life, beauty, wellbeing, glory, heavenly rebirth, and sovereignty!" Thus, Ānanda, should the remorse of Cunda, the metalworker, be dispelled.'

58. Then the Bhagavā, understanding that matter, breathed forth the solemn utterance:

'Who gives, his virtues shall increase;
Who is self-curbed, no hatred bears;
Whoso is skilled in virtue, evil shuns,
And by the rooting out of lust and hate
And all delusion, comes to be at peace.'

V

Last Place of Rest

1. Then the Bhagavā addressed the venerable Ānanda, saying: "Come, Ānanda, let us cross to the farther bank of the Hiraññavati, and go to the Mallas' Sāla grove, in the vicinity of Kusināra.'⁴⁸

'So be it, Lord.'

2. And the Bhagavā, together with a large company of bhikkhus, betook himself to the farther bank of the river Hiraññavati, to the Sāl grove of the Mallas, in the vicinity of Kusināra. And there he spoke to the venerable Ānanda, saying:

3. 'I pray you, Ānanda, prepare for me the couch between the twin Sāl trees, with the head to the north. I am weary, Ānanda, and would lie down.' ⁴⁹

'So be it, Lord.' And the venerable Ānanda did the Bhagavā's bidding.

Then the Bhagavā laid him down on his right side, in the lion's posture, resting one foot upon the other, and so disposed himself, mindfully and clearly comprehending.

4. At that time the twin Sāl trees broke out in full bloom, yet it was not the season of flowering. And the blossoms rained upon the body of the Tathāgata and dropped and scattered and were strewn upon it, in worship of the Tathāgata. And celestial coral-flowers and heavenly sandalwood powder from the sky rained down upon the body of the Tathāgata, and dropped and scattered and were strewn upon it in worship of the Tathāgata. And the sound of heavenly voices and heavenly instruments made music in the air, out of reverence for the Tathāgata.

5. And the Bhagavā spoke to the venerable Ānanda, saying: 'In full bloom, Ānanda, are the twin Sāl trees, yet it is not the season of flowering. And the blossoms rain upon the body of the Tathāgata and drop and scatter and are strewn upon it, in worship of the Tathāgata. And celestial coral-flowers and heavenly sandalwood powder from the sky rain down upon the body of the Tathāgata, and drop and scatter and are strewn upon it, in worship of the Tathāgata. And the sound of heavenly voices and heavenly instruments makes music in the air, out of reverence for the Tathāgata.

6. 'Yet not thus, Ānanda, is the Tathāgata respected,

venerated, esteemed, worshipped and honoured in the highest degree. But, Ānanda, whatsoever bhikkhu or bhikkhuni, lay man or lay woman abides by the Teaching, lives uprightly in the Teaching, walks in the way of the Teaching, it is by him that the Tathāgata is respected, venerated, esteemed, worshipped and honoured in the highest degree, Therefore, Ānanda, “Abide by the Teaching, live uprightly in the Teaching, walk in the way of the Teaching!” — thus should you train yourselves.’

The Grief of the Gods

7. At that time the venerable Upavana was standing before the Bhagavā, fanning him. And the Bhagavā rebuked him, saying: ‘Move aside, Bhikkhu, do not stand in front of me.’

8. And to the venerable Ānanda came the thought: ‘This venerable Upavana has been in attendance on the Bhagavā for a long time, closely associating with him and serving him. Yet now, right at the end, the Bhagavā rebukes him. What now could be the reason, what the cause, for the Bhagavā to rebuke the venerable Upavana, saying, “Move aside, Bhikkhu, do not stand in front of me”?’

9-10. And the venerable Ānanda told his thought to the Bhagavā. The Bhagavā said: ‘Throughout the tenfold world-system, Ānanda, hardly any are there of the deities that have not gathered together to look upon the Tathāgata. For a distance of twelve yojanas around the Sāl grove of the Mallas, Ānanda, in the vicinity of Kusināra there is not a spot that could be pricked with the tip of a hair that is not filled with powerful deities. And these deities, Ānanda, are

complaining : “From afar have we come to look upon the Tathāgata. For rare in the world is the arising of Tathāgatas, Arahats, Sammā-sambuddhas. And this day, in the last watch of the night, the Tathāgata’s Parinibbāna will come about. But this bhikkhu of great powers has placed himself right in front of the Bhagavā, concealing him, so that now, at the very end, we are prevented from looking upon the Bhagavā!” Thus, Ānanda, the deities complain.’

11. ‘Of what kinds of deities, Lord, is the Bhagavā aware?’

12-13 ‘There are deities, Ānanda, in space and on the earth who are earthly-minded; with dishevelled hair they weep, with uplifted arms they weep; flinging themselves on the ground they roll from side to side, lamenting: “Too soon has the Bhagavā come to his Parinibbāna! Too soon has the Happy One come to his Parinibbāna! Too soon will the Eye of the World vanish from sight!”’

14 ‘But those deities who are freed from passion, mindful and comprehending, reflect in this wise: “Impermanent are all compounded things. How could this be otherwise?”’

Ānanda’s Concern

15 ‘Formerly, Lord, on leaving their quarters after the rains the bhikkhus would set forth to see the Tathāgata, and to us there was the gain and benefit of receiving and associating with those very reverend bhikkhus who came to have audience with the Bhagavā, and to wait upon him. But, Lord, after the Bhagavā has gone, we shall have that gain and benefit no more!’

Four Places of Pilgrimage

16. ‘There are four places, Ānanda, that a pious man should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.⁵⁰ What are the four?’

17. ‘“Here the Tathāgata was born!”⁵¹ This, Ānanda, is a place that a pious man should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

18. ‘“Here the Tathāgata became fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, Supreme Enlightenment!”⁵² This, Ānanda, is a place that a pious man should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

19. ‘“Here the Tathāgata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Law!”⁵³ This, Ānanda, is a place that a pious man should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

20. ‘“Here the Tathāgata passed away into Nibbāna wherein the elements of clinging do not arise!” This, Ānanda, is a place that a pious a man should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

21. ‘These, Ānanda, are the four places that a pious man should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence. And truly there will come to those places, Ānanda, pious bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, lay men and lay women, reflecting: “Here the Tathāgata was born!” “Here the Tathāgata became fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, Supreme Enlightenment!” “Here the Tathāgata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Law.” “Here the Tathāgata passed away into Nibbāna wherein the elements of clinging do not arise!”’

22. ‘And whosoever, Ānanda, should die on such a pilgrimage, with his heart established in faith, he

at the breaking up of the body, after death, will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness.'

23. Then the venerable Ānanda said to the Bhagavā: 'How Lord, should we conduct ourselves towards women?'

'See them not, Ānanda.'

'But, Lord, if we do see them?'

'Do not speak, Ānanda.'

'But, Lord, if they should speak to us?'

'Then, Ānanda, you should establish mindfulness.'

24. Then the venerable Ānanda said: 'How should we act, Lord, respecting the body of the Tathāgata?'

'Do not hinder yourselves, Ānanda, to honour the body of the Tathāgata. Rather should you strive, Ānanda, and be zealous on your own behalf,⁶⁴ for your own good. Unflinchingly, ardently and resolutely should you apply yourselves to your own good. For there are, Ānanda, wise nobles, wise brahmanas and wise householders who are devoted to the Tathāgata, and it is they who will render due honour to the body of the Tathāgata.'

25. Then the venerable Ānanda said: 'But how, Lord, should they act respecting the body of the Tathāgata?'

'After the same manner, Ānanda, as towards the body of a universal monarch (Cakkavatti).'

'But how, Lord, do they act respecting the body of a universal monarch?'

26. 'The body of a universal monarch, Ānanda, is first wrapped round with new linen, and then with teased cotton wool, and so it is done up to five hundred layers of linen and five hundred of cotton wool. When

that is done, the body of the universal monarch is placed in an iron⁵⁵ oil vessel, which is enclosed in another iron vessel, a funeral pyre is built of all kinds of perfumed woods, and so the body of the universal monarch is burned; and at the meeting of four ways a stupa is raised for the universal monarch. So is it done, Ānanda, with the body of a universal monarch.

‘And even, Ānanda, as with the body of a universal monarch, so should it be done with the body of the Tathāgata; and at the meeting of four ways also a stupa should be raised for the Tathāgata. And whosoever shall bring to that place garlands, or incense, or sandal (paste), or pay reverence, and whose mind becomes calm there—to his weal and happiness will it be, for a long time.

27. ‘There are four persons, Ānanda, who are worthy of a stupa. Who are those four? A Tathāgata, Arahāt, Sammā-sambuddha is worthy of a stupa; so also is a Pacceka Buddha,⁵⁶ and a disciple of a Tathāgata, and a universal monarch.

28-31. And why, Ānanda, is a Tathāgata, Arahāt, Sammā-sambuddha worthy of a stupa? Because, Ānanda, at the thought: “This is the stupa of that Bhagavā, Arahāt, Sammā-sambuddha!” the hearts of many people will be calmed and made happy; and so calmed and with their minds established in faith therein, they at the breaking up of the body, after death, will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness. And so also at the thought: “This is the stupa of that Pacceka Buddha!” or “This is the stupa of a disciple of that Tathāgata, Arahāt, Sammā-sambuddha!” or “This is the stupa of that righteous monarch who ruled

according to Dhamma!’ the hearts of many people are calmed and made happy; and so calmed and with their minds established in faith therein, they at the breaking up of the body, after death, will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness. And it is because of this, Ānanda, that these four persons are worthy of a stupa.’

Ānanda’s Grief

32. Then the venerable Ānanda went into the vihāra⁵⁷ and leaned against the doorpost and wept ‘I am still but a learner⁵⁸, and still have to strive for my own perfection. But alas! — my Master, who was so compassionate towards me, is about to pass away!’

33. And the Bhagavā spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: ‘Where, Bhikkhus, is Ānanda?’

‘The venerable Ānanda, Lord, has gone into the vihāra and there stands leaning against the doorpost and weeping: “I am still but a learner, and still have to strive for my own perfection. But alas! — my Master, who was so compassionate towards me, is about to pass away!”’

34. Then the Bhagavā asked a certain bhikkhu to bring the venerable Ānanda to him, saying: “Go, Bhikkhu, and say to Ānanda, “Friend Ānanda, the Master calls you”’

‘So be it, Lord.’ And that bhikkhu went and spoke to the venerable Ānanda as the Bhagavā had bidden him. And the venerable Ānanda went to the place where the Bhagavā was, and bowed himself before the Bhagavā and seated himself on one side.

35. Then the Bhagavā spoke to the venerable Ānanda, saying: ‘Enough, Ānanda; do not grieve, do not lament! For have I not taught you aforetime that it is the

nature of all things near and dear to us that we must suffer separation from them, and be severed from them? Of that which is born, come to being, put together, and so is subject to dissolution, how should it be said that it should not depart? Now for a long time, Ānanda, you have served the Tathāgata with loving-kindness in deed, word and thought, graciously, pleasantly, with a whole heart and beyond measure, Great good have you gathered, Ānanda! Now should you put forth energy, and soon you too will be one who is canker - free.’⁵⁹

Praise of Ānanda

36. Then the Bhagavā addressed the bhikkhus, saying: ‘The Holy Ones, the Fully Enlightened Ones of times past, Bhikkhus, those Bhagavās also had excellent and devoted attendant bhikkhus, such as I have in Ānanda. And so also, Bhikkhus, will the Holy Ones, the Fully Enlightened Ones of times to come.

37. ‘Capable and judicious is Ānanda, Bhikkhus, for he knows the proper time for bhikkhus to have audience with the Tathāgata, and the time for bhikkhunis; the time for lay men and for lay women; the time for kings and for ministers of state; the time for teachers of other sects and for their followers.

38. ‘In Ānanda, Bhikkhus, are to be found four rare and superlative qualities. What are those four? If, Bhikkhus, a company of bhikkhus should go to see Ānanda, they become joyful on beholding him; and if he then speaks to them of the Dhamma they are made joyful by his discourse; and when he becomes silent they are disappointed. So it is also when bhikkhunis, or when lay men or lay women go to see Ānanda; they

become joyful on beholding him; and if he then speaks to them of the Dhamma they are made joyful by his discourse; and when he becomes silent they are disappointed.

39. 'In a universal monarch, Bhikkhus, are to be found four rare and superlative qualities. What are those four? If, Bhikkhus, a company of nobles should go to see the universal monarch, they become joyful on beholding him; and if he then speaks, they are made joyful by his talk; and when he becomes silent they are disappointed. So it is also when a company of brahmanas, of householders or of ascetics go to see a universal monarch.

40. 'And In just the same way, Bhikkhus, in Ānanda, are to be found these four rare and superlative qualities.

The Past Glory of Kusinara

41. When this had been said, the venerable Ānanda, spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: 'Let it not be, Lord, that the Bhagavā should pass away in this mean place, this uncivilised township in the midst of the jungle, a mere outpost of the province! There are great cities, Lord, such as Champa, Rājagaha, Sāvattthī, Sāketa, Kosambi and Banaras—let the Bhagavā have his final passing away in one of those! For in those cities dwell many wealthy nobles and brahmanas and householders who are devotees of the Tathāgata, and they will render due honour to the remains of the Tathāgata.'

42. 'Do not say that, Ānanda! Do not say: "This mean place, this uncivilised township in the midst of the jungle, a mere outpost of the province!"

'In times long past, Ānanda, there was a king by the name of Mahā Sudassana, who was a universal

monarch, a king of righteousness, a conqueror of the four quarters of the earth, whose realm was established in security, and who was endowed with the Seven Jewels. And that king Mahā Sudassana, Ānanda, had his royal residence here at Kusināra, which was then called Kusavati, and it extended twelve yojanas from east to west, and from north to south, seven.

43. 'And mighty, Ānanda, was Kusavati, the capital; prosperous and well populated, much frequented by people, and abundantly provided with food. Just, Ānanda, as the royal residence of the deities, Ālakamanda, is mighty, prosperous and well populated, much frequented by deities and abundantly provided with food, so was the royal capital of Kusavati.

44. 'Kusavati, Ānanda, resounded unceasingly day and night, with the ten sounds — the trumpeting of elephants, neighing of horses, rattling of chariots, beating of drums and tabours, music and song, cheers, clapping of hands and cries of "Eat, drink and be merry!"'

Lamentation of the Mallas

45. 'Go now, Ānanda, to Kusināra and announce to the Mallas: "Today, Vāsetṭhas, in the last watch of the night, the Tathāgata's Parinibbāna will take place. Approach, O Vāsetṭhas, draw near! Be not remorseful hereafter at the thought: "In our township it was that the Tathāgata's Parinibbāna took place, but we, at the very last, failed to see him!"'

'So be it, Lord.' And the venerable Ānanda prepared himself, and taking bowl and robe, went with one companion into Kusinara.

46. Now at that time the Mallas had gathered

together in the council hall for some public business. And the venerable Ānanda approached them and announced: 'Today, Vāseṭṭhas, in the last watch of the night, the Tathāgata's Parinibbāna will take place. Approach, Vāseṭṭhas, draw near! Be not remorseful hereafter at the thought: "In our township it was that the Tathāgata's Parinibbāna took place, but we, at the very last, failed to see him."'

47. When they heard the venerable Ānanda speak these words, the Mallas with their sons, their wives and the wives of their sons, were sorely grieved, grieved at heart and afflicted; and some, with their hair all dishevelled, with arms uplifted in despair, wept; flinging themselves on the ground they rolled from side to side, lamenting: 'Too soon has the Bhagavā come to his Parinibbāna! Too soon has the Happy One come to his Parinibbāna! Too soon will the Eye of the World vanish from sight!'

48. And thus afflicted and filled with grief the Mallas with their sons, their wives and the wives of their sons went to the Sāl Grove, the recreation park of the Mallas, to the place where the venerable Ānanda was.

49. And the thought arose in the venerable Ānanda: 'If I were to allow the Mallas of Kusināra to pay reverence to the Bhagavā one by one, the night will have given place to dawn before they are all presented to him. Therefore let me divide them up according to clan, each family in a group, and so present them to the Bhagavā thus: "The Malla of such and such a name, Lord, with his wives and children, his attendants and his friends, pays homage at the feet of the Bhagavā."'

50-51. And the venerable Ānanda divided the Mallas

up according to clan, each family in a group, and so presented them to the Bhagavā.

52. And so it was that the venerable Ānanda caused the Mallas of Kusināra to be presented to the Bhagavā by clans, each family in a group, even in the first watch of the night.

The Last Convert

52-53. Now at that time a wandering ascetic named Subhadda was dwelling at Kusinara. And Subhadda the wandering ascetic heard it said: 'Today in the third watch of the night, the Parinibbāna of the ascetic Gotama will take place.'

And the thought arose in him: 'I have heard it said by old and venerable wandering ascetics, teachers of teachers, that the arising of Tathāgatas, Arahats, Sammā-sambuddhas, is rare in the world. Yet this very day, in the last watch of the night, the Parinibbāna of the ascetic Gotama will take place. Now there is in me a doubt; but to this extent have I faith in the ascetic Gotama, that he could so teach me the Doctrine as to remove that doubt.'

54-55. Then the wandering ascetic Subhadda betook himself to the Sal Grove, the recreation park of the Mallas, and drew near to the venerable Ānanda, and told the venerable Ānanda his thought. And he spoke to the venerable Ānanda, saying: 'O, Friend Ānanda, good would it be for me if I could but be allowed into the presence of the ascetic Gotama!'

56. But the venerable Ānanda answered him, saying, 'Enough, Friend Subhadda! Do not trouble the Tathāgata. The Bhagavā is weary.'

57. Yet a second and a third time did the wandering

ascetic Subhadda make his request, and a second and a third time did the venerable Ānanda refuse him.

58. And the Bhagavā heard the talk between them, and he called the venerable Ānanda and said: 'Stay, Ānanda! Do not refuse Subhadda. Subhadda, Ānanda, may be allowed into the presence of the Tathāgata. For whatever he will ask me, he will ask for the sake of knowledge, and not as an offence. And the answer I give him, that he will readily understand.'

59. Thereupon the venerable Ānanda said to the wandering ascetic, Subhadda: 'Go then, Friend Subhadda, the Bhagavā gives you leave.'

60. Then the wandering ascetic, Subhadda, approached the Bhagavā and saluted him courteously. And having exchanged with him pleasant and civil greetings, the wandering ascetic Subhadda seated himself at one side and addressed the Bhagavā, saying: 'There are, venerable Gotama, ascetics and brahmanas who are heads of great companies of disciples, who have large retinues, who are leaders of schools, well-known and renowned, and held in high esteem by the multitude, such teachers as Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita-Kesakambali, Pakhuda, Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Belatṭhi-putta, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭa-putta. Have all of these attained realisation, as each of them would have it believed, or has none of them; or is it that some have attained realisation, and others not?'

61. 'Enough, Subhadda. Let it be as it may, whether all of them have attained realisation, as each of them would have it believed, or whether none of them has; or whether some have attained realisation, and others not. The Truth will I teach you, Subhadda; hearken and heed it well, and I will speak.'

‘So be it, Lord,’ And the Bhagavā spoke, saying:

The Lion’s Roar

62. ‘In whatsoever Teaching and Rule, Subhadda, there is not found the Noble Eightfold Path, neither is there found a true ascetic of the first nor second, third nor fourth degree of saintliness. But in whatsoever Teaching and Rule there is found the Noble Eightfold Path, therein is found the true ascetic of the first and second, third and fourth degree of saintliness.⁶⁰ Now In this Teaching and Rule Subhadda, is found the Noble Eightfold Path; and in it alone is found also the true ascetic of the first and second, third and fourth degree of saintliness. Devoid of true ascetics are the systems of other teachers; but if, Subhadda, the bhikkhus live righteously, the world will not be destitute of Arahats!

‘In age but twenty-nine was I, Subhadda,
When I renounced the world to seek the Good;
Fifty-one years have passed since then, Subhadda,
And all that time a wanderer have I been
In the domain of virtue and of truth.
And save therein, there is no saintly man,

‘—nor of the second degree, nor of the third nor of the fourth degree of saintliness. Devoid of true ascetic sare the systems of other teachers: but if, Subhadda, the bhikkhus live righteously, the world will not be destitute of Arahats!’

63. When this was said, the wandering ascetic Subhadda spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: ‘Excellent, O Lord, most excellent, O Lord! It is as if, O Lord, one were to set upright what had been overthrown, or to reveal what had been hidden, or to show the path to one who had gone

astray, or to light a lamp in the darkness, that those having eyes might see,—even so has the Bhagavā set forth the Teaching in many ways. And so, O Lord, I take my refuge in the Bhagavā, the Teaching and the Community of Bhikkhus. Would that I might receive from the Bhagavā admission to the Order, receive also the higher ordination!’

‘Whosoever, Subhadda, having been formerly a follower of another creed, wishes to receive admission and higher ordination in this Dhamma and Rule, remains on probation for a period of four months. At the end of those four months, bhikkhus who are established in mind grant him admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu. Yet in this matter I recognise differences of personalities.’

64. ‘If, O Lord, whosoever, having been formerly a follower of another creed, wishes to receive admission and higher ordination in this Dhamma and Rule, remains on probation for a period of four months, and, at the end of those four months, bhikkhus who are established in mind grant him admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu,—then I too will remain on probation for a space of four months. And at the end of those four months let the bhikkhus who are established in mind grant me admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu!’

But the Bhagavā called the venerable Ānanda and said to him: ‘Even so, Ānanda, let Subhadda be given admission into the order.’

And the venerable Ānanda replied: ‘So be it, Lord.’

65. Then the wandering ascetic, Subhadda, said to the venerable Ānanda: ‘A gain is it to you, friend Ānanda,

a blessing, verily, that in the presence of the Master himself you have received the sprinkling of ordination as a disciple.'

So it came about that the wandering ascetic, Subhadda, in the presence of the Bhagavā received admission and higher ordination. And from the time of his ordination the venerable Subhadda remained alone, secluded, heedful, ardent and resolute. And before long he attained to the goal for which a worthy man goes forth entirely from home to homelessness, the supreme goal of the holy life; and having by himself realized higher knowledge, he dwelt therein. 'Destroyed is birth; the higher life is fulfilled; nothing more is to be done, and beyond this life nothing more remains',—thus he knew.

And the venerable Subhadda became yet another among the Arahats, and he was the last disciple converted by the Bhagavā himself.

VI

The Bhagavā's Final Exhortations

1. Now the Bhagavā spoke to the venerable Ānanda, saying: 'It may be, Ānanda, that to some among you the thought will come: "Ended is the word of the Master; we have a Master no more." But it should not, Ānanda, be so considered. For that which I have proclaimed and made known, Ānanda, as the Teaching and the Rule, that shall be your Master when I am gone.

2. 'And, Ānanda, whereas now the bhikkhus address

one another as "Friend",⁶¹ let it not be so when I am gone. The senior bhikkhus, Ānanda, may address the junior ones by their name, their family name or as "Friend"; but the junior bhikkhus should address the senior ones as "Lord" or "Venerable Sir."⁶²

3. 'If it is desired, Ānanda, the Sangha may, when I am gone, abolish the minor rules.

4. 'Upon the bhikkhu Channa, Ānanda, when I am gone, let the higher penalty be imposed.'

'But what, Lord, is the higher penalty?'

'The bhikkhu Channa, Ānanda, may say what he will, but the bhikkhus should neither converse with him, nor exhort nor admonish him.'

5. Then the Bhagavā addressed the bhikkhus, saying: 'It may be, Bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, the path, or the practice. Then question, Bhikkhus! Let yourselves not be given to remorse later on, with the thought: "The Master was with us, face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him."'

But when this was said, the bhikkhus were silent. And yet a second and a third time the Bhagavā said to them: 'It may be, Bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, the path, or the practice. Then question, Bhikkhus! Let yourselves not be given to remorse later on, with the thought: "The Master was with us, face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him."'

And for a second and third time the bhikkhus were silent. Then the Bhagavā said to them: 'It may be, Bhikkhus, out of respect for the Master that you put no questions. Then, Bhikkhus, let friend communicate it to friend.' Yet still the bhikkhus were silent.

6. And the venerable Ānanda spoke to the Bhagavā, saying: 'Marvellous, O Lord, most wonderful it is! This faith I have in the community of bhikkhus, that not even one bhikkhu is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, the path, or the practice!'

'Out of faith, Ānanda, you speak thus. But here, Ānanda, the Tathāgata knows for certain that among this community of bhikkhus there is not even one bhikkhu who is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, the path, or the practice. For, Ānanda, among these five hundred bhikkhus even the lowest is a Stream-winner, secure from downfall, assured, and bound for Enlightenment.'

7. And the Bhagavā addressed the bhikkhus, saying: 'Behold now, Bhikkhus, I exhort you: Transient are all the elements of being! Strive with earnestness!'⁶³

This was the last word of the Tathāgata.

How the Bhagavā passed into Nibbana

8. And the Bhagavā entered the first jhāna. Rising from the first jhāna, he entered the second jhāna. Rising from the second jhāna, he entered the third jhāna. Rising from the third jhāna, he entered the fourth jhāna. And rising out of the fourth jhāna, he entered the Sphere of Infinite Space. Rising from the attainment of the Sphere of Infinite Space, he entered the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness. Rising from the attainment of the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, he entered the Sphere of No-thing-ness. Rising from the attainment of the Sphere of No-thing-ness, he entered the Sphere of Neither-perception-nor-nonperception. And rising out of the attainment of the Sphere of

Neither Perception-nor-nonperception, he attained to the Cessation of Perception and Feeling.

And the venerable Ānanda spoke to the venerable Anuruddha, saying: 'Lord Anuruddha, the Bhagavā has passed away!'

'No, Friend Ānanda, the Bhagavā has not passed away. He has entered the state of the Cessation of Perception and Feeling.'

Then the Bhagavā, rising from the Cessation of Perception and Feeling, entered the Sphere of Neither-Perception-nor-nonperception. Rising from the attainment of the Sphere of Neither-Perception-nor-nonperception, he entered the Sphere of No-thing-ness. Rising from the attainment of the Sphere of No-thing-ness, he entered the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness. Rising from the attainment of the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, he entered the Sphere of Infinite Space. Rising from the attainment of the Sphere of Infinite Space, he entered the fourth jhāna. Rising from the fourth jhāna, he entered the third jhāna. Rising from the third jhāna, he entered the second jhāna. Rising from the second jhāna, he entered the first jhāna.

Rising from the first jhāna, he entered the second jhāna. Rising from the second jhāna, he entered the third jhāna. Rising from the third jhāna, he entered the fourth jhāna. And, rising from the fourth jhāna, the Bhagavā immediately passed away.

The World's Echo

9. And when the Bhagavā had passed away, simultaneously with his parinibbāna, there came a tremendous earthquake, dreadful and astounding, and the thunders rolled across the heavens.

And Brahmā Sahampati, when the Bhagavā had passed away, simultaneously with his parinibbāna, spoke this stanza:

‘All must depart—all beings that have life
Must shed their compound forms. Yea, even one,
A Master such as he, a peerless being,
Powerful in wisdom and Enlightenment,
Has passed away.’

And Sakka, the King of the Gods, when the Bhagavā had passed away, simultaneously with his parinibbāna, spoke this stanza:

‘All transient are the elements of life;
Into existence having come, they pass away,
Good is the peace when they forever cease.’

And the venerable Anuruddha, when the Bhagavā had passed away, simultaneously with his parinibbāna, spoke this stanza:

‘No movement of the breath, but with
steadfast heart
Free from desires, and tranquil—so the sage
Comes to his end. By mortal pangs unshaken,
His mind, like a flame extinguished, finds release.’

And the venerable Ānanda, when the Bhagavā had passed away, simultaneously with his parinibbāna, spoke this stanza:

‘Then was there terror, and the hair stood up,
when he,
The all-accomplished one, the Buddha,
passed away.’

Then, when the Bhagavā had passed away, some bhikkhus, not yet freed from passion, lifted up their arms and wept; and some, flinging themselves on the

ground, rolled from side to side and wept, lamenting: 'Too soon has the Bhagavā come to his parinibbāna! Too soon has the Happy One come to his parinibbāna! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!'

But the bhikkhus who were freed from passion, mindful and clearly comprehending, reflected in this wise: 'Impermanent are all compounded things, How could this be otherwise?'

And the venerable Anuruddha addressed the bhikkhus, saying: 'Enough, Friends! Do not grieve, do not lament! For has not the Bhagavā declared aforetime that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation and severance? Of that which is arisen, come into being, compounded, and is subject to decay, how can one say, "May it not come to dissolution!" The deities, Friends are aggrieved!'

'But, Lord, of what deities is the venerable Anuruddha aware?'

'There are deities, friend Ānanda, in space and on the earth who are earthly-minded with dishevelled hair they weep, with uplifted arms they weep; flinging themselves on the ground they roll from side to side, lamenting: "Too soon has the Bhagavā come to his parinibbāna! Too soon has the Happy One come to his parinibbāna! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!" But the deities who are freed from passion, mindful and clearly comprehending, reflect in this wise: "Impermanent are all compounded things. How could this be otherwise?"'

12. Now the venerable Anuruddha and the venerable Ānanda spent the rest of the night in talking of the Doctrine. Then the venerable Anuruddha spoke to

the venerable Ānanda, saying: 'Go now, Friend Ānanda, to Kusināra, and announce to the Mallas: "Passed away, O Vāsetṭhas, has the Bhagava! Do now as seems fitting to you!"' 'So be it, O Lord.' And the venerable Ānanda prepared himself in the forenoon, and taking bowl and robe, went with one companion into Kusināra.

At that time the Mallas of Kusināra were gathered together in the Council hall to consider that very matter. And the venerable Ānanda approached them and announced: 'Passed away, O Vāsetṭhas, has the Bhagavā! Do now as seems fitting to you!'

And when they heard the venerable Ānanda speak these words the Mallas with their sons, their wives and the wives of their sons were sorely grieved, grieved at heart and afflicted; and some, with their hair all dishevelled, with arms upraised in despair, wept; flinging themselves on the ground they rolled from side to side, lamenting: 'Too soon has the Bhagavā come to his parinibbāna! Too soon has the Happy One come to his parinibbāna! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!'

Homage to the Remains

13. Then the Mallas of Kusināra gave orders to their men, saying: 'Gather now all the perfumes, flower-garlands and musicians, even all that are in Kusināra.' And the Mallas, with the perfumes, the flower-garlands and the musicians, and with five hundred sets of clothing, went to the Sāl grove, the recreation park of the Mallas, and approached the body of the Bhagavā. And having approached, they paid homage to the body of the Bhagavā with dance, song, music flower-garlands

and perfume, and erecting canopies and pavilions they spent the day showing respect, honour and veneration to the body of the Bhagavā. And then the thought came to them: 'Now the day is too far spent for us to cremate the body of the Bhagavā. Tomorrow we will do it.'

And for a second day, and a third, fourth, fifth and sixth day they paid homage to the body of the Bhagavā with dance, song, music, flower-garlands and perfume, and erecting canopies and pavilions they spent the day showing respect, honour and veneration to the body of the Bhagavā.

14. But on the seventh day the thought came to them: 'We have paid homage to the body of the Bhagavā with dance, song, music, flower-garlands and perfume, and have shown respect, honour and veneration; let us now carry the body of the Bhagavā southward, to the southern part of the town and beyond, and let us there cremate the body of the Bhagavā, south of the town.'

And eight Mallas of the foremost families, bathed from the crown of their heads and clothed in new cloths, with the thought: 'We will lift up the body of the Bhagavā,' strove to do so, but they could not.

Then the Mallas spoke to the venerable Anuruddha, saying: 'What is the cause, Lord Anuruddha, and what is the reason, that these eight Mallas of the foremost families, bathed from the crown of their heads and clothed in new cloths, with the thought: "We will lift up the body of the Bhagavā," strive to do so, but cannot?'

'You, Vāsetṭhas, have one purpose, the deities have another.'

15. 'Then what, Lord, is the purpose of the deities?'

‘Your purpose, Vāseṭṭhas, is this: “We have paid homage to the body of the Bhagavā with dance, song, music, flower-garlands and perfume, and have shown respect, honour and veneration; let us now carry the body of the Bhagavā southward, to the southern part of the town and beyond, and let us there cremate the body of the Bhagavā, south of the town.” But the purpose of the deities, Vāseṭṭhas, is this: “We have paid homage to the body of the Bhagavā with heavenly dance, song, music, flower-garlands and perfume, and have shown respect, honour and veneration; let us now carry the body of the Bhagavā northward, to the northern part of the town; and having carried it through the northern gate let us go through the centre of the town, and then eastward, to the east of the town; and having passed through the east gate let us carry it to the Cetiya of the Mallas, Makuṭa-bandhana, and there let us cremate the body of the Bhagavā.’

‘As the deities wish, Lord, so let it be ’

16. Thereupon, the whole of Kusināra, even to the dust heaps and rubbish heaps, became covered knee-deep in Mandārava flowers. And homage was paid to the body of the Bhagavā by the deities as well as the Mallas of Kusināra. With dance, song, music, flower-garlands and perfume, both divine and human, respect, honour and veneration was shown. And they carried the body of the Bhagavā northward, to the northern part of the town; and having carried it through the northern gate, went through the centre of the town, and then eastward, to the east of the town; and having passed through the east gate they carried the body of the Bhagavā to the Cetiya of the Mallas,

Makuṭa-bandhana, and there laid it down.

17 Then the Mallas of Kusināra spoke to the venerable Ānanda, saying: 'How should we act, Lord Ānanda, respecting the body of the Tathāgata?'

'After the same manner, Vāsetṭhas, as towards the body of a universal monarch.'

'But how, Lord Ānanda, do they act respecting the body of a universal monarch?'

'The body of a universal monarch, Vāsetṭhas, is first wrapped round with new linen, and then with teased cotton wool. And again it is wrapped round with new linen, and again with teased cotton wool, and so it is done up to five hundred layers of linen and five hundred of cotton wool. When that is done, the body of the universal monarch is placed in an iron oil-vessel, which is enclosed in another iron vessel, and a funeral pyre is built of all kinds of perfumed woods, and so the body of the universal monarch is burned. And at the meeting of four ways a stupa is raised for the universal monarch. So is it done, Vāsetṭhas, with the body of a universal monarch.

'And even, Vāsetṭhas, as with the body of a universal monarch, so should it be done with the body of the Tathāgata; and at the meeting of four ways also a stupa should be raised for the Tathāgata. And whosoever shall bring to that place garlands, or incense or sandal (paste), or pay reverence, and whose mind becomes calm there—to his weal and happiness will it be, for a long time.'

18. Then the Mallas gave orders to their men, saying: 'Gather now all the teased cotton wool of the Mallas!' And the Mallas of Kusināra wrapped the body of the Bhagavā round with new linen, and then with teased

cotton wool. And again they wrapped it round with new linen, and again with teased cotton wool, and so it was done up to five hundred layers of linen and five hundred of cotton wool. When that was done, they placed the body of the Bhagavā in an iron oil-vessel, which was enclosed in another iron vessel, and they built a funeral pyre of all kinds of perfumed woods, and upon it they laid the body of the Bhagavā.

19. Now at that time the venerable Mahā Kassapa was journeying from Pāva to Kusināra, together with a large company of bhikkhus, amounting to five hundred. And on the way, the venerable Mahā Kassapa went aside from the high-road and seated himself at the foot of a tree.

And a certain Ājīvaka came by, on his way to Pāva, and he had taken a Mandārava flower from Kusināra. And the venerable Mahā Kassapa saw the Ājīvaka coming from a distance, and as he drew close he spoke to him, saying: 'Do you, Friend, know anything of our Master?'

'Yes, Friend, I know. It is now seven days since the ascetic Gotama passed away. From there I have brought this Mandāra flower.'

Thereupon, some bhikkhus, not yet freed from passion, lifted up their arms and wept; and some, flinging themselves on the ground, rolled from side to side and wept, lamenting: 'Too soon has the Bhagavā come to his parinibbāna! Too soon has the Happy One come to his parinibbāna! Too soon has the Eye of the World vanished from sight!'

But the bhikkhus who were freed from passion, mindful and clearly comprehending, reflected in this wise: 'Impermanent are all compounded things.

How could this be otherwise?’

Now at that time, one Subhadda, who had renounced only in his old age, was seated in the assembly. And he addressed the bhikkhus, saying: ‘Enough, Friends! Do not grieve, do not lament! Well rid are we of that great ascetic! Too long, Friends, have we been oppressed by “This is fitting for you; that is not fitting for you”! Now we shall be able to do as we wish, and what we do not wish, that we shall not do.’

But the venerable Mahā Kassapa addressed the bhikkhus, saying: ‘Enough, Friends! Do not grieve, do not lament! For has not the Bhagavā declared aforetime that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation and severance? Of that which is arisen, come into being, compounded, and is subject to decay, how can one say, “May it not come to dissolution!”’

21. Now at that time four Mallas of the foremost families, bathed from the crown of their heads and clothed in new cloths, with the thought: ‘We will set light to the Bhagavā’s pyre,’ strove to do so, but they could not. And the Mallas spoke to the venerable Anuruddha, saying: ‘What is the cause, Lord Anuruddha, and what the reason that these four Mallas of the foremost families, bathed from the crown of their heads and clothed in new cloths, with the thought: “We will set light to the Bhagavā’s pyre,” strive to do so, but cannot?’

‘You, Vāsetṭhas, have one purpose, the deities have another.’

‘Then what, Lord, is the purpose of the deities?’

‘The purpose of the deities, Vāsetṭhas, is this:

“The venerable Mahā Kassapa is on his way from Pāva to Kusināra, together with a large company of bhikkhus, amounting to five hundred; let not the Bhagavā’s pyre be set alight until the venerable Mahā Kassapa has paid homage at the feet of the Bhagavā!”

‘As the deities wish, Lord, so let it be.’

22. And the venerable Mahā Kassapa approached the pyre of the Bhagavā, at the Cetiya of the Mallas, Makuṭa-bandhana, in Kusināra. And he arranged his robe on one shoulder, and with his clasped hands raised in salutation he walked three times round the pyre, keeping his right side towards the Bhagavā, and he paid homage at the feet of the Bhagavā. And even so did the five hundred bhikkhus.

And when homage had been paid by the venerable Mahā Kassapa and the five hundred bhikkhus, the pyre of the Bhagavā burst into flame of itself.

23. And it came about that when the body of the Bhagavā had been burned, of what had been skin, tissue, flesh, sinews and fluid, no ashes or particles were to be seen; only bones remained. Just as when ghee or oil, when burned leave no particles or ashes behind, even so when the body of the Bhagavā had been burned, of what had been skin, tissue, flesh, sinews and fluid, no ashes or particles were to be seen; only bones remained. And of the five hundred linen wrappings, only two were not consumed, the innermost and the outermost.

And when the body of the Bhagavā had been burned, water rained down from heaven and extinguished the pyre of the Bhagavā, and from the Sāl trees water came forth, and the Mallas of Kusināra brought water scented with many kinds of perfumes, and they

too extinguished the pyre of the Bhagavā.

And the Mallas of Kusināra laid the relics of the Bhagavā in their council hall, and surrounded them with a lattice work of spears and encircled them with a fence of bows; and there for seven days they paid homage to the relics of the Bhagavā with dance, song, music, flower-garlands and perfume, and showed respect, honour and veneration to the relics of the Bhagavā.

Partition of the Relics

24. Then the king of Magadha, Ajātasattu, son of the Videhi queen, came to know that at Kusināra the Bhagavā had passed away. And he sent a message to the Mallas of Kusināra, saying: 'Of the warrior caste was the Bhagavā, and even so am I. Worthy am I to receive a portion of the relics of the Bhagavā. Over the relics of the Bhagavā I will erect a stupa, and in their honour I will hold a festival.'

And the Licchavis of Vesālī came to know that at Kusināra the Bhagavā had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusināra, saying: 'Of the warrior caste was the Bhagavā, and even so are we. Worthy are we to receive a portion of the relics of the Bhagavā. Over the relics of the Bhagavā we will erect a stupa, and in their honour we will hold a festival.'

And the Sakyas of Kapilavatthu came to know that at Kusināra the Bhagavā had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusināra, saying: 'Greatest of our clan was the Bhagavā. Worthy are we to receive a portion of the relics of the Bhagavā. Over the relics of the Bhagavā we will erect a stupa, and in their honour we will hold a festival.'

And the Bulis of Allakappa came to know that at Kusināra the Bhagavā had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusināra, saying: 'Of the warrior caste was the Bhagavā, and even so are we. Worthy are we to receive a portion of the relics of the Bhagavā. Over the relics of the Bhagavā we will erect a stupa, and in their honour we will hold a festival.'

And the Kolis of Rāmagāma came to know that at Kusināra the Bhagavā had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusināra, saying: 'Of the warrior caste was the Bhagavā, and even so are we. Worthy are we to receive a portion of the relics of the Bhagavā. Over the relics of the Bhagavā we will erect a stupa, and in their honour we will hold a festival.'

And the Veṭṭhadīpa brahmana came to know that at Kusināra the Bhagavā had passed away. And he sent a message to the Mallas of Kusināra, saying: 'Of the warrior caste was the Bhagavā, and I am a brahmana. Worthy am I to receive a portion of the relics of the Bhagavā. Over the relics of the Bhagavā I will erect a stupa, and in their honour I will hold a festival.'

And the Mallas of Pāva came to know that at Kusināra the Bhagavā had passed away. And they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusināra, saying: 'Of the warrior caste was the Bhagavā, and even so are we. Worthy are we to receive a portion of the relics of the Bhagavā. Over the relics of the Bhagavā we will erect a stupa, and in their honour we will hold a festival.'

25. But when they heard these words, the Mallas of Kusināra addressed the assembly, saying: 'In our township the Bhagavā has passed away. We shall not part with any portion of the relics of the Bhagavā.' Then the brahmana Doṇa spoke to the assembly, saying:

‘One word from me, I beg you, Sirs, to hear!
 Our Buddha taught us ever to forbear;
 Unseemly would it be, should strife arise
 And war and bloodshed, over the custody
 Of his remains, who was the best of men!
 Let us all, Sirs, in friendliness agree
 To share eight portions—so that far and wide
 Stupas may rise, and seeing them, mankind
 Faith in the All-enlightened One will find!’

‘So be it, Brahmana! Do you then divide the
 relics into eight equal portions yourself.’

And the brahmana Doṇa said to the assembly, ‘So
 be it, Sirs.’ And he divided justly into eight equal
 portions the relics of the Bhagavā, and having done so
 he addressed the assembly, saying: ‘Let this urn, Sirs,
 be given to me! Over this urn I will erect a stupa,
 and in its honour I will hold a festival.’ And the urn
 was given to the brahmana Doṇa.

26. Then the Moriyas of Pippalivana came to know
 that at Kusināra the Bhagavā had passed away. And
 they sent a message to the Mallas of Kusināra, saying:
 ‘Of the warrior caste was the Bhagavā, and even so are
 we. Worthy are we to receive a portion of the relics
 of the Bhagavā. Over the relics of the Bhagavā we
 will erect a stupa, and in their honour we will hold
 a festival.’

‘There is no portion of the relics of the Bhagavā
 remaining; divided are the relics of the Bhagavā. But
 take from here the ashes!’ And they took from
 there the ashes.

27. And the king of Magadha, Ajātasattu, son of the
 Videhi queen, erected a stupa over the relics of the
 Bhagavā at Rājagaha, and in their honour held a festival.

The Licchavis of Vesālī erected a stupa over the relics of the Bhagavā at Vesālī, and in their honour held a festival. The Sakyas of Kapilavatthu erected a stupa over the relics of the Bhagavā at Kapilavatthu, and in their honour held a festival. The Bulis of Allakappa erected a stupa over the relics of the Bhagavā at Allakappa, and in their honour held a festival. The Kolis of Rāmagāma erected a stupa over the relics of the Bhagavā at Rāmagāma, and in their honour held a festival. The Veṭṭhadīpa brahmana erected a stupa over the relics of the Bhagavā at Veṭṭhadīpa, and in their honour held a festival. The Mallas of Pāva erected a stupa over the relics of the Bhagavā at Pāva, and in their honour held a festival. The Mallas of Kusināra erected a stupa over the relics of the Bhagavā at Kusināra, and in their honour held a festival. The brahmana Doṇa erected a stupa over the urn, and in its honour held a festival. And the Moriyas of Pipphalivana erected a stupa over the ashes at Pipphalivana, and in their honour held a festival.

So it came about that there were eight Stupas for the relics, a ninth for the urn, and a tenth for the ashes.

And thus it was in the days of old.

28. Eight portions there were of the relics of him
 Who was the All-seeing One, the greatest of men.
 Seven in Jambu-dīpa are honoured, and one
 In Rāmagāma, by kings of the Nāga race.
 One tooth is honoured in the Tāvatisa heaven,
 One in the realm of Kalinga, and one by the
 Nāga kings.

Through their brightness this bountiful earth
 With most excellent gifts is endowed;

For thus the relics of the All-seeing One are
best honoured
By those who are worthy of honour—by gods
and Nāgas
And lords of men, yea, by the highest of
mankind.
Pay homage with clasped hands! For hard
indeed is it
Through hundreds of ages to meet with an
All-Enlightened One! 64

The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta is ended.

Corrections:-

Page 48, Sec. 17, line 3: for 41 read 46

Page 49, Sec. 23, line 6: for 42 read 47

NOTES

1. *Bhagavā*: the Auspicious, Blessed or Exalted One; the most frequent appellation of the Buddha, though not restricted to Buddhist usage.

2. *Ajātasattu Videhiputta*. The commentary says that Ajātasattu's mother was a Kosala princess and not the daughter of the Videha king. Hence the commentary explains *vedehiputta* as 'son of a wise mother'.—Ajātasattu became king after murdering his father, King Bimbisāra (see D. 2).

3. *Tathāgata*, lit.: 'Thus-gone' or 'Thus-come'; likewise an appellation of the Buddha, which he generally used when speaking of himself.

4. *aparihāniyā dhammā*.

5. The Venerable Ānanda was a cousin of the Buddha and his personal attendant for 25 years. He attained to Sainthood (*arahatta*) after the passing away of the Buddha, just before the commencement of the First Council at which he was the reciter of the Dīgha Nikāya and the authority for the Sutta Piṭaka (the Collections of the Discourses).

6. The Discourse referred to here, is included in the 'Gradual Sayings' (Aṅguttara-Nikāya), The Book of the Sevens, Text 19.

7. The group-names which are not in the original, are supplied from other references to the qualities concerned; here *satta saddhammā*, about which see 'Gradual Sayings' (Aṅguttara Nik.), The Sevens (PTS transl., vol. III, pp. 71, 99); Majjh. Nik. No. 53. In the Comy. to Majjh. 8, they are called "the complete equipment required for Insight" ('The Wheel' No. 61/62, p. 48).

8. *Satta Bojjhaṅga*. See 'The Wheel' No. 1.
9. *sārāṇīyā dhammā*; Majjh. 48; Aṅguttara, Sixes, No 11, 12.
10. Virtue (*sīla*), Concentration (*samādhi*) and Wisdom (*paññā*) are the divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path. Our text stresses again and again the importance of a full development of all three for final liberation.
11. *āsava*, 'cankers', 'corruptions'; see "Buddhist Dictionary" by Nyanatiloka.
12. *evam-sīlā*,
13. *evam-dhammā*. Comy & SubComy: This refers to concentration and to the mental qualities belonging to concentration (*samādhipakkhyā dhammā*) as energy, mindfulness, etc.
14. *evam-pañña*.
15. *evam-vihārā*; Comy: the abiding in the Attainment of Cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti-vihāra*).
16. *evam-vimuttā*. Comy. refers to the five kinds of Deliverance, identical with the five kinds of Relinquishment (see B. Dict.: *pahāṇa*).
17. On the Five Hindrances, see The Wheel No. 26.
18. On the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, see 'The Wheel' Nos. 19 & 60.
19. *puṭa-bhedanam*. Comy. explains it as the breaking open, the unpacking, of the boxes (*puṭa*) of merchandise for the purpose of distribution. But probably, it refers to the bursting-open of the seed-box of the Pāṭali flower.
20. The stage of Sainthood (*arahatta*).
21. The Non-returner (*anāgāmi*).
22. The Once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*).

23. The Stream-winner (*sotāpanna*).

24. Or: 'not delayed (in its results)'.

25. *sabba-nimittānaṃ amanasikārā*; i. e., all objects of forms, sounds, etc.; or all 'signs' (*nimitta*) or ideas, conditioned by greed, hate and delusion.

26. Comy.: the mundane (*lokiya*) feelings.

27. *animittāṃ cetosamādhin*; Comy. to Angutt.: "The concentration attained during intensive Insight-meditation (*vipassanā*)." See Angutt. Nik., Sevens, No. 56.

28. *tamatagge*, a difficult word. Comy. takes it to stand for the superlative form: *aggatamā*, but alludes also to the Pāli word *tama*, 'darkness'. It is rather difficult to accept that a superlative *suffix* should be made to precede the word it qualifies. Tibetan and Chinese parallels (Waldschmidt, p. 200f) point to a meaning as "the highest". In the fragments of the Turfan Sanskrit version, these words are not preserved. The Commentary says: "*Tamatagge* = *tama-agge*; The 't' in the middle is inserted for euphonic reasons (*pada-sandhi*). The meaning is: 'these are the very highest, the most eminent (*ime aggatamā aggatamā*'ti). Having cut every bondage of darkness (*tama-yoga*), those Bhikkhus of mine will be on the very top, in the highest rank (*ativiya agge uttamabhāve*). Among them those will be on the very summit (*ati-agge*) who are desirous of training; and those whose resort is the fourfold Satipaṭṭhāna will be at the very top of them.' "

29. *kappaṃ, vā tiṭṭheyya, kappāvasesaṃ vā*. The Commentary takes *kappa* not as 'world period' or 'aeon', but as *āyu-kappa*, 'life span', and explains *avasesaṃ* (usually 'remainder') by 'in excess'.

Comy.: "He may stay alive completing the life span pertaining to men at the respective time." (SubComy: the maximum life span.) *Kappāvasesaṇi*; 'in excess' (*atirekaṇi*), i. e., more or less above the 100 years said to be the normally highest life expectation."

Among the numerous meanings of the word *kappa*, there is, in fact, that of 'time' in general (*kāla*) and not only the duration of an aeon; but the meaning 'life span' seems to have been ascribed to it only in this passage. Also the meaning 'in excess' for *avasesa* (usually 'remainder') is unusual.

This passage of our text is quoted in the fourth chapter of the *Milinda-pañhā* (Trenckner p. 140; transl. by I. B. Horner I, 195).

30. *Convincing and liberating*. This stands for the one Pāli word *sappāṭihāriyaṇi*, as an attempt to render the two connotations of the word which it has according to the commentaries and in the context of other occurrences in the Discourses. In the Mahā-Sakuludāyī Sutta (M. 77) and elsewhere (e. g. Ang., Tika-Nip. No. 126), it occurs with its opposite, *appāṭihāriya*, and is preceded by another pair of opposites, *sa-nidāna* and *a-nidāna* ('with, and without, cause'). The commentary says that both pairs are synonymous and explains *sappāṭihāriya* by *sa-kāraṇa*, 'with (good) reasons', i. e. reasonable or rational. To render in the present context *sappāṭihāriya* by 'rational' would have been quite befitting, if it were not desirable to avoid any wrong impression that thereby the Teaching is depicted as purely 'rationalistic', in a shallow sense. Hence, for expressing this aspect of *sappāṭihāriya*, the rendering 'convincing' was

chosen in this context that relates to the refutation of adverse views.—Quite frequently found in the texts, there is also another pair of terms, *sappāṭihīrakata* and *apāṭihīrakata*, that, in derivation and meaning, is akin to *sa-*and *appāṭihāriya*. The negative term occurs, e. g., in the Tevijja Sutta (D. 13). A full examination of both pairs of terms has been made by K. N. Jayatilleke in his recent work *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London 1963, Allen & Unwin), p. 321ff.

In the light of the above-mentioned (and additional) occurrences of the term, its rendering by 'miraculous', 'wonder-working' (Rhys Davids), or in German, 'Wunderding' (Georg Grimm) which relate it to *pāṭihāriya*, miracle, can be excluded as unapplicable.

The commentaries derive it from the verb *paṭiharati*, 'to remove' and explain it (1) as the removal of what is adverse, e. g. opposition and objections (covered by our rendering 'convincing'), and (2) as the removal of inner obstructions, i. e. defilements as greed, etc., effected by sainthood (*arahatta*). It is probably for pointing to that latter meaning, that the commentary to our present text paraphrases our passage as follows "until they are able to preach the Teaching in its liberating capacity" (lit.: making it to lead out *yāva na niyyānikam katvā desissanti*). Hence the term 'liberating' was included in our dual rendering of *sappāṭihāriya*.

31. *āyu-saikhāra*.

32. *tulam atulañca sambhavam*, lit.: the measurable and immeasurable productive cause (of life), i. e. the volitional action causing rebirth in the confined, or limited, Sense-sphere, or in the unbounded Fine-material and Immaterial Sphere.

33. *bhavasaiikhārāṇi*, the formative force of becoming, in the sense of what forms existence.

34. Commentary: "He breaks through the entire net of defilements that envelops individual existence like a coat of mail; he breaks the defilements like a great warrior breaks his armour after the battle."—The Sanskrit version has: "like an egg shell" (*kośam iv' āṇḍa-sambhavaṇi*).

35. Comy: "Even by this much the venerable Ānanda was aware of the fact: 'Surely, today the Exalted One has renounced his will to live on.' Though the Exalted One knew that the venerable Ānanda was aware of it, he did not give him an other opportunity for asking the Buddha to stay on for the remainder of his life span: but he spoke to him about other eight-term groups beginning with the Eight Assemblies."—Sub-Comy: "Some say that the Buddha did so in order to divert the venerable Ānanda and to prevent grief arising in him."

36. *abhibhāyatana*.

37. That is: 'perceiving forms on his own body'. This refers to preliminary concentration.

39. This refers to the *kaṣiṇa-nimitta*, the after-image arising with full concentration.

40. He derives the 'sign' from objects external to his body.

41. *aṭṭha vimokkha*.

42. *rūpī*. This refers to the Form-sphere Absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), obtained with form objects of one's own body.

43. *Subhan-tveva adhimutto hoti*.—Comy: Hereby, meditative Absorption (*jhāna*), obtained through blue-

kasina, etc., of very pure colour are indicated. Anticipating objections, it is admitted that, during Absorption itself, there is no thought of loveliness or beauty; but if one has taken a very pure, beautiful *kasina* as object, one feels relief and becomes intent upon it (*adhimutto*) through its loveliness."

44. *Handa 'dāni bhikkhave āmantayāmi vo: Vaya-dhammā saikhārā, appamādena sampādettha.*

45. The Comy. says that the Buddhas, when looking back, turn the whole body round, as an elephant does.

46. *sūkara-maddava*, a controversial term which, therefore, has been left untranslated. *Sūkara* = pig; *maddava* = soft, tender, delicate. Hence two alternative renderings of the compound term are possible: 1. the tender parts of a pig or boar; 2. what is enjoyed by pigs or boars. In the latter meaning *sūkara-maddava* has been thought to refer to a mushroom or truffle; or a jam or tuber. K. E. Neumann, in the Preface to his German translation of the Majjhima-Nikāya, quotes from an Indian compendium of medicinal plants, the *Rājaniganṭu*, several plants beginning with *sūkara*: *sūkarukaṇḍa*, *sūkarisṭas* ('desired by pigs'), etc.

The Commentary to our text gives three alternative explanations: 1. the flesh from a single first-born (wild) pig, neither too young nor too old, which had come to hand naturally (*pavattamaṁsa*). i. e. without intentional killing; 2. a preparation of soft boiled rice cooked with the five cow-products; 3. a kind of alchemistic elixir (*rasāyanavidhi*).—Dhammapāla, in his commentary to Udāna VIII, 5, gives, in addition to explanation (1)—(3): "young bamboo shoots trampled by pigs" (*sūkarehi maddita-vaṁsa-kaḷīro*).

47. Comy: These verses were inserted by the Elders who collected the Dhamma (-texts, at the First Council; *dhamma-saṅgāhaka-thera*).

48. *In the vicinity* (*upavattane*); *upavattana* (Skr: *upavartana*) signifies a recreation ground or recreation park, near a town.

49. Comy: 'From the town of Pāva are three Gāvutas to Kusinara. Walking that distance with great effort and sitting down at 25 places on the way, the Exalted One reached the Sāla Grove at the time of dusk when the sun had already set. Thus comes illness to man, crushing all his health. As if He wanted to point to this fact, the Exalted One spoke that word which deeply moved (*sainvega-kara*) the whole world: "I am weary, Ānanda, and would lie down."'

50. See *The Four Sacred Shrines*, by Piyadassi Thera. 'Bodhi Leaves' No. B. 8 (Buddhist Publ. Socy., Kandy).

51. At Lumbini near Kapilavatthu. The grove of Lumbini where Queen Māyā gave birth to Prince Siddhattha, was close to Kapilavatthu (modern *Rummin-dei* in Nepal). Kapilavatthu was the ancestral seat of the Sakyans, in the foot hills of the Himālayas. The Thūpa built by the Sakyans for the relics of the Master was excavated in modern times at Piprava, on the Nepalese border.

52. At Uruvelā (Buddha-Gayā), perhaps modern Urel village. There, on the bank of the river Nerañjara (now called Lilājan), the Buddha's Enlightenment took place. It is situated about 7 miles from the railway station of Gayā in Bihar.

53. At Isipatana near Benares (modern Saranāth), where the Buddha "set rolling the Wheel of Truth"

(dhammacakka pavattana).

54. *sadatthe*. Comy.: for the highest purpose, the goal of Sainthood. There is a different reading *sāratthe*, 'for an essential purpose'.

55. *āyasa*, generally 'iron', has here, according to the Commentary, the meaning of 'gold', for which there is also support in the Sanskrit usage of the word.

56. *Pacceka-Buddha* is one awakened, or enlightened, for himself alone. Such *Pacceka-Buddhas* arise in times when there is no Fully Enlightened One (*Sammā-sambuddha*). Like the latter, they attain to Enlightenment (*bodhi*) by their own effort, but unlike them, are not able to lead others to deliverance.

57. The word *vihāra*, given in the text, cannot refer here to a monastery or monks' living quarters. Comy explains it as a pavilion (*maṇḍala-māla*). If the locality was used as a meeting place for the clan, as the Commentary states, there may well have been a kind of shelter there. The couch in the open, which Ānanda was asked to prepare for the Master (Ch. V, §3) was probably a seat for the Chiefs of the Malla clan put up at that place.

58. *sekho*. This signifies the three lower stages of emancipation, before reaching perfect Sainthood (*arahatta*). Ānanda Thera, at that time, had reached the first of these stages, the Stream-entry (*sotāpatti*).

59. *anāsavo*; a saint or Arahant.

60. The four 'degrees of saintliness' are: 1. that of the Stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*), 2. the Once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*), 3. the Non-returner (*anāgāmi*) 4. the Saint (*arahant*).

61. *āvuso*.

62. *bhante* or *āyasmā*.

63. See p. 43 and Note 44—Earnestness (*appamāda*) is explained as 'presence of mindfulness'. Comy.: "‘You should accomplish all your duties without allowing mindfulness to lapse!’ Thus did the Exalted One, while on the bed of His Parinibbāna, summarize in that one word on Earnestness the advice he had given through 45 years."

64. The Commentary ascribes these verses to the "Elders of Tambapaṇṇi Island (Ceylon)".

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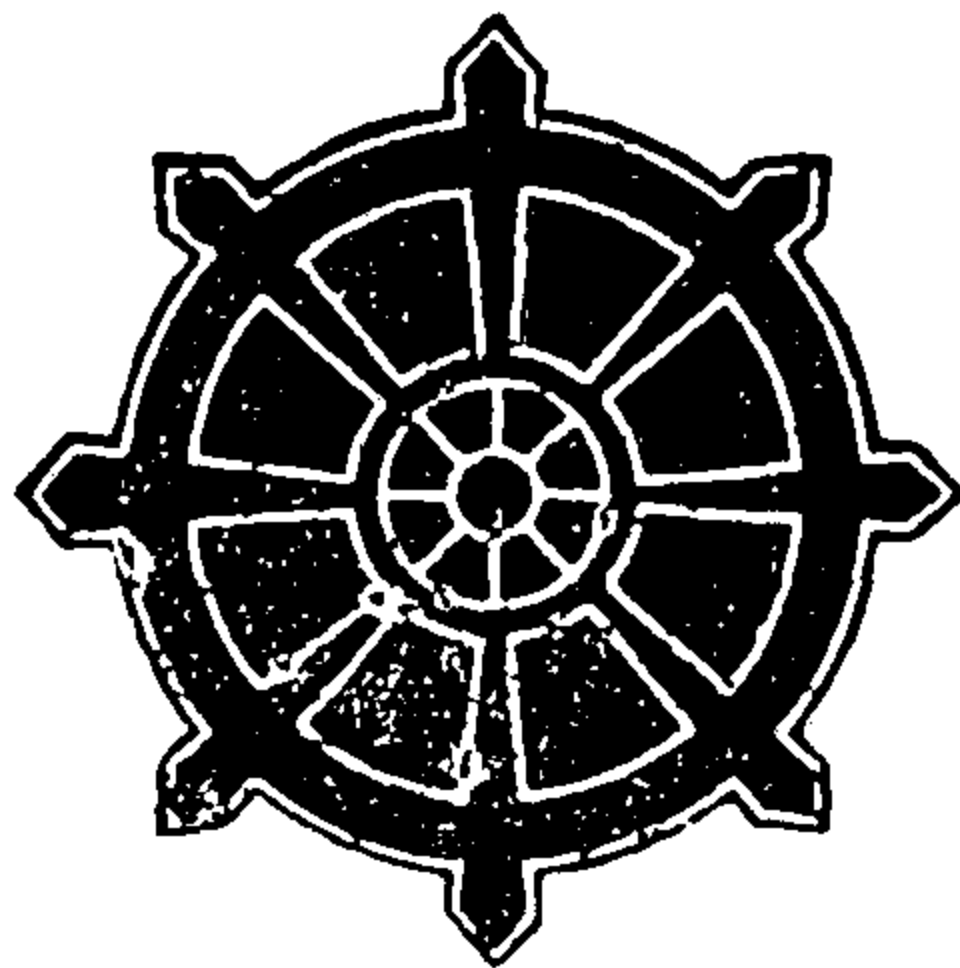
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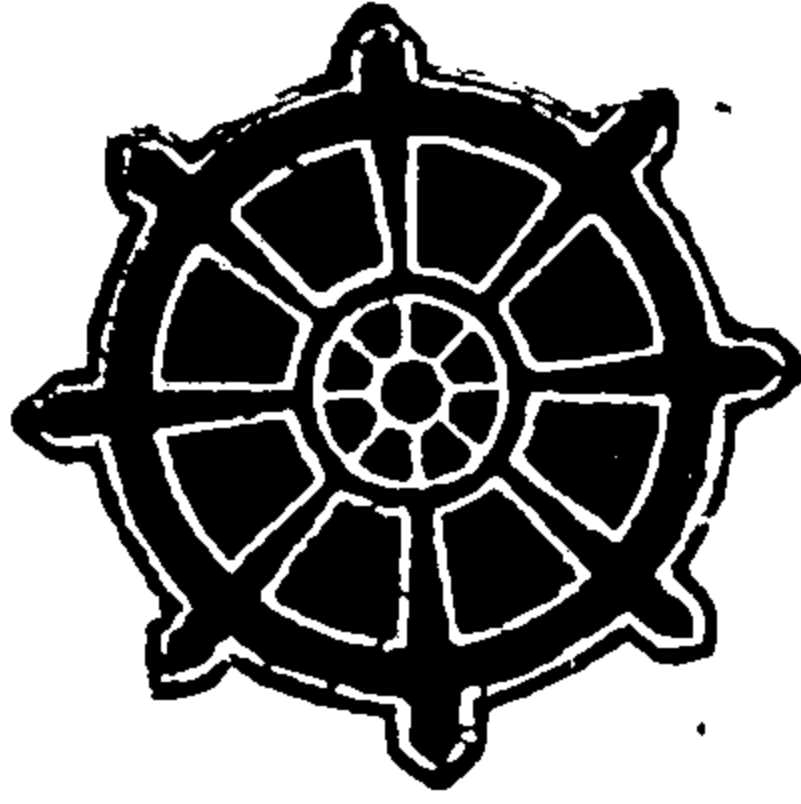
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The Life of Sāriputta

NYANAPONIKA THERA

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THE LIFE OF SARIPUTTA

THE LIFE OF SĀRIPUTTA

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translated from the
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PROLOGUE

IN many temples of Ceylon you will find, on either side of the Buddha image, the statues of two monks. Their robes are draped over one shoulder and they stand in the attitude of reverence, with joined palms. Quite often there are a few flowers at their feet, laid there by some pious devotee.

If you ask who they are, you will be told that they are the Enlightened One's two Chief Disciples, the Arhats Sāriputta and Mahā Moggallāna. They stand in the positions they occupied in life, Sāriputta on the Buddha's right, Mahā-Moggallāna on his left. When the great stupa at Sānchi was opened up, in the middle of the last century, the relic chamber was found to contain two stone receptacles; the one to the north held the body-relics of Mahā-Moggallāna, while that on the south enclosed those of Sāriputta. Thus they had lain while the centuries rolled past and the history of two thousand years and more played out the drama of impermanence in human life. The Roman Empire rose and fell, the glories of ancient Greece became a distant memory; new religions wrote their names, often with blood and fire, on the changing face of the earth, only to mingle at last with legends of Thebes and Babylon, and gradually the tides of commerce shifted the great centres of civilisation from East to West, while generations that had never heard the Teaching of the Buddha arose and passed away. But all the time that the ashes of the saints lay undisturbed, forgotten in the land that gave them birth, their memory was held dear wherever the Buddha's message spread, and the record of their lives was passed down from one generation to

another, first by word of mouth, then in the written pages of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka, the most voluminous and detailed scripture of any religion. Next to the Enlightened One himself, it is these two disciples of his who stand highest in the veneration of Buddhists in the Theravāda lands. Their names are as inseparable from the annals of Buddhism as that of the Buddha himself. If it has come about that in the course of time many legends have been woven into the tradition of their lives, this is but the natural outcome of the devotion that has always been felt for them.

And that high esteem was fully justified. Few religious teachers have been so well served by their immediate disciples as was the Buddha. This you will see as you read these pages, for they tell the story of one of the two greatest of them, Sāriputta, who was second only to the Buddha in the depth and range of his understanding, and in his ability to teach the Doctrine of Deliverance. In the Tripiṭaka there is no connected account of his life, but it can be pieced together from the various incidents, scattered throughout the canonical texts and commentaries, in which he figures. Some of them are more than mere incidents, for his life is so closely interwoven with the life and ministry of the Buddha that he plays an essential part in it, and on a number of occasions it is Sāriputta himself who takes the leading role—as skilled preceptor and exemplar, as kind and considerate friend, as guardian of the welfare of the bhikkhus under his charge, as faithful repository of his Master's doctrine, the function which earned him the title of *Dhamma-senāpati*, Marshall of the Dhamma, and always as himself, a man unique in his patience and steadfastness, modest and upright in thought, word and deed, a man to whom one act of kindness was a thing to be remembered

with gratitude so long as life endured. Even among the Arhats, saints freed from all defilements of passion and delusion, he shone like the full moon in a starry sky.

This then is the man, of profound intellect and sublime nature, a true disciple of the Great Teacher, whose story we have set down, to the best of our ability, in the pages that follow. If you, the reader, can gather from this imperfect record something of the qualities of man perfected, of man fully liberated and raised to the highest level of his being; of how such a man acts and speaks and comports himself towards his fellows; and if the reading of it gives you strength and faith in the assurance *of what man may become*, then our work has been worthwhile, and is fully rewarded.

This book is chiefly based on Pāli texts translated and relevant facts gathered, by the Venerable Nyanaponika Thera.

The Life of Sāriputta

PART I

From Birth to the Attainment of Sainthood

THE STORY begins at two brahmanical villages in India, called Upatissa and Kolita, which lay not far from the city of Rājagaha. Before our Buddha had appeared in the world a Brahmin lady named Sārī, living in Upatissa viilage,* conceived;** and so also, on the same day at Kolita village, did another Brahmin lady whose name was Moggallī. The two families were closely connected, having been friends with one another for seven generations. From the first day of their pregnancy the families gave due care to the mothers-to-be, and after ten months both women gave birth to boys, on the same day. On the name-giving day the child of the Brahmin lady Sārī received the name Upatissa, as he was a son of the foremost family of that village; and for the same reason Moggallī's son was named Kolita.

When the boys grew up they were educated, and acquired mastery of all the sciences. Each of them had a following of five hundred Brahmin youths, and when they went to the river or park for sport and recreation, Upatissa used to go with five hundred palanquins, and Kolita with five hundred horse carriages:

Now at Rajagaha there was an annual event called the Hilltop Festival. Seats were arranged for both youths and they sat together to witness the celebrations. When there

* According to the Cunda Sutta (Satipaṭṭhāna Samyutta) and its Commentary, the name of his birthplace was Nālaka, or Nālagāma, which may be an alternative name. It was probably quite close to the more famous Nālanda.

** Sāriputta's father was a Brahmin named Vaganta. (Comy. to Dhammapada, v. 75)

was occasion for laughter they laughed; when the spectacles were exciting, they became excited, and they paid their fees for the extra shows. In this manner they enjoyed the festival for a second day; but on the third day their understanding was awakened and they could no longer laugh or get excited, nor did they feel inclined to pay for extra shows as they had done on the first days. Each of them had the same thought: "What is there to look at here? Before these people have reached a hundred years they will all have come to death. What we ought to do is to seek for a teaching of deliverance."

It was with such thoughts in mind that they took their seats at the festival. Then Kolita said to Upatissa: "How is this, my dear Upatissa? You are not as happy and joyous as you were on the other days. You seem now to be in a discontented mood. What is on your mind?"

"My dear Kolita, to look at these things here is of no benefit at all. It is utterly worthless! I ought to seek a teaching of deliverance for myself. That my Kolita is what I was thinking, seated here. But you, Kolita, seem to be discontented, too."

And Kolita replied "Just as you have said, I also feel." When he knew that his friend had the same inclinations, Upatissa said: "That was a good thought of ours. But for those who seek a teaching of deliverance there is only one thing to do: to leave home and become ascetics. But under whom shall we live the ascetic life?"

At that time, there lived at Rājagaha an ascetic of the sect of the Wanderers (*paribbājaka*), called Sañjaya, who had a great following of pupils. Deciding to get ordination under him, Upatissa and Kolita went there, each with his own following of five hundred Brahmin youths, and all of them received ordination from Sañjaya. And from the time

of their ordination under him, Sañjaya's reputation and support increased abundantly.

Within a short time the two friends had learned Sañjaya's entire doctrine, and they asked him: "Master, does your doctrine go so far only, or is there something beyond?"

Sañjaya replied: "So far only it goes. You know all."

Hearing this, they thought to themselves: "If that is the case, it is useless to continue the Holy Life under him. We have gone forth from home to seek a teaching of deliverance. Under him we cannot find it. But India is vast; if we wander through villages, towns and cities we shall certainly find a master who can show us the teaching of deliverance." And after that, whenever they heard that there were wise ascetics or brahmins at this or that place, they went and discussed with them. But there was none who was able to answer their questions, while they were able to reply to those who questioned them.

Having thus travelled through the whole of India they turned back, and arriving at their old place they agreed between them that he who should attain to the Deathless State first, should inform the other. It was a pact of brotherhood, born of the deep friendship between the two young men.

Some time after they had made that agreement, the Blessed One, the Buddha, came to Rājagaha. It was when he had delivered the Fire Sermon at Gāyā Peak that he remembered his promise, given before his Enlightenment to King Bimbisāra, that he would come to Rājagaha again when he had attained his goal. So in stages the Blessed One journeyed from Gāyā to Rājagaha, and having received from King Bimbisāra the Bamboo Grove Monastery (Veluvana) he resided there.

Among the sixty-one Arahats (Saints) whom the Master had sent forth to proclaim to the world the virtues of the Triple Gem, there was the Elder Assaji, who belonged to the group of five ascetics, the Buddha's erstwhile companions before his Enlightenment, and afterwards his first disciples. The Elder Assaji had returned to Rājagaha from his wanderings, and when one morning he was going for alms in the city he was seen by Upatissa, who was on his way to the Paribbājaka ascetics' monastery. Struck by Assaji's dignified and serene appearance, Upatissa thought: "Never before have I seen such a monk. He must be one of those who are Arahats, or on the way to Arahatship. Should I not approach him and ask, "Under whom have you been ordained? Who is your teacher and whose teaching do you profess?" "

But then he thought: 'It is not the proper time now for putting questions to this monk, as he is going for alms through the streets. I had better follow behind him, after the manner of supplicants.' And he did so.

Then, when the Elder had gathered his alms food, and Upatissa saw him going to another place intending to sit down and take his meal, he prepared for him his own ascetic's seat that he carried with him, and offered it to the Elder. The Elder Assaji took his meal, after which Upatissa served him with water from his own water-container, and in that way performed towards Assaji the duties of a pupil to a teacher.

After they had exchanged the usual courteous greetings, Upatissa said: 'Serene are your features, friend. Pure and bright is your complexion. Under whom, friend, have you gone forth as an ascetic? Who is your teacher and whose doctrine do you profess?'

Assaji replied: 'There is, O friend, the Great Recluse,

the scion of the Sākyas, who has gone forth from the Sākyā clan. Under that Blessed One I have gone forth. That Blessed One is my teacher and it is his Dhamma that I profess.'

'What does the venerable one's master teach, what does he proclaim?'

Questioned thus, the Elder Assaji thought to himself: 'These wandering ascetics are opposed to the Buddha's dispensation. I shall show him how profound this dispensation is.' So he said: 'I am but new to the training, friend. It is not long since I went forth from home, and I came but recently to this teaching and discipline. I cannot explain the Dhamma in detail to you.'

The Wanderer replied: 'I am called Upatissa, friend. Please tell me according to your ability, be it much or little. It will be my task to penetrate its meaning by way of a hundred or a thousand methods.' And he added:

'Be it little or much that you can tell,
The meaning only, please proclaim to me!
To know the meaning is my sole desire;
Of no avail to me are many words.'

In response, the Elder Assaji uttered this stanza:

'Of all those things that from a cause arise,
Tathāgata the cause thereof has told;
And how they cease to be, that too he tells,
This is the doctrine of the Great Recluse.'*

* *Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgato āha,
tesaṃ yo nirodho evamvādī mahāsamaṇo 'ti.*

This gāthā was later to become one of the best-known and most widely-disseminated stanzas of Buddhism, standing for all time as a reminder of Sāriputta's first contact with the Dhamma and also as a worthy memorial to Assaji, his great Arahāt teacher. Spoken at a time when the principle of causality was not accorded the prominence it enjoys today in philosophical thought, its impact on the minds of the early Buddhists must have been revolutionary.

Upon hearing the first two lines, Upatissa became established in the Path of Stream-entry, and to the ending of the last two lines he already listened as a Stream-winner.

When he had become a Stream-winner, and before he had achieved the higher attainments, he thought: 'Here will the means of deliverance be found!' And he said to the Elder: 'Do not enlarge upon this exposition of the Dhamma, Venerable Sir. This will suffice. But where does our Master live?'

'In the Bamboo Grove Monastery, Wanderer.'

'Then please go on ahead, Venerable Sir. I have a friend with whom I agreed that he who should reach the Deathless State first, should tell the other. I shall inform him, and together we shall follow on the road you went and shall come into the Master's presence.' Upatissa then prostrated himself at the Elder's feet, saluted him and, taking the Elder's leave, went back to the park of the Wandering Ascetics.

Kolita saw him approaching and thought: 'Today my friend's appearance is quite changed. Surely, he must have found the Deathless State!'

And when he asked him about it, Upatissa replied: 'Yes, friend, the Deathless State has been found!' and he recited to him the stanza he had heard. At the end of the verse, Kolita was established in the Fruition of Stream-entry and he asked: 'Where, my dear, does the Master live?'

'I learned from our teacher, the Elder Assaji, that he lives at the Bamboo Grove Monastery.'

'Then let us go, Upatissa, and see the Master,' said Kolita.

But Sāriputta was one who always respected his teacher, and therefore he said to his friend: 'First, my dear, we shall go to our teacher, the Wanderer Sañjaya, and tell him that we have found the Deathless. If he can grasp it, he will

penetrate to the Truth. And even if he does not he may, out of confidence in us, come with us to see the Master; and hearing the Buddha's teaching, he will attain to the penetration of the Path and Fruition '

So both of them went to Sañjaya and said: 'Oh, our teacher! What are you doing? A Buddha has appeared in the world! Well-proclaimed is his Teaching and in right conduct lives his community of monks. Let us go and see the Master of the Ten Powers!'

'What are you saying, my dear?' Sañjaya exclaimed. And refusing to go with them he spoke to them of the gain and fame they would enjoy if they would share his, the teacher's, place.

But they said: 'Oh, we should not mind always remaining in the state of pupils! But you, O teacher, you must know whether to go or not!'

Then Sañjaya thought: 'If they know so much, they will not listen to what I say.' And realizing that, he replied: 'You may go, then, but I cannot.'

'Why not, O teacher?'

'I am a teacher of many. If I were to revert to the state of a disciple, it would be as if a huge water tank were to change into a small pitcher. I cannot live the life of a pupil now.'

'Do not think like that, O teacher!' they urged.

'Let it be, my dear. You may go, but I cannot.'

'Oh teacher! When a Buddha has appeared in the world, people flock to him in large crowds and pay homage to him, carrying incense and flowers. We too shall go there. And then what will happen to you?'

To which Sañjaya replied: 'What do you think, my pupils: are there more fools in this world, or more wise people?'

‘Fools there are many, O teacher, and the wise are few.’

‘If that is so, my friends, then the wise ones will go to the wise recluse Gotama, and the fools will come to me, the fool. You may go now, but I shall not.’

So the two friends left, saying: ‘You will come to understand your mistake, O teacher!’ And after they had gone there was a split among Sañjaya’s pupils, and his monastery became almost empty. Seeing his place empty, Sañjaya vomited hot blood. Five hundred of his disciples had left along with Upatissa and Kolita, out of whom two hundred and fifty returned to Sañjaya. With the remaining two hundred and fifty, and their own following, the two friends arrived at the Bamboo Grove Monastery.

There the Master, seated among the fourfold assembly,* was preaching the Dhamma, and when the Blessed One saw the two coming he addressed the monks: ‘These two friends, Upatissa and Kolita, who are now coming, will be two excellent disciples to me, a blessed pair’.

Having approached, the friends saluted the Blessed One reverentially and sat down at one side. When they were seated they spoke to the Blessed One, saying: ‘May we obtain, O Lord, the ordination of the Going Forth under the Blessed One, may we obtain the Higher Ordination!’

And the Blessed One said: ‘Come, O Bhikkhus! Well proclaimed is the Dhamma. Now live the Life of Purity, to make an end of Suffering!’ This alone served as the ordination of these venerable ones.

Then the master continued his sermon, taking the individual temperaments** of the listeners into consideration; and with the exception of the two chief disciples all of them

* That is, monks, nuns, and male and female lay followers.

** *Carita-vasena*. This refers to the types of character (*carita*) as explained in ‘The Path of Purification’ (Visuddhi-Magga, Ch. III).

attained to Arahatsip. But the two chief disciples had not yet completed the task of attaining to the three higher paths of sanctity. The reason for this was the greatness of the 'Knowledge pertaining to the Perfection of a Disciple' (*Sāvaka-pāramī-ñāṇa*), which they had still to reach.

Upatissa received the name of Sāriputta on becoming a disciple of the Buddha, whilst Kolita became known as Mahā-Moggallāna.

Now the Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna went to live at a village in Magadha called Kallavāla, on which he depended for alms-food. On the seventh day after his ordination when he was doing the recluse's work (of meditation), fatigue and torpor fell upon him. But spurred on by the Master,* he dispelled his fatigue, and while listening to the Master expounding to him the meditation-subject of the elements (*dhātu-kammaṭṭhāna*), he completed the task of winning to the three higher paths and reached the acme of a Disciple's Perfections (*sāvaka-pāramī*).

But the Venerable Sāriputta continued to stay near the Master, at a cave called the Boar's Shelter (*Sūkarakhata-leṇa*), depending on Rājagaha for his alms-food. Half a month after his ordination the Blessed One gave a discourse on the comprehension of Feelings** to the Venerable Sāriputta's nephew, the Wandering Ascetic Dīghanakha. The Venerable Sāriputta was standing behind the Master, fanning him. While following with his thoughts the progress of the Discourse, as though sharing the food prepared for another, the Venerable Sāriputta on that occasion reached the acme of 'Knowledge pertaining to a Disciple's Perfection' and attained to Arahatsip together with the Fourfold Analytical

* This is a reference to the Discourse in Anguttara-Nikāya, The Sevens, No. 58 (P.T.S. IV, 85).

** Dīghanakha Sutta, Majjhima-Nikāya No. 74.

Knowledge (*paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*).* And his nephew, at the end of the sermon, was established in the Fruition of Stream-entry.**

Now it may be asked: Did not the Venerable Sāriputta possess great wisdom; and if so, why did he attain to the Disciple's Perfections later than the Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna? The answer is, because of the greatness of the preparations necessary for it. When poor people want to go anywhere they take to the road at once; but in the case of kings, larger preparations are required, as for instance to get ready the elephants and chariots, and so on. Thus it was in this case.

On that same day, when the evening shadows had lengthened, the Master caused his disciples to assemble and bestowed upon the two Elders the rank of Chief Disciples. At this, some monks were displeased and said among themselves: 'The Master should have given the rank of Chief Disciples to those who were ordained first, that is, the Group of Five disciples. If not to them, then either to the group of two hundred and fifty bhikkhus headed by Yasa, or to the thirty of the Auspicious Group (Bhaddavaggiya), or else to the three Kassapa brothers. But passing over all these Great Elders, he has given it to those whose ordination was the very last of all.'

The Master inquired about the subject of their talk. When he was told it, he said: 'I do not show preference, but give to each what he has aspired to. When, for instance, Kondaṇṇa-the-Knower in a previous life gave

* The fact of his attainment to Analytical Knowledge, which has here been added to the commentarial text, was mentioned by the Venerable Sāriputta himself in *Anguttara-Nikāya*, The Fours, No 172.

** The Venerable Sāriputta refers to his way of attaining Arahatsip in verses 935-6 in the *Theragāthā*.

alms-food nine times during a single harvest, he did not aspire to Chief Discipleship; his aspiration was to be the very first to penetrate to the highest state, Arahatship. And so it came about. But when Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna many aeons ago, at the time of the Buddha Anomadassi, were born as the Brahmin youth Sārada and the Landowner Sirivaḍḍhaka, they made the aspiration for Chief Discipleship. This, O bhikkhus, was the aspiration for these my sons at that time. Hence I have given them just what they aspired to, and did not do it out of preference.'

This account of the beginning of the Venerable Sāriputta's career is taken from the Commentary to the Anguttara-Nikāya, Etad-agga section, with some passages from the parallel version in the Dhammapada Commentary. From it some of the principal traits of the Venerable Sāriputta's character are already discernible. His capacity for deep and constant friendship showed itself while he was still a worldling, a youth nurtured in luxury and pleasure, and it persisted after he had abandoned the household life. On receiving his first insight into the Dhamma, and before proceeding any further, his first thought was for his friend Kolita and the vow they had sworn together. His penetrating intellect is revealed in the promptness with which he grasped the essence of the Buddha's teaching from a few simple words. And, most rare of all, he combined that intellectual power with a modesty and sweetness of nature that expressed itself in gratitude and reverence for anyone, even the misguided Sañjaya, who had taught him things of value. It was no wonder, therefore, that throughout his life he continued to show respect for the Venerable Assaji, from whom he had gained his introduction to the Buddha's Teaching. We are told in the Commentary to the Navā Sutta (Sutta-Nipāta), and also in the Commentary to v. 392 of the Dhammapada, that whenever the Venerable Sāriputta

lived in the same monastery as the Elder Assaji he always went to pay obeisance to him immediately after having done so to the Blessed One. This he did out of reverence, thinking: 'This Venerable One was my first teacher. It was through him that I came to know the Buddha's Dispensation.' And when the Elder Assaji lived in another monastery, the Venerable Sāriputta used to face the direction in which the Elder Assaji was living, and to pay homage to him by touching the ground at five places (with the head, hands and feet), and saluting with joined palms.

But this led to misunderstanding, for when other monks saw it they said: 'After becoming a Chief Disciple, Sāriputta still worships the heavenly quarters! Even today he cannot give up his brahmanical views!' Hearing these remarks, the Blessed One said: 'It is not so, bhikkhus. Sāriputta does not worship the heavenly quarters. He salutes him through whom he came to know the Dhamma. It is him he salutes, worships and reveres as his teacher. Sāriputta is one who gives devout respect to his teacher.' It was then that the Master preached to the monks assembled there the Navā Sutta*, which starts with the words:

"As gods their homage pay to Indra,
So should a man give reverence to him
From whom he learned the Dhamma."

Another example of the Venerable Sāriputta's gratitude is given in the story of Rādha Thera. The Commentary to verse 76 of the Dhammapada relates that there was living at Sāvattthi a poor Brahmin who stayed in the monastery. There he performed little services such as weeding, sweeping, and the like, and the monks supported him with food. They

* Sutta-Nipāta, verse 316 ff (also called 'Dhamma Sutta').

did not, however, want to ordain him. One day the Blessed One, in his mental survey of the world, saw that this Brahmin was mature for Arahatsip. He inquired about him from the assembled monks, and asked whether any one of them remembered to have received some help from the poor Brahmin. The Venerable Sāriputta said that he remembered that once, when he was going for alms in Rājagaha, this poor Brahmin had given him a ladle full of alms-food that he had begged for himself. The Master asked Sāriputta to ordain the man, and he was given the name of Rādha. The Venerable Sāriputta then advised him time and again as to what things should be done, and always Rādha received his admonitions gladly, without resentment. And so, living according to the Elder's advice he attained Arahatsip in a short time.

This time the bhikkhus remarked on Sāriputta's sense of gratitude and said that he who himself willingly accepts advice obtains pupils who do the same. Commenting on this, the Buddha said that not only then, but also formerly Sāriputta had showed gratitude and remembered any good deed done to him. And in that connection the Master told the *Alīnacitta Jātaka*, the story of a grateful elephant.*

* Jātaka No. 156.

The Life of Sāriputta

PART II

Maturity of Insight

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Friendships

If Sāriputta was notable for his lasting sense of gratitude he was no less so for his capacity for friendship. With Mahā-Moggallāna, the friend and companion of his youth, he maintained a close intimacy, and many were the conversations they held on the Dhamma. One of these, which is of special interest as throwing light on the process of Venerable Sāriputta's attainment, is recorded in the Anguttara-Nikāya, Catukka-nipāta, No. 167. It relates that once the Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna went to see the Elder and said to him :

‘There are four ways of progress, brother Sāriputta :

Difficult progress, with sluggish direct-knowledge;
Difficult progress, with swift direct-knowledge;
Easy progress, with sluggish direct-knowledge;
Easy progress, with swift direct-knowledge.

‘By which of these four ways of progress, brother, was your mind freed from the cankers without remnants of clinging?’ To which the Venerable Sāriputta replied : ‘By that of those four ways of progress, brother, which is easy and has swift direct-knowledge.’

The explanation of this passage is that if the suppression of the defilements, preparatory to absorption or insight, takes place without great difficulty, progress is called ‘easy’ (sukha-paṭipadā); in the reverse case it is ‘difficult’ or ‘painful’ (dukkha-paṭipadā). If, after the suppression of the defilements, the manifestation of the Path, the goal of

insight, is quickly effected, the direct-knowledge (connected with the Path) is called 'swift' (khippābhiññā); in the reverse case it is 'sluggish' (daṇḍābhiññā). In this Discourse the Venerable Sāriputta's statement refers to his attainment of Arahātship. His attainment of the first three Paths, however, was, according to the Commentary to the above text, connected with 'Easy progress and sluggish direct-knowledge'.

In such ways as this did the two friends exchange information about their experience and understanding of the Dhamma. They were also frequently associated in attending to affairs of the Sangha. One such occasion was when they combined, in winning back certain monks who had been led astray by Devadatta. There is an interesting passage* in this connection which shows that the Venerable Sāriputta's generous praise of Devadatta's achievements before the latter brought about a schism in the Sangha was the cause of a slight embarrassment. It relates that when the Buddha asked Sāriputta to proclaim in Rājagaha that Devadatta's deeds and words should not longer be regarded as connected with the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, the Venerable Sāriputta said: 'Formerly I spoke at Rājagaha in praise of Devadatta's great magical powers. How can I now make that declaration about Devadatta?' The Buddha asked: 'Did you not speak truthfully, Sāriputta, when you praised Devadatta's magical powers?' 'Yes, Lord,' the Elder replied. 'So you will now speak truthfully also, Sāriputta, when you make this proclamation about Devadatta.' So, after receiving the formal approval of the Sangha, the Venerable Sāriputta, together with many monks, went to Rājagaha and made the declaration about Devadatta.

When Devadatta had formally split the Sangha by declaring that he would conduct Sangha-acts separately, he

* Cūlavagga, Sanghabhedaka-khandaka, Sanghabheda-Kathā

went to Vultures' Peak with five hundred young monks who through Ignorance had become his followers. To win them back, the Buddha sent Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna to the Vultures' Peak, and while Devadatta was resting the two Chief Disciples preached to the monks, who attained to Stream-entry and went back to the Master.*

Another time when the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna worked together to restore order in the Sangha was when a group of monks led by Assaji (not the Elder Assaji referred to earlier) and Punabbasu, living at Kīṭagiri, were misbehaving. In spite of repeated admonitions, these monks would not mend their ways, so the two Chief Disciples were sent to pronounce the penalty of Pabbājaniya-kamma (excommunication) on those who would not submit to the discipline.**

Venerable Sāriputta's devotion to his friend was fully reciprocated; we are told of two occasions when Sāriputta was ill, and Mahā-Moggallāna attended to him and brought him medicine.

Yet there was nothing exclusive about the Venerable Sāriputta's friendships, for according to the Commentary to the Mahā-Gosinga-Sutta there was also a bond of mutual affection between him and the Elder Ānanda. On the part of Sāriputta it was because he thought: 'He is attending on the Master—a duty which should have been performed by me;' and Ānanda's affection was due to the fact that Sāriputta had been declared by the Buddha as his foremost disciple. When Ānanda gave Novice Ordination to young pupils he used to take them to Sāriputta to obtain Higher Ordination under him. The Venerable Sāriputta did the

* Cūlavagga, Sanghabhedaka-khandhaka, Sanghabheda-kathā.

** Cūlavagga, Kammakkhandhaka, Pabbājaniyakamma; Pārājika Pāli, Sanghādisesa-kaṇḍa, Kuladūsaka-sikkhāpada,

same in regard to Ānanda, and in that way they had five hundred pupils in common.

Whenever the Venerable Ānanda received choice robes or other requisites he would offer them to Sāriputta, and in the same way, Sāriputta passed on to Ānanda any special offerings that were made to him. Once Ānanda received from a certain Brahmin a very valuable robe, and with the Master's permission he kept it for ten days awaiting Sāriputta's return. The Sub-commentary says that later teachers commented on this: 'There may be those who say: We can well understand that Ānanda, who had not yet attained to Arahatsip, felt such affection. But how is it in the case of Sāriputta, who was a canker-free Arahata? To this we answer: Sāriputta's affection was not one of worldly attachment, but a love for Ānanda's virtues (guṇa-bhatti).'

The Buddha once asked the Venerable Ānanda: 'Do you, too, approve of Sāriputta?' And Ānanda replied: 'Who, O Lord, would not approve of Sāriputta, unless he were childish, corrupt, stupid or of perverted mind! Learned, O Lord, is the Venerable Sāriputta; of great wisdom, O Lord, is the Venerable Sāriputta; of broad, bright, quick, keen and penetrative wisdom is the Venerable Sāriputta; of few wants and contented, inclined to seclusion, not fond of company, energetic, eloquent, willing to listen, an exhorter who censures what is evil.'*

In the Theragathā (v. 1034f) we find the Venerable Ānanda describing his emotion at the time of Sāriputta's death. 'When the Noble Friend (Sāriputta) had gone,' he declares, 'the world was plunged in darkness for me.' But he adds that after the companion had left him behind, and also the Master had passed away, there was no other friend

* Devaputta-Saṃy., Susima Sutta.

like Mindfulness directed on the Body. Ānanda's sorrow on learning of the Venerable Sāriputta's death is also described very movingly in the Cunda Sutta.*

Sāriputta was a true friend in the fullest sense of the word. He well understood how to bring out the best in others, and in doing so did not hesitate sometimes to speak straightforwardly and critically, like the ideal friend described by the Buddha, who points out his friend's faults. It was in this way that he helped the Venerable Anuruddha in his final break-through to Arahatsip, as recorded in the Anguttara-Nikāya (Tika-nipāta No. 128):

‘Once the Venerable Anuruddha went to see the Venerable Sāriputta. When they had exchanged courteous greetings he sat down and said to the Venerable Sāriputta: “Friend Sāriputta, with the divine eye that is purified, transcending human ken, I can see the thousandfold world-system. Firm is my energy, unremitting; my mindfulness is alert and unconfused; the body is tranquil and unperturbed; my mind is concentrated and one-pointed. And yet, my mind is not freed from the cankers, not freed from clinging.”

“Friend Anuruddha,” said the Venerable Sāriputta, “that you think thus of your divine eye, this is conceit** in you. That you think thus of your firm energy, your alert mindfulness, your unperturbed body and your concentrated mind, this is restlessness** in you. That you think of your mind not being freed from the cankers, this is worrying** in you. It will be good,

* See p. 61.

** Conceit (māna) and Restlessness (uddhacca) are two of the three Fetters (saṃyojana) which are destroyed only at the stage of Arahatsip. Worry (or Scruples: kukkucca) however, is removed already at the stage of Non-returner (anāgāmi).

Indeed, if the Venerable Anuruddha, abandoning these three states of mind and paying no attention to them, will direct the mind to the Deathless Element.”

‘And the Venerable Anuruddha later on gave up these three states of mind, paid no attention to them and directed his mind to the Deathless Element. And the Venerable Anuruddha, living then alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, with determined mind, before long reached in this very life, understanding and experiencing it by himself, that highest goal of the Holy Life, for the sake of which noble sons go forth entirely from home into homelessness. And he knew: “Exhausted is rebirth, lived is the holy life, the work is done, nothing further remains after this.” Thus the Venerable Anuruddha became one of the Arahats.’

Sāriputta must have been stimulating company, and sought after by many. What attracted men of quite different temperament to him and his conversation can be well understood from the incident described in the Mahā-Gosinga Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya No. 32). One evening the Elders Mahā-Moggallāna, Mahā-Kassapa, Anuruddha, Revata and Ānanda went to Sāriputta to listen to the Dhamma. The Venerable Sāriputta welcomed them, saying: ‘Delightful is this Gosinga Forest of Sāla trees; there is moonlight tonight, all the Sāla trees are in full bloom, and it seems that heavenly perfume drifts around. What kind of monk, do you think, Ānanda, will lend more lustre to this Gosinga Sāla Forest?’

The same question was put to the others as well, and each answered according to his individual nature. Finally, Sāriputta gave his own answer, which was as follows:

‘There is a monk who has control over his mind, who is not under the control of his mind.* In whatever (mental) abiding or attainment he wishes to dwell in the forenoon, he can dwell in it at that time. In whatever (mental) abiding or attainment he wishes to dwell at noon, he can dwell in it at that time. In whatever (mental) abiding or attainment he wishes to dwell in the evening, he can dwell in it at that time. It is as though a king’s or royal minister’s cloth chest were full of many-coloured garments; so that whatever pair of garments he wishes to wear in the forenoon, or at noon, or in the evening, he can wear it at will at those times. Similarly it is with a monk who has control over his mind, who is not under the control of his mind; In whatever (mental) abiding or attainment he wishes to dwell in the morning, or at noon, or in the evening, he can do so at will at those times.

‘Such a monk, friend Moggallāna, may lend lustre to this Gosinga Sāla Forest.’

They then went to the Buddha, who approved of all their answers and added his own.

We see from this episode that Sāriputta, with all his powerful intellect and his status in the Sangha, was far from being a domineering type who tried to impose his views on others. How well did he understand how to stimulate self-expression in his companions in a natural and charming way, conveying to them the pensive mood evoked by the enchanting scenery! His own sensitive nature responded to it, and drew a similar response from his friends.

There are many such conversations recorded between Sāriputta and other monks, not only the Venerables Mahā-Moggallāna, Ānanda and Anuruddha, but also Mahā-Koṭṭhita, Upavāna, Samiddhi, Savittha, Bhūmiṇi and many more. It

* Is not subject to the vagaries of his mind.

seems that the Buddha himself liked to talk to Sāriputta, for he often did so, and many of his discourses were addressed to his 'Marshal of the Law,' to use the title he gave him.

Once, Sāriputta repeated some words the Master had spoken to Ānanda on another occasion: 'This is the whole of the Life of Purity (*brahmacariya*); namely, Noble Friendship, Noble Companionship, Noble Association.'*

There could be no better exemplification of that teaching than the life of the Chief Disciple himself.

The Helper

Among the Bhikkhus Sāriputta was outstanding as one who helped others. We find a reference to this in the Devadaha Sutta.** Some visiting monks, about to return to their own places, took formal leave of the Buddha. He then advised them to see the Venerable Sāriputta and take leave of him also, telling them: 'Sāriputta, O bhikkhus, is wise, and a helper of his fellow monks.'

The Commentary, in explanation of these words, says:

'Sāriputta was a helper in two ways: by giving material help (*āmisānuggaha*) and the help of the Dhamma (*dhammānuggaha*).

The Elder, it is said, did not go on alms round in the early morning hours as the other bhikkhus did. Instead, when they had all gone he walked around the entire monastery grounds, and wherever he saw an unswept place,

* Magga Saṃyutta No. 2.

** Khandha Saṃyutta No. 2.

he swept it; wherever refuse had not been removed, he threw it away; where furniture such as beds, chairs, etc., or earthenware had not been properly arranged, he put them in order. He did that lest other, non-Buddhist ascetics, visiting the monastery, might see some disorderliness and speak in contempt of the bhikkhus.

Then he used to go to the hall for the sick, and having spoken consoling words to the patients he would ask them about their needs. To procure their requirements he took with him young novices, and went in search of medicine either by way of the customary alms-round or to some appropriate place. When the medicine was obtained he would give it to the novices, saying: 'Caring for the sick has been praised by the Master! Go now, good people, and be heedful!' After sending them back to the monastery sick room he would go on the alms-round or take his meal at a supporter's house. This was his habit when staying for some time at a monastery.

But when going on a journey on foot with the Blessed One, he did not go with the very first of the monks, shod with sandals and umbrella in hand, as one who thinks: 'I am the Chief Disciple.' But letting the young novices take his bowl and robes and sending them ahead with the others, he himself would first attend to those who were old, very young, or unwell, making them apply oil to any sores they might have on their bodies. Then, either later on the same day or on the next day he would leave together with them.

Once, when for that reason the Elder Sāriputta had arrived particularly late at the place where the others were resting, he did not get proper quarters for the night, and seated himself under a tent made from robes. The Master saw this, and next day he caused the monks to assemble and told them the story of the elephant, the monkey and the

partridge who, after deciding which was the eldest of them, lived together showing respect for the seniormost.* He then laid down the rule that 'lodgings should be allocated according to seniority'.**

In this way the Venerable Sāriputta was a helper by giving material help.

Sometimes he would give material help and the help of the Dhamma together, as when he visited Samitigutta, who suffered from leprosy, in the infirmary. The Theragāthā Commentary tells us that he said to Samitigutta: 'Friend, so long as the Aggregates (khandha) continue, all feeling is just suffering. Only when the Aggregates are no more is there no more suffering.' Having thus given him the Contemplation of Feelings as subject of meditation, Sāriputta went away. Samitigutta, following the Elder's instruction, developed Insight and realised the six Supernormal Powers (chalabhiñña) as an Arahāt.***

Again, when Anāthapiṇḍika was lying on his deathbed, Sāriputta visited him, accompanied by Ānanda. Sāriputta preached to the dying man on non-attachment, and Anāthapiṇḍika was greatly moved by the profound discourse.†

Another sick bed sermon given by the Elder to Anāthapiṇḍika is preserved in the Sotāpatti-Saṃyutta (Vagga 3, Sutta 6). In this discourse, Anāthapiṇḍika is reminded that those things which lead to rebirth in states of woe are no longer in him, but that he possesses the four basic qualities of stream-entry (Sotāpattiyanga) and the eight Path Factors; in considering this, his pains would subside. As the result, his pains actually did subside.

* Tittira Jātaka (No. 37)

** Vinaya Cūla-Vagga, Senāsana-khandhaka.

*** Theragatha v. 81 and Commentary.

† Majjh. 143.

Once the Elder Channa was lying ill and in great pain. The Venerable Sāriputta paid him a visit, in company with the Elder Mahā Cunda. Seeing the sick monk's agonies, Sāriputta at once offered to go in search of medicines and suitable food for him. But Channa told them he had decided to take his life, and after they had left he did so. Afterwards the Buddha explained that the Elder Channa's act was without demerit and blameless, since he had attained Arahatsip whilst dying. This story is found in the Channovāda Sutta (Majjh. 144).

It is said that whenever Sāriputta gave advice, he showed infinite patience; he would admonish and instruct up to a hundred or a thousand times, until his pupil was established in the Fruition of Stream-entry. Only then did he discharge him and give his advice to others. Very great was the number of those who, after receiving his instruction and following it faithfully, attained to Arahatsip. In the Sacca-vibhanga Sutta (Majjh. N. 141) the Buddha says: 'Sāriputta is like a mother who brings forth, while Moggallāna is like a nurse of that which has been brought forth. Sāriputta trains to the Fruit of Stream-entry, and Moggallāna trains to the highest goal.'

Explaining this passage, the Commentary says: 'When Sāriputta accepted pupils for training, whether they were ordained by him or by others, he favoured them with his material and spiritual help, looked after them in sickness, gave them a subject of meditation and at last, when he knew that they had become Stream-winners and had risen above the dangers of the lower worlds, he dismissed them in the confident knowledge that 'Now they can, by their own manly strength, produce the higher stages of Saintship.' Having thus become free from concern about their future, he instructed new groups of pupils. But Mahā-Moggallāna,

when training pupils in the same way, did not give up concern for them until they had attained Sainthood. This was because he felt, as was said by the Master: 'Since even a little excrement is of evil smell, I do not praise even the shortest spell of existence, be it no longer than a snap of the fingers.'

But although the Majjhima Commentary says that Sāriputta used to lead his regular pupils only up to Stream-entry, in individual cases he helped monks to attain the higher stages. The Udāna Commentary, for example, says that "at that time bhikkhus in higher training (*sekha*) used often to approach the Venerable Sāriputta for a subject of meditation that could help them to attain the three higher Paths." It was after taking instruction from Sāriputta that the Elder Lakunṭika-Bhaddiya ('The Dwarf') attained Arahatsip*, he having been a Stream-winner at the time. There is also the case of the Venerable Anuruddha, referred to on p. 27.

It was in this manner that the Venerable Sāriputta gave the help of the Dhamma. He was a great leader of men and an outstanding spiritual adviser. To the latter task he brought not only a keen and perceptive understanding of the human mind, but also a warm, human interest in others which must have been a great encouragement to those under his spiritual guidance. We have already seen how ready he was to give generous praise where it was due; he was also keen at all times to meet noble monks, particularly those whom the Master had commended. One such was the Elder Puṇṇa Mantāniputta; when Sāriputta learned that he had come on a visit he went to meet him. Without telling him who he was, he listened to Puṇṇa's great discourse, the Stage Coach Simile (Majjhima-Nikāya, No. 24), and when it was ended gave it high praise.

Administering to the physical as well as the spiritual needs of the monks under his charge, restraining them with kindly admonitions and encouraging them with the praise their efforts deserved, guiding them on the path and showing in all he did that vital sympathetic interest which draws forth the best from a pupil, Sāriputta combined the qualities of a perfect teacher with those of a perfect friend. He was ready to help in every way, in small things as in great. Filled with the virtue of the Holy Life himself, he was quick to see virtue in others, expert in developing it in those in whom it was latent, and among the first to extol it where it was in full flower. His was no cold, aloof perfection, but the richest intermingling of spiritual exaltation with the qualities that are finest and most endearing in a human being.

Attainment

Two stanzas in the Theragāthā (995, 996) relate, in words ascribed to the Venerable Sāriputta himself, the way in which he attained Arahatsip. There he tells us:

‘It was to another that the Blessed One was teaching the Dhamma; to the Dhamma-preaching I listened intently for my own good. And not in vain, for freed from all defilements, I gained release.’

In the next two verses (996-7) the Elder declares that he felt no inclination to develop the Five Supernormal Powers (Abhiññā). However, the Iddhividha-Kathā of the Paṭisambhidā-Magga credits him with possessing the intensive degree of meditative concentration called ‘The Power of Intervention by Concentration’ (Samādhi-vipphāra-iddhi),

which is capable of intervening in certain normal physiological processes or other natural events. This is illustrated by the anecdote in the Visuddhi Magga, Ch. XII, which records that once when the Venerable Sāriputta was living with the Elder Mahā Moggallāna at Kapotakandarā he was sitting meditating in the open with his hair freshly shaved when he was given a malicious blow on the head by a mischievous spirit. The blow was a very severe one, but at the time it was given “the Elder was absorbed in meditative attainment; consequently he suffered no harm.” The source of this story is the *Udāna**, which continues the account as follows :

The Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna saw the incident and approached the Venerable Sāriputta to ask how he fared. He asked him: ‘Brother, are you comfortable? Are you doing well? Does nothing trouble you?’—

‘I am comfortable, brother Moggallāna,’ said the Venerable Sāriputta. ‘I am doing well, brother Moggallāna. Only my head troubles me a little.’

Whereupon the Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna said: ‘O wonderful is it, brother Sāriputta! O marvellous is it, brother Sāriputta! How great is the psychic power, and how great is the might of the Venerable Sāriputta! For just now, brother Sāriputta, a certain demon gave you a blow on the head. And a mighty blow it was! With such a blow one might fell an elephant seven or seven and a half cubits high, or one might split a mountain peak. But the Venerable Sāriputta says only this, “I am comfortable, brother Moggallāna. I am doing well, brother Moggallāna. Only my head troubles me a little.”’

Then the Venerable Sāriputta replied: ‘O wonderful is it, brother Moggallāna! O marvellous is it, brother Moggallāna! How great is the psychic power, and how

* *Udāna* IV, 4.

great is the might of the Venerable Moggallāna, that he should see any demon at all! As for me, I have not seen so much as a mud-sprite!’

The *Anupada Sutta** contains a description of Sāriputta’s attainments given by the Buddha himself. In it the Blessed One declares that the Venerable Sāriputta had mastered the nine meditative attainments, that is, the four Fine-material and four Immaterial Jhānas and the Cessation of Perception and Feeling**. And in the Sāriputta Saṃyutta*** the Venerable Elder mentions the fact himself, in speaking to Ānanda, adding that in all the stages he was free of any self-reference: ‘I had no such thoughts as “I am entering the Jhāna; I have entered it; I am rising from it.”’ And on another occasion he describes to Ānanda how he attained to such developed concentration of mind that with regard to the Earth Element he was without earth perception, and so also with regard to the other three elements. Likewise with the four Immaterial Absorptions; he was without perception of them. Yet it seems that he was not entirely without perception of another kind, his only perception being that ‘Nibbāna is ceasing of coming-to-be (bhava-nirodha)’.†

This detached attitude to the Jhānic attainments may have been due to the meditative Abiding in Voidness (suññatā-vihāra) which the Venerable Sāriputta cultivated. We read in the Piṇḍapāta-pārisuddhi Sutta†† that the Buddha once remarked on the Venerable Sāriputta’s radiant features and asked him by which state of mind this radiance had

* Majjh. 111

** See also p. 42.

*** Saṃyutta Nikāya, vol. III: Khandha vagga.

† Ang., Tens, No. 7.

†† Majjh. 151.

been caused.* The Venerable Sāriputta replied that he frequently practised the Abiding in Voidness, upon which the Buddha said that this was the abode of great men, and proceeded to describe it in detail. The Udāna records that on three occasions the Master saw the Venerable Sāriputta seated in meditation outside the monastery and uttered verses (udāna) in praise of a firm and calm mind.

We may perhaps imagine the Venerable Sāriputta seated in meditation in a bower such as that mentioned in the Devadaha Sutta (Khandha-Saṃyutta, No. 2), where it says, 'Once the Blessed One lived in the Sakya country, at Devadaha, a market town of the Sakyas At that time the Venerable Sāriputta was seated, not far from the Blessed One, under an Elagalā bush.' The Commentary to the text tells us that 'At Devadaha there was a bower under an Elagalā bush. This bush grows where there is a constant supply of flowing water. People had made a bower with four posts over which they let the bush grow, forming a roof. Under it they made a seat by placing bricks there and strewing it with sand. It was a cool place for the daytime, with a fresh breeze blowing from the water.' It may well have been in some such rustic shelter as this that the Buddha saw Sāriputta deep in meditation, on those occasions when he extolled his disciple's tranquillity and detachment.

Concerning his attainment to Analytical Knowledge (Paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa), the Venerable Sāriputta speaks of it in the Anguttara-Nikāya (the Fours, No. 172), where he says:

'It was half a mont after my ordination, friends, that I realized, in all their parts and details, the Analytical Knowledge of Meaning, the Analytical

* The Buddhas, although they are able to divine such matters themselves, ask questions for the instruction and illumination of others.

Knowledge of the Law, the Analytical Knowledge of Language, the Analytical Knowledge of Perspicuity. These I expound in many ways, teach them and make them known, establish and reveal them, explain and clarify them. If anyone has any doubt or uncertainty, he may ask me and I shall explain (the matter). Present is the Master who is well acquainted with our attainments.'

From all of this it is evident that the Venerable Sāriputta was a master of all the stages of attainment up to and including the highest Insight-knowledge. What could be more aptly said of him than this, in the Buddha's own words :

'If one could ever say rightly of one that he has come to mastery and perfection in noble virtue, in noble concentration, in noble wisdom and noble liberation, it is of Sāriputta that one could thus rightly declare.

'If one could ever say rightly of one that he is the Blessed One's true son, born of his speech, born of the Dhamma, formed of the Dhamma, heir to the Dhamma, not heir to worldly benefit, it is of Sāriputta that one could thus rightly declare.

'After me, O monks, Sāriputta rightly turns the supreme Wheel of Dhamma, even as I have turned it.'

Majjh. 111. Anupada Sutta.

The Turner of the Wheel

The discourses of Sāriputta and the books attributed to him form a comprehensive body of teaching that for scope and variety of exposition can stand beside that of the

Master himself. Sāriputta understood in a unique way how to organize and present the rich material of the Dhamma lucidly, in a manner that was intellectually stimulating and also an inspiration to practical effort. We find this exemplified in two classic discourses of the Majjhima-Nikāya, the Sammā-diṭṭhi Sutta (No. 9) and the Greater Sutta on the Elephant-footprint Simile (No. 28).

The *Greater Discourse on the Elephant-footprint Simile** is a masterpiece of methodical treatment. It begins with the statement that the Four Noble Truths comprise everything that is salutary, then singles out the Truth of Suffering as being identifiable with the Five Aggregates of personality. From these, the Aggregate of Corporeality is chosen for detailed investigation; it is shown to consist of the four Great Elements, each of which is said to be internal and external. The bodily parts and functions belonging to the internal Element are stated in detail, and it is said of both the internal and external Elements that they neither belong to a self, nor constitute a self. This insight leads to disgust and detachment regarding the Elements.

The discourse then goes on to show the impermanence of the mighty external elements when they are involved in great upheavals of nature, and against that background it is stressed that this tiny body, the product of craving, can never be regarded as 'I' or 'Mine', or considered in the sense of 'I am'. And when a monk who has this firm and deeply-rooted insight meets with abuse, blame and hostility on the part of others, he is able to analyse the situation soberly and so remain master of it. He recognises that the painful feeling that has arisen in him is produced by ear-contact, which is in itself no more than a conditioned

* A commented translation of this text will appear shortly in 'The Wheel' series.

phenomenon; and of all the constituent parts of the situation he knows that they are Impermanent. This he discerns with reference to contact, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. At this point of the discourse we see that the other four Aggregates, the mental components of personality, are introduced in an organic context, together with the already-mentioned factor of contact. The discourse then continues: 'Then his mind, just by taking only the Elements as its object, becomes elated, gladdened, firm and intent;' and even if he is beaten and injured he will think: 'This body is of such a nature that is liable to such injuries.' Thereupon he will recollect the Master's Simile of the Saw and will resolve to follow the Buddha's injunction to suffer all injuries in patience, whatever may happen to him.

But, the sermon continues, if when thus remembering the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha the monk's equanimity does not endure, he will be stirred by a sense of urgency and feel ashamed that, in spite of that recollection of the Triple Gem, he could not remain constant. On the other hand, if his endurance persists he will experience happiness. 'Even to this extent, much has been achieved by that monk,' says the Sutta.

Here all the four Elements are treated identically. The concluding section starts by comparing the body and its constituent parts with a house, which is made up of its various components. After that follows an exposition of the conditioned arising of the sixfold perceptual consciousness. In mentioning the five sense-organs and sense-objects as the basic conditions for the arising of five-sense consciousness, the Derived Corporeality is here introduced by means of a prominent part of it, thus completing the treatment of the Corporeal Aggregate. With the state of consciousness

having thus arisen, all five Aggregates are given, and in that way their conjunction can be understood, as well as their dependent origination. And in this connection Sāriputta quotes the Master: 'He who understands Dependent Origination understands the Dhamma; and he who understands the Dhamma understands Dependent Origination.' Desire, inclination and attachment in regard to the Five Aggregates is the Origin of Suffering. Removal of that desire, inclination and attachment is the Cessation of Suffering. And of the monk who has understood this it is said: 'Even to this extent, much has been achieved by that monk.' Thus the exposition is rounded off with the Four Noble Truths. This discourse is indeed like an intricate and beautifully constructed piece of music ending on a solemn and majestic chord.

Another model exposition of the Venerable Sāriputta's is the Sutta on *Right Understanding*.* This is a masterpiece of teaching, which also provides a framework for further elaboration, such as given in the extensive Commentary to it. The Commentary says: 'In the Buddha Word as collected in the five great Nikāyas there is no discourse other than the Discourse on Right Understanding, wherein the Four Noble Truths are stated thirty-two times, and thirty-two times the state of Saintship.' The same Discourse also gives an original exposition of Dependent Origination, with slight, but very instructive, variations. Each factor of Dependent Origination is used, as are also the additional sections, to illustrate the Right Understanding of the Four Noble Truths, the comprehension of which is thus greatly enhanced, broadened and deepened. This Discourse has been widely used for instructional purposes throughout the centuries down to the present day.

* See "Right Understanding." Discourse and Commentary, translated by Soma Thera (Lake House Bookshop, Colombo).

Another of the Venerable Sāriputta's discourses is the *Sama-citta Sutta**, which was listened to by the Devas of 'Tranquil Mind'. It is concerned with the first three stages of Sanctitude, the Stream-winner, the Once-returner and the Non-returner. Its purpose is to clarify the question of their residuum of rebirths, in the Five-sense world or in the Fine-material and Non-material worlds, which depends upon their mode of practice and on the Fetters of Existence still remaining. It is a very short discourse, but had a singular impact on the huge assembly of Devas who, according to tradition, assembled to hear it. It is said that a very large number of them attained Sainthood, and innumerable were those who reached Stream-entry. This discourse of the Venerable Sāriputta is, in fact, counted among the few which had such unusually far-reaching results among beings of the higher worlds; and although it is a very brief text and rather cryptic without the commentarial explanation, it had a high reputation in succeeding centuries. It is the sermon that was preached by the Arahāt Mahinda on the evening of his arrival in Ceylon, and the Mahāvamsa (XIV, 34ff), Ceylon's famous Chronicle, relates that on this occasion, also, numerous Devas listened and achieved penetration of the Dhamma.

The high regard in which the Discourse is held, and the strong impact ascribed to it, may be attributed to the fact that it helps those on the Path to define their position as to the kind of rebirths still to be expected by them. Devas on higher levels of development are sometimes inclined to regard their heavenly status as final, and do not expect to be reborn in the Five-sense world, as may sometimes be the case. The Great Elder's discourse gave them a criterion by which to judge their position. For worldlings still outside

* Anguttara-Nikāya (PTS), Vol. I, 63 (The Twos, No. IV, 5).

the Paths, as well, it must have offered valuable orientation for the direction of their efforts.

The *Sangīti Sutta* ('The Recital') and *Dasuttara Sutta* ('Up to Ten'), two more of the Venerable Sāriputta's sermons, are the last two texts of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*, the collection of Long Discourses. Both these texts are compilations of doctrinal terms, in which a large number of topics is classified as falling into groups of from one to ten members. The reason for bringing the compilation only up to ten may have been that there are only a very few groups of doctrinal terms extending beyond ten members, and these could be supposed to be well known and easily remembered. The *Sangīti Sutta* was preached in the presence of the Buddha, and at its conclusion received his express approval.

While in the *Sangīti* the doctrinal terms are arranged solely in numerical groups of one to ten, in the *Dasuttara Sutta* each of these ten groups has a tenfold subdivision which serves to bring out the practical significance of these groups, for example :

'One thing (1) is of great importance, (2) should be developed, (3) should be fully known, (4) should be abandoned, (5) implies decline, (6) implies progress, (7) is hard to penetrate, (8) should be made to arise, (9) should be directly known, (10) should be realized. What is the one thing of great importance? Heedfulness in salutary things . . .'

These texts must have been compiled at a fairly late period of the Buddha's and the Venerable Sāriputta's life, when there was already in existence a large body of doctrine and carefully transmitted Discourses which required organizing for ready use, and also anthologies of salient features of the Dhamma became a useful aid in a comprehensive study of the Teaching. The *Sangīti Sutta* was delivered at the

time of Nigantha Nātaputta's death, on the date of which, however, scholars differ. It was in fact this event that occasioned the preaching of the Sutta, for it speaks of the dissensions, schisms and doctrinal disagreements that arose among the Jains immediately after the death of their Master, Nigantha Nātaputta, otherwise Mahāvīra. This was taken as a warning example by the Venerable Sāriputta, who in his discourse stresses that this text 'should be recited by all in concord and without dissension, so that the Holy Life should last long for the welfare and happiness of gods and men.' The commentators say that the Sangīti Sutta is meant to convey the 'flavour of concord' (sāmaggi-rasa) in the Teaching, which is strengthened by doctrinal proficiency (desanā-kusalatā).

The practical purpose of the *Dasuttara Sutta* is indicated in the Venerable Sāriputta's introductory verses:

'The Dasuttara (Discourse) I shall proclaim - a teaching for the attainment of Nibbāna and the ending of suffering, the release from all bondage'

*Dasuttaram pavakkhāmi dhammam nibbānappattiyaṃ
dukkhass' antakiriyaṃ sabbaganthapamocanam.*

It seems likely that these two Suttas served as a kind of Index to selected teachings. They may have been useful also to those monks who did not memorize a great many texts; to them they may have been helpful in presenting numerous aspects of the Teaching in a form that was easily memorized and assimilated. Both of these Discourses admirably illustrate the Venerable Sāriputta's concern with the preservation of the Dhamma, and his systematic way of ensuring that it was transmitted intact in all its details. It was for that purpose that he provided 'study aids' such as

these and other discourses, together with works like the *Niddesa*.

A summary of other discourses given by the Venerable Sāriputta is included at the end of this book. We shall now turn to a consideration of larger canonical works attributed to him.

The first is the *Niddesa*, which belongs to the Khuddaka-Nikāya of the Sutta Piṭaka. It is the only work of an exclusively commentarial character included in the Pāli Tripiṭaka. Of its two parts, the *Mahā-Niddesa* is a commentary to the Aṭṭhaka-vagga of the Sutta-Nipāta, while the *Cūla-Niddesa* comments on the Parāyaṇa-vagga and the Khaggavisāna Sutta, likewise of the Sutta-Nipāta.

The Aṭṭhaka-vagga and the Parāyaṇa-vagga are the last two books of the Sutta-Nipāta, and doubtlessly belong to the oldest parts not only of that work but of the entire Sutta-Piṭaka. They were highly appreciated even in the earliest days of the Sangha, and of the Buddhist laity as well, as is testified by the fact that the Udāna records a recital of the Aṭṭhaka-vagga by Soṇa Thera, and the Anguttara-Nikāya a recital of the Parāyaṇa-vagga by the female lay disciple, Nandamātā. On at least five occasions the Buddha himself has given explanations of verses contained in these two parts of the Sutta-Nipāta. Apart from the high esteem in which they were evidently held, the fact that these two verse collections contain numerous archaic words and terse aphoristic sayings makes it understandable that in very early days a commentary on them was composed which was later included in the canonical scriptures. The traditional

attribution of it to the Venerable Sāriputta must be regarded as highly plausible*. It is quite in character with the great Elder's concern with the methodical instruction of Bhikkhus that the Niddesa contains not only word explanations, clarifications of the context and supporting quotations from the Buddha Word, but also material obviously meant for linguistic instruction, such as the addition of many synonyms of the word explained. On this subject, Prof. E. J. Thomas writes as follows :**

‘ . . . the most characteristic feature of the Niddesa . . . consists of a list of synonyms of the words commented on. Such lists are not used to explain the meaning of a word in a particular context. They are repeated in the same form wherever the word occurs and were evidently intended to be learned in the same way as the modern *kos'a* (dictionary) . . . Much of this is also found in the Abhidhamma books, but in the Niddesa it is used as general matter applied to passages for which it was not immediately intended . . . This shows a system for learning the vocabulary of the Canon, and for explaining archaic forms, but no further grammatical teaching occurs apart from the description of certain terms as particles . . . In the Niddesa we thus have direct evidence of a general system of instruction applied to a definite work, consisting of interpretation, doctrinal teaching and the verbal expositions of the beginnings of grammar. The Abhidhamma books and related works like the *Paṭisambhidā-magga* give other traces of its existence. It appears to be this system which is expressly referred to in the Niddessa (I, 234) and other

* The Commentary of the Theragāthā, by Bhadantācariva Dhammapāla, quotes from the Niddesa and attributes it to Sāriputta (Dhamma-enāpati).

** See *Buddhist Education in Pāli and Sanskrit Schools* by E. J. Thomas; in *Buddhist Studies*, ed. by B. O. Law (Calcutta 1931), p. 223ff.

places as the four kinds of analysis (*paṭisambhidā*): the analysis of meanings (*attha*), of conditions (*dhamma*), of grammatical analysis (*nirutti*), and clearness of insight (*paṭibhāna*). The *Nirutti* of the *Niddesa* is of the kind that we should expect to exist when Pāli was a living language. All the grammatical analysis that was required was a knowledge of those words in the Scriptures that had become obsolete, and the explanation of unusual grammatical forms by means of current expressions . . . We can see from its different forms and readings that it underwent changes and received additions, and in the case of a work used continually for instruction this would be inevitable.'

The Venerable Sāriputta states that he attained to the four kinds of analytical knowledge (*paṭisambhidā*) two weeks after his ordination, that is, on attaining Arahathip.* This fact, and the extensive application of *Nirutti-paṭisambhidā*, 'grammatical analysis', in the *Niddesa*, make it quite probable that he was actually the author of both, the *Niddesa* and the *Paṭisambhidā Magga*.

The *Mahā Niddesa* contains also the commentary on the *Sāriputta Sutta* (also called the 'Therapañhā Sutta'), which forms the last text of the *Aṭṭhaka-vagga*. The first part of this text, with verses in praise of the Master and questions put to him, is ascribed to Sāriputta. The *Mahā-Niddesa* explains the opening stanza as referring to the Buddha's return from Tāvātimsa Heaven after he had preached the *Abhidhamma* there. Apart from that it contains only his questions, the essential part of the text being the Buddha's replies.

The *Paṭisambhidā Magga* has the appearance of a manual of higher Buddhist studies, and its range is as broad as that of the mind of its reputed author. At the beginning

* A. II 160; see p. 29.

it presents treatises on 72 types of knowledge (*ñāṇa*) and on the types of wrong speculative views (*diṭṭhi*), both of which show the methodical and penetrative mind of the Venerable Sāriputta. In the Treatise on Knowledge, as well as in other chapters of the work, there are found a large number of doctrinal terms appearing for the first time and only in the *Paṭisambhidā Magga*. It also contains elaborations of terms and teachings that are mentioned only briefly in other and older parts of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. In addition to this, it contains material on meditation of great practical value, as for example on Mindfulness of Breathing,* *Mettā-Bhāvanā* and numerous Insight-exercises. There is also, to give variety to the subject matter, a passage of hymnic character and great beauty, on the Great Compassion of the Tathāgata. Mahānāma Thera of Ceylon, who wrote the *Saddhammappakāsinī*, the commentary to the work, confidently ascribes it to the Venerable Sāriputta, and in the Introductory stanzas gives eloquent praise of the great Elder. In the *Paṭisambhidā Magga* itself, Sāriputta is mentioned twice, once as being one who possesses *Samādhi-vipphāra-iddhi* (in the *Iddhividha-kathā*) and again in the *Mahā-paññā-kathā*, *Solasa-paññā-niddesa*, where it is said: 'Those whose wisdom is equal to that of Sāriputta, they partake to some extent of the Buddha-Knowledge.'

We come now to one of the most important contributions made by the Venerable Sāriputta to Buddhist teaching. According to tradition (e. g. in the *Atthasālinī*), the Buddha preached the *Abhidhamma* in the Tāvātimsa heaven to his mother, Queen Māyā, who had been reborn as Deva in that world. He did this for three months, and when returning daily to earth for his meals, he gave to the

* Translated in "Mindfulness of Breathing" by Nāṇamoli Thera; Kandy Buddhist Publication Society, 1964.

Venerable Sāriputta the 'method' (*naya*) of that portion of Abhidhamma he had preached. The Atthasālini says: 'Thus the giving of the method was to the Chief Disciple, who was endowed with analytical knowledge, as though the Buddha stood on the edge of the shore and pointed out the ocean with his open hand. To the Elder the doctrine taught by the Blessed One in hundreds and thousands of methods became very clear.' Thereafter, the Elder passed on what he had learned to his five hundred disciples.

Further it is said: 'The textual order of the Abhidhamma originated with Sāriputta; the numerical series in the Great Book (Paṭṭhāna) was also determined by him. In this way the Elder, without spoiling the unique doctrine, laid down the numerical series in order to make it easy to learn, remember, study and teach the Law.'

The Atthasālini, the Commentary to the Dhammasaṅgī, also ascribes to Sāriputta the following contributions to the canonical Abhidhamma:

- (a) the 42 Couplets (Dyads; *duka*) of the Suttanta Mātikā, which follows the Abhidhamma Mātikā, both of which preface the seven Abhidhamma books. The 42 Suttanta Couplets are explained in the Dhammasaṅgī, and this likewise has probably to be ascribed to the Elder.
- (b) The fourth and last part of the Dhammasaṅgī, the *Atthuddhāra-kaṇḍa*, the 'Synopsis'.
- (c) The arrangement for the recitation of the Abhidhamma (Vācanamagga), and
- (d) The Numerical Section (gaṇanacāra) of the Paṭṭhāna.

In the Anupada Sutta* the Buddha himself speaks of the Venerable Sāriputta's analysis of meditative consciousness

* Majjh. Nik. No. 111.

into its chief mental concomitants, which the Elder undertook from his own experience, after rising from each of the meditative attainments in succession. This analysis may well be either a precursor or an abridgment of the detailed analysis of Jhāna-consciousness given in the Dhammasaṅgāṇi.

Concerning the Venerable Sāriputta's mastery of the Dhamma, and its exposition, the Buddha had this to say:

‘The Essence of Dhamma (dhammadhātu) has been so well penetrated by Sāriputta, O monks, that if I were to question him therein for one day in different words and phrases, Sāriputta would reply likewise for one day in various words and phrases: And if I were to question him for one night, or a day and a night, or for two days and nights, even up to seven days and nights, Sāriputta would expound the matter for the same period of time, in various words and phrases.’

Nidāna Saṃyutta, No. 32.

And on another occasion the Master employed this simile :

‘If he is endowed with five qualities, O monks, the eldest son of a World-ruling Monarch righteously turns the Wheel of Sovereignty that had been turned by his father. And that Wheel of Sovereignty cannot be overturned by any hostile human being.

What are the five qualities? The eldest son of a World-ruling Monarch knows what is beneficial, knows the Law, knows the right measure, knows the right time and knows the society (with which he has to deal; *parisa*).

Similarly, O monks, is Sāriputta endowed with five qualities and rightly turns the supreme Wheel of

Dhamma, even as I have turned it. And this Wheel cannot be overturned by ascetics, or priests, by deities or Brahma, nor by anyone else in the world.

What are those five qualities? Sāriputta, O monks, knows what is beneficial, knows the Teaching, knows the right measure, knows the right time and knows the assembly (he is to address).'

Anguttara Nikāya, V., 132.

Other Theras were not behind in their appreciation. The Elder Vangīsa, in his encomium in the Theragāthā, verses 1231-3, praises Sāriputta who 'teaches in brief and also speaks in detail,' while in the same compilation other great Elders, Mahā-Kassapa (vv. 1082-3), and Mahā-Moggallāna (vv. 1158; 1176-7; 1182) also give their meed of praise. And the Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna, at the end of Sāriputta's Discourse on Guiltlessness,* uttered these words of tribute to his friend's sermon: 'To (virtuous and earnest) monks who have heard the exposition of the Venerable Sāriputta it will be like food and drink to their ears and mind. How well does he lift up his fellow-monks from what is unwholesome, and confirm them in what is good!'

The relationship in which the two Chief Disciples stood to one another in the matter of teaching was explained by the Buddha when he said:

'Associate, O monks, with Sāriputta and Moggallāna, and keep company with them! They are wise bhikkhus and helpers of their fellow-monks. Sāriputta is like a mother who brings forth, and Moggallāna is like a nurse to what has been brought forth. Sāriputta trains (his pupils) in the Fruition of Stream-entry, and Moggallāna trains them for the Highest Goal.'

* Majjhima Nikāya, No. 5.

‘Sāriputta is able to expound the Four Noble Truths in detail, to teach them and make them intelligible, to proclaim, reveal and explain them, and make them clear.’

Majjh. 141. Sacca-vibhanga Sutta.

And in the Anguttara Nikāya (II, 131):

‘A monk of faith, O bhikkhus, should cherish this right aspiration: “Oh, may I become such as Sāriputta and Moggallāna!” For Sāriputta and Moggallāna are the model and standard for my bhikkhu-disciples.’

That the Venerable Sāriputta’s great reputation as a teacher of the Dhamma long survived him, to become a tradition among later Buddhists, is shown by the concluding passages of the *Milinda-pañha*, written some three hundred years later. There, King Milinda compares Nāgasena Thera to the Venerable Sāriputta, saying: ‘In this Buddha’s Dispensation there is none other like yourself for answering questions, except the Elder Sāriputta, the Marshal of the Law.’

That grand reputation still lives today, upheld by the cherished teachings of the Great Disciple, preserved and enshrined in some of the oldest books of Buddhism alongside the words of his Master.

The Elder’s Relatives

As we have already seen, the Venerable Sāriputta was born into a Brahmin family of Upatissa Village (or Nālaka), near Rājagaha, his father’s name being Vaganta and his

mother's, Sāri. He had three brothers: Cunda, Upasena and Revata, and three sisters named Cālā, Upacālā and Sīsūpacālā. All six took ordination and attained Arahatsip.

Cunda was known by the name Samañuddesa, meaning 'The Novice' in the Sangha, even after becoming a bhikkhu; this was to distinguish him from the Elder Mahā-Cunda. At the time of Sāriputta's death, Cunda was his attendant and it was he who informed the Buddha of his passing away, bringing with him the Chief Disciple's relics. The story is told in the Cunda Sutta, an outline of which will be given elsewhere in this book.

Upasena, who came to be known as Vagantaputta, or 'Son of Vaganta', as 'Sāriputta' is 'Son of Sāri', was said by the Buddha to be foremost among those of all-pleasing deportment (*samantappāsādika*). He died of snake bite, as is related in the *Salāyatana Saṃyutta*, *Vagga 7, Sutta 7*.

Revata was the youngest of the brothers, and their mother, wishing to prevent his seeking ordination, had him married when he was a very young boy. But on the wedding day he saw the grandmother of his future wife, an old woman of 120, stricken with all the signs of decrepitude. At once he became disgusted with worldly life. Escaping from the wedding procession by a ruse, he fled to a monastery and was ordained. In later years he was on his way to see the Buddha when he stopped at a forest of acacia trees (*khadīra-vana*), and while spending the rainy season there he attained Arahatsip. After that he became known as Revata Khadīravaniya—'Revata of the Acacia Forest'. The Buddha distinguished him as being the foremost among forest dwellers.

The three sisters, Cālā, Upacālā and Sīsūpacālā, wishing to follow their brother's example, became nuns after their

marriage. In marriage, each of them had a son who was named after his mother Cālā (or Cālī) and so on. These three sons were also ordained, being received as novices by Revata Khadīravaniya. Their good conduct was praised by the Venerable Sāriputta, who met them when he went to see his youngest brother who was ill. This is recorded in the Commentary to the Theragāthā, v. 42.

Cālā, Upacālā and Sīsupacālā as nuns are said to have been approached by Māra with taunting and tempting questions, to which they gave excellent replies. These are recorded in the Therī-gāthā and Bhikkhuni-Saṃyutta.

In contrast to all these, Sāriputta's mother was a staunch Brahmin and hostile to the Buddha's Teaching and his followers. In the Commentary to the Dhammapada (v. 400) it is related that once, when the Venerable Sāriputta was in his own village of Nālaka with a large retinue of monks, he came to his mother's house in the course of his alms round. His mother gave him a seat and served him with food, but while she did so she uttered abusive words: 'Oh, you eater of others' leavings!' she said. 'When you fail to get leavings of sour rice-gruel you go from house to house among strangers, licking the leavings off the backs of ladles! And so it was for this that you gave up eighty crores of wealth and became a monk! You have ruined me! Now go on and eat!'

Likewise, when she was serving food to the monks, she said: 'So! You are the men who have made my son your page boy! Go on, eat now!'

Thus she continued reviling them, but the Venerable Sāriputta spoke not a word. He took his food, ate it and in silence returned to the monastery. The Buddha learned of the incident from the Venerable Rāhula, who had been among the monks at the time. All the Bhikkhus who heard

of it wondered at the Elder's great forbearance, and in the midst of the assembly the Buddha praised him, uttering the stanza :

‘He that is free from anger, who performs his duties
faithfully,
 He that guards the Precepts and is free from lust;
 He that has subdued himself, he that wears his
last body,—
 He It is I call a Brahmin.’

It was not until right at the close of Sāriputta's life that he was able to convert his mother; that story will be told later on. But the incident that has been related here leads us to a consideration of the great Elder's most pleasing characteristics, his humility, patience and forbearance.

The Unresentful

It is the neighbourhood of Jetavana, where the Buddha is residing. Some men are in a group, talking about the noble qualities of the Elder Sāriputta. ‘Such great patience has our noble Elder,’ they are saying, ‘that even when people abuse him and strike him, he feels no trace of anger.’

‘Who is this that never gets angry?’ The question is from a Brahmin, a holder of false views. And when they tell him, ‘it is our Elder, Sāriputta,’ he retorts: ‘It must be that nobody has ever provoked him.’

‘That is not so, Brahmin,’ they reply. ‘Well then, I will provoke him to anger.’ ‘Provoke him to anger if you can!’ ‘Leave it to me,’ says the Brahmin. ‘I know just what to do to him.’

The Venerable Sāriputta enters the city on his round for alms. Approaching him from behind, the Brahmin strikes him a tremendous blow on the back. 'What was that?' says the Venerable Sāriputta; and without so much as turning to look, he continues on his way.

The fire of remorse leaps up in every part of the Brahmin's body. Prostrating himself at the Elder's feet he begs for pardon. 'For what?' asks the Elder, mildly. 'To test your patience I struck you,' the penitent Brahmin replies. 'Very well, I pardon you.'

'Reverend Sir,' the Brahmin says, 'If you are willing to pardon me, hereafter please take your food only at my house.' With these words he takes the Elder's alms bowl, which the Elder willingly yields, and leading him to his house, serves him with food.

But those who saw the assault are enraged. They gather at the Brahmin's house, armed with sticks and stones, to kill him. When the Venerable Sāriputta emerges, accompanied by the Brahmin carrying his bowl, they cry: 'Reverend Sir, order this Brahmin to turn back!'

'Why, lay disciples?' asks the Elder. They answer: 'The man struck you. We are going to give him what he deserves!'

'But what do you mean? Was it you, or me, he struck?'

'It was you, Reverend Sir.' 'Well, if it was me he struck, he has begged my pardon. Go your ways.' And so, dismissing the people and permitting the Brahmin to return, the great Elder calmly takes his way to the monastery.

This incident, recorded in the Dhammapada Commentary, was the occasion of the Buddha's uttering the verses 389 and 390 of the Dhammapada, which are among those that give the Buddha's definition of what constitutes a

Brahmin, that is to say, rectitude of conduct rather than birth or rank.

Let none strike a Brahmin;
Let no Brahmin return a blow.
Shame on him that strikes a Brahmin !
More shame on the Brahmin who returns the blow !
Not small is the gain to a Brahmin
Who restrains his mind from what is dear;
As fast as the will to injure wanes
So fast indeed does suffering decline.

Dhammapada, vs. 389, 390.

The Venerable Sāriputta's humility was as great as his patience. He was willing to receive correction from anyone, not only with submission but with gratitude. It is told in the Commentary to the Devaputta Samyutta, Susima Sutta, that once, through a momentary negligence, a corner of the Elder's under-robe was hanging down, and a seven-year-old novice, seeing this, pointed it out to him. The Venerable Sāriputta stepped aside at once and arranged the garment in the proper equally-circular way. Then he stood before the novice with folded hands, saying: 'Now it is correct, teacher!' *

There is a reference to this incident in the 'Questions of Milinda', where these verses are ascribed to the Venerable Sārlputta:

“One who this very day, at the age of seven, has
gone forth —
If he should teach me, I accept it with (bended) head,

* A slightly different version of this is found in the Commentary to the Theragāthā where it deals with Sāriputta's verses.

At sight of him, I give him ardent zeal and regard.
 With respect may I again and again set him in the
 teacher's place!"

On one occasion the Buddha mildly reproved Sāriputta for not having carried his teaching far enough. When the Brahmin Dhānañjāni was on his deathbed he was visited by the Venerable Sāriputta. The Elder, reflecting that Brahmins are bent on the Brahma-world (or 'union with Brahma') taught the dying man the way to it through the Brahma-viharas. As a result, it is said, the Brahmin was in fact reborn there.

When the Venerable Sāriputta returned from the visit, the Master asked him: 'Why, Sāriputta, while there was more to do, did you set the Brahmin Dhānañjāni's thoughts on the inferior Brahma-world, and then rising from your seat, leave him?' The Venerable Sāriputta replied: 'I thought: These Brahmins are bent on the Brahma-world. Should I not show the Brahmin Dhānañjāni the way to the communion with Brahma?'

'The Brahmin Dhānañjāni has died, Sāriputta,' said the Buddha, 'and he has been reborn in the Brahma-world.'

This story, which is found in the Dhānañjāni Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya (97), is interesting as an illustration of the undesirability of rebirth in an inferior Brahma-world for one who is capable for bringing rebirth entirely to an end. For while the Buddha himself sometimes showed only the way to Brahma, as for example in the Tevijjā-Sutta, it seems probable that in the case of Dhānañjāni the Master saw that he was fit to receive a higher teaching, while the Venerable Sāriputta, lacking the capacity of knowing other's hearts (Lokiya-abhiñña), was not able to discern that fact. The result is that Dhānañjāni will spend an incalculable period in

the Brahma-world and will have to take human birth again before he can achieve the goal.

The Venerable Sāriputta received another gentle reproof when, having asked the Buddha why it was that the Sāsana of some of the Buddhas of the past did not last very long, and the Buddha had replied that it was because those Enlightened Ones did not preach very much Dhamma, did not lay down regulations for the disciples, nor institute the recital of the Pāṭimokkha, Sāriputta said that it was now time for the Blessed One to promulgate the regulations and to recite the Pāṭimokkha, so that the Holy Life might last for a long period. The Buddha said: 'Let it be, Sāriputta! The Tathāgata himself will know the time for it. The Master will not lay down regulations for the disciples nor recite the Pāṭimokkha until signs of corruption have appeared in the Sangha.'*

The disciple's concern that the Sāsana should endure as long as possible is characteristic of Sāriputta; equally characteristic was it of the Buddha that he did not wish to lay down regulations until such time as it was absolutely necessary to do so. He went on to explain that at that time the least-advanced member of the Sangha was a Sotāpanna (perhaps a fact of which the Venerable Sāriputta was not aware), and therefore it was not yet necessary to lay down the rules of the Bhikkhu-life.

The Cātumā Sutta** records another occasion when the great Elder was admonished by the Master. A large number of monks, newly-ordained, as the Commentary tells us, by the Venerable Sāriputta and Maha-Moggallāna, had come with the latter to pay their respects to the Buddha for the first time. On arrival they were allotted quarters and

* Pārājika Pāli, Introductory chapter.

** Majjhima Nikāya, 67.

started chatting with the resident monks of Cātumā. Hearing the noise, the Buddha summoned the resident monks to question them about it, and was told that the commotion was caused by the new arrivals. The text does not say that the visiting monks were present at the time, but they must have been, for the Buddha addressed them with the words: 'Go away, monks. I dismiss you. You should not stay with me.'

The newly ordained monks left, but some persons intervened in their behalf and they were allowed to return.

The Buddha then said to the Venerable Sāriputta: 'What did you think, Sāriputta, when I dismissed that group of monks?'

The Venerable Sāriputta replied: 'I thought: The Blessed One wishes to remain unconcerned and to abide in the state of Happiness Here-and-now; so we too shall remain unconcerned and abide in the state of Happiness Here-and-now.'

'Hold, Sāriputta! Do not allow such a thought ever to arise in you again!' the Buddha said. Then, turning to Mahā-Moggallāna, he put the same question.

'When the Blessed One dismissed those monks,' replied Maha-Moggallāna, 'I thought: The Blessed One wishes to remain unconcerned and to abide in the state of Happiness Here-and-now. Then I and the Venerable Sāriputta should now look after the community of monks.'

'Well spoken, Moggallāna, well spoken!' said the Master. 'It is either myself or Sāriputta or Moggallāna who should look after the community of monks.'

The Sutta account is lacking in certain details which would place the story in the proper light necessary for an understanding of all its implications, but it is possible that

since the monks who had been dismissed were pupils of Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna, the Elder wished to show his displeasure with them and to indicate by his aloofness that they had behaved badly.

Once, when the Buddha was residing at Jetavana, the Venerable Sāriputta was the victim of a false accusation. It so happened that at the end of the rains the Elder took leave of the Master and departed with his own retinue of monks on a journey. A large number of monks also took leave of Sāriputta, and in dismissing them he addressed those who were known by their personal and family names, by those names. Among them there was a monk who was not known by his personal and family name, but a strong desire arose in him that the Chief Disciple should address him by those names in taking his departure.

In the great throng of monks, however, the Venerable Sāriputta did not give him this distinction, and the monk was aggrieved. 'He does not greet me as he does the other monks,' he thought, and conceived a grudge against Sāriputta. At the same time it chanced that the hem of the Elder's robe brushed against him, and this added to his grievance. He approached the Buddha and complained: 'Lord, the Venerable Sāriputta, doubtless thinking to himself, "I am the Chief Disciple," struck me a blow that almost damaged my ear. And having done that without so much as begging my pardon, he set out on his journey.'

The Buddha summoned Sāriputta into his presence. Meanwhile, the Venerable Maha-Moggallāna and the Venerable Ānanda, knowing that a calumny was about to be exposed, summoned all the monks, convoking an assembly. 'Approach, Venerable Sirs!' they called. 'When the Venerable Sāriputta is face to face with the Master, he will

roar the roar of a lion!'

And so it came about. When the Master questioned the great Elder, instead of denying the charge he said: 'O Lord, one who is not firmly established in the Contemplation of the Body with regard to his body, such a one may be able to hurt a fellow monk and leave without apologising.' Then followed the Venerable Sāriputta's lion's roar. He compared his freedom from anger and hatred with the patience of the earth which receives all things, clean and unclean; his tranquillity of mind to a bull with severed horns, to a lowly Caṇḍāla youth, to water, fire and wind, and to the removal of impurity; he compared the oppression he felt from his own body to the oppression of snakes and corpses, and the maintenance of his body to that of fatty excrescences. In nine similes he described his own virtues, and nine times the great earth responded to the words of truth. The entire assembly was moved by the majestic force of his utterance.

As the Elder proclaimed his virtues, remorse filled the monk who had unjustly traduced him. Immediately, he fell at the feet of the Blessed One, admitting his slander and confessing his fault. Thereupon the Buddha said: 'Sāriputta, pardon this deluded man, lest his head should split into seven pieces.' Sāriputta's reply was: 'Venerable Sir, I freely pardon this venerable monk.' And, with joined palms, he added, 'May this venerable monk also pardon me if I have in any way offended him.'

In this way they were reconciled. The other monks were filled with admiration, saying: 'See, Bretheren, the surpassing goodness of the Elder! He cherishes neither anger nor hatred against this lying, slanderous monk!'

*A 'Lion's Roar' (Siha-nada) is a weighty and emphatic utterance, made with assurance.

Instead, he crouches before him, stretches his hands in reverence, and asks his pardon.'

The Buddha's comment was: 'Bhikkhus, it is impossible for Sāriputta and his like to cherish anger or hatred. Sāriputta's mind is like the great earth, firm like a gate post, like a pool of still water,

'Unresentful like the earth, firm like a gate post,
With mind like a clear pool, such is the virtuous man
For whom the round of births exists no more.'*

Another incident of this nature, in the Early Sangha, did not end so happily, for the calumniator refused to admit his fault. He was a monk named Kokālika, who approached the Buddha with a slander against the two Chief Disciples 'Sāriputta and Moggallāna have bad intentions, O Lord!' he said. 'They are in the grip of evil ambition.'

The Master replied: 'Do not say so, Kokālika! Do not say so! Have friendly and trustful thoughts towards Sāriputta and Moggallāna! They are of good behaviour, and lovable!'

But the misguided Kokālika paid no heed to the Buddha's words. He persisted with his false accusation, and soon after that his whole body became covered with bolls, which continued to grow until eventually he died of his illness.

This incident was well-known. It is recorded in the following places in the Sutta-piṭaka: Brahma-Samyutta No. 10; Sutta-Nipāta, Mahāvagga No. 10; Anguttara Nikāya V. 170, and Takkāriya Jātaka (No. 481). A comparison of these two incidents reveals the importance of penitence. Neither the Venerable Sāriputta nor Mahā-Moggallāna bore the monk

* Dhammapada, v. 95,

Kokālika any ill-will for his malice, and his apologies, had he offered them, would have made no difference to the attitude of the two Chief Disciples. But they would have benefited the erring monk himself, averting the consequences of his bad Kamma. Evil rebounds upon those who direct it towards the innocent, and so Kokālika was judged and punished by himself, through his own deeds.

The Life of Sāriputta

PART III

The Further Shore

The last debt paid

We now come to the year of the Master's Parinibbāna. The Blessed One had spent the rainy season at Beluva village,* near Vesālī, and when the Retreat was over he left that place and, going by the way he had come, returned by stages to Sāvattthī and arrived at the Jeta Grove Monastery.

There the Elder Sāriputta, the Marshal of the Law, paid homage to the Blessed One and went to his day quarters. When his own disciples had saluted him and left, he swept the place and spread his leather mat. Then, having rinsed his feet, he sat down cross-legged and entered into the state of the Fruition Attainment of Arahatsip.

At the time predetermined by him, he arose from the meditation, and this thought occurred to him: 'Do the Enlightened Ones have their final passing away first, or the Chief Disciples?' And he saw that it is the Chief Disciples who pass away first: Thereupon he considered his own life-force, and saw that its residue would sustain him only for another week.

He then considered: 'Where shall I have my final passing away?' And he thought: 'Rāhula finally passed away among the deities of the Thirty-three, and the Elder Kondañña 'The Knower' at the Chaddanta Lake.** Where, then, will be my place?'

* See Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, Ch. II (*Last Days of the Buddha*, 'The Wheel' No 67/69, p.26). It was during his stay at Beluva that the Master fell gravely ill.

** In the Himālaya.

While thinking this over repeatedly he remembered his mother, and the thought came to him: 'Although she is the mother of seven Arahats* she has no faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Has she the supportive conditions in her to acquire that faith, or has she not?'

Investigating the matter he discerned that she had the supportive condition for the Path-Intuition (abhisamaya) of Stream-entry. Then he asked himself: 'Through whose instruction can she win to the Penetration of Truth?'

And he saw that not through anyone else's, but only through his own instruction in the Dhamma, could it come about. And following upon that came the thought: 'If I now remain indifferent, people will say: "Sāriputta has been a helper to so many others; on the day, for instance, when he preached the Discourse to the Deities of Tranquil Mind, a large number of Devas attained Arahathship, and still more of them penetrated to the first three Paths; and on other occasions there were many who attained to Stream-entry, and there were thousands of families who were reborn in heavenly worlds after the Elder had inspired them with joyous confidence in the Triple Gem. Yet despite this, he cannot remove the wrong views of his own mother!" Thus people may speak of me. Therefore I shall free my mother from her wrong views, and shall have my final passing away in the very chamber where I was born.'

Having made that decision, he thought: 'This very day I shall ask the Master's permission and then leave for Nālaka.' And, calling the Elder Cunda, who was his attendant, he said: 'Friend Cunda, please ask our group of five hundred bhikkhus to take their bowls and robes, for I wish to go to Nālaka'. And the Elder Cunda did as he was bidden.

* Sāriputta himself and his younger brothers and Sisters. See p. 54

The bhikkhus put their lodgings in order, took their bowls and robes, and presented themselves before the Elder Sāriputta. He, for his own part, had tidied up his living quarters and swept the place where he used to spend the day. Then, standing at the gate, he looked back at the place, thinking: 'This is my last sight of it. There will be no more coming back.'

Then, together with the five hundred bhikkhus he went to the Blessed One, saluted him and spoke: 'May, O Lord, the Blessed One permit, may the Exalted One consent: the time of my final passing away has come, I have relinquished the life-force.'

'Lord of the World, O greatest Sage!
From life I soon shall be released.
Going and coming no more shall be;
This is the last time that I worship thee.

Short is the life that now remains to me;
But seven days from now, and I shall lay
This body down, throwing the burden off.

Grant it, O Master! Give permission, Lord!
At last for me Nibbāna's time has come,
Relinquished have I now the will to live.'

Now, says the text, if the Enlightened One were to have replied, 'You may have your final passing away,' hostile sectarians would say that he was speaking in praise of death; and if he had replied, 'Do not have your final passing away,' they would say that he extolled the continuation of the round of existence. Therefore the Blessed One did not speak in either way, but asked: 'Where will your final passing away take place?'

The Venerable Sāriputta replied: 'In the Magadha

country, in the village called Nālaka, there in the chamber of my birth shall I finally pass away.'

Then the Blessed One said: 'Do Sāriputta, what you think timely. But now your elder and younger bretheren in the Sangha will no longer have the chance to see a bhikkhu like you. Give them once more a discourse on Dhamma.'

The great Elder then gave a discourse, displaying all his wondrous powers; rising to the loftiest heights of truth, descending to mundane truth, rising again and again descending, he expounded the Dhamma directly and in symbols. And when he had ended his discourse he paid homage at the feet of the Master. Embracing his legs, he said: 'So that I might worship these feet I have fulfilled the Perfections throughout an aeon and a hundred thousand kalpas. My heart's wish has found fulfilment. From now on there will be no more contact or meeting; severed now is that intimate connection. The City of Nibbāna, the unageing, undying, peaceful, blissful, heat-assuaging and secure, which has been entered by many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas—I too shall enter it now.

'If any deed or word of mine did not please you, O Lord, may the Blessed One forgive me! It is now time for me to go.'

Now once before, the Buddha had answered this, when he said: 'There is nothing, be it in deeds or words, wherein I should have to reproach you, Sāriputta. For you are learned, Sāriputta, of great wisdom, of broad and bright, quick, keen and penetrative wisdom.'*

So now he made answer in the same way. 'I forgive you, Sāriputta,' he said. 'But there was not a single word or deed of yours that was displeasing to me. Do now, Sāriputta, what you think timely.'

* Vangisa Sāmy. No. 7.

From this we see that on those few occasions when the Master seemed to reproach his Chief Disciple, it was not that he was displeased with him in any way, but that rather he was pointing out another approach to a situation, another way of viewing a problem.

Immediately after the Master had given his permission and the Venerable Sāriputta had risen from paying homage at his feet, the Great Earth cried out, and with a single huge tremor shook to its watery boundaries. It was as though the Great Earth wished to say: 'Though I bear these girdling mountain ranges with Mount Meru, the encircling mountain walls (cakkavāla) and the Hīmavant, I cannot sustain on this day so vast an accumulation of virtue!' And mighty thunder split the heavens, a vast cloud appeared and heavy rain poured down.

Then the Blessed One thought: 'I shall now permit the Marshal of the Law to depart.' And he rose from the seat of the Law, went to his Perfumed Cell and there stood on the Jewel Slab. Three times the Venerable Sāriputta circumambulated the Cell, keeping it to his right, and paid reverence at four places. And this thought was in his mind: 'An aeon and a hundred thousand kalpas ago it was, when I fell down at the feet of the Buddha Anomadassi and made the aspiration to see you. This aspiration has been realized, and I have seen you. At the first meeting it was my first sight of you; now it is my last, and there will be none in the future.' And with raised hands joined in salutation he departed, going backwards until the Blessed One was out of sight. And yet again the Great Earth, unable to bear it, trembled to its watery boundaries.

The Blessed One then addressed the bhikkhus who surrounded him. 'Go, bhikkhus,' he said. 'Accompany your elder brother.' At these words, all the four assemblies

of devotees at once went out of the Jeta Grove, leaving the Blessed One there alone. The citizens of Sāvattthi also, having heard the news, went out of the city in an unending stream carrying incense and flowers in their hands; and with their hair wet (the sign of mourning), they followed the Elder lamenting and weeping.

The Venerable Sāriputta then admonished the crowd, saying: 'This is a road that none can avoid,' and asked them to return. And to the monks who had accompanied him, he said: 'You may turn back now! Do not neglect the Master!'

Thus he made them go back, and with only his own group of disciples he continued on his way. Yet still some of the people followed him, lamenting 'Formerly our Venerable went on journeys and returned. But this is a journey without return!' To them the Elder said: 'Be heedful, friends! Of such nature, indeed, are all things that are formed and conditioned!' And he made them turn back.

During his journey the Venerable Sāriputta spent one night wherever he stopped, and thus for one week he favoured many people with a last sight of him. Reaching Nālaka village in the evening, he stopped near a banyan tree at the village gate. It happened that at the time a nephew of the Elder, Uparevata by name, had gone outside the village and there he saw the Venerable Sāriputta. He approached the Elder, saluted him, and remained standing.

The Elder asked him: 'Is your grand-aunt at home?' 'Yes, Venerable Sir,' he replied. 'Then go and announce our coming,' said the Elder. 'And if she asks why I have come, tell her that I shall stay in the village for one day, and ask her to prepare my birth chamber and provide lodgings for five hundred bhikkhus.'

Uparevata went to his grand-aunt and said: 'Grand-aunt, my uncle has come.' 'Where is he now?' she asked. 'At the village gate.'

'Is he alone, or has someone else come with him?'

'He has come with five hundred bhikkhus.'

And when she asked him, 'Why has he come?' he gave her the message the Elder had entrusted to him. Then she thought: 'Why does he ask me to provide lodgings for so many? After becoming a monk in his youth, does he want to be a layman again in his old age?' But she arranged the birth chamber for the elder and lodgings for the bhikkhus, had torches lit and then sent for the Elder.

The Venerable Sāriputta then, accompanied by the bhikkhus, went up to the terrace of the house and entered his birth chamber. After seating himself, he asked the bhikkhus to go to their quarters. They had hardly left, when a grave illness, dysentery, fell upon the Elder, and he felt severe pains. When one pail was brought in, another was carried out. The Brahmin lady thought: 'The news of my son is not good,' and she stood leaning by the door of her own room.

And then it happened, the text tells us, that the Four Divine Kings asked themselves: 'Where may he now be dwelling, the Marshal of the Law?' And they perceived that he was at Nālaka, in his birth chamber, lying on the bed of his Final Passing Away. 'Let us go for a last sight of him,' they said.

When they reached the birth chamber, they saluted the Elder and remained standing.

'Who are you?' asked the Elder.

'We are the Great Divine Kings, Venerable Sir.'

'Why have you come?'

‘We want to attend on you during your illness.’

‘Let it be!’ said the Venerable Sāriputta. ‘There is an attendant here. You may go.’

When they had left, there came in the same manner Sakka the king of the Gods, and after him, Mahā Brahmā, and all of them the Elder dismissed in the same way.

The Brahmin lady, seeing the coming and going of these deities, asked herself: ‘Who could they have been, who came and paid homage to my son, and then left?’ And she went to the door of the Elder’s room and asked the Venerable Cunda for news about the Elder’s condition. Cunda conveyed the inquiry to the Elder, telling him: ‘The Great Upāsikā (lay devotee) has come.’

The Venerable Sāriputta asked her: ‘Why have you come at this unusual hour?’

‘To see you, dear,’ she replied. ‘Tell me, who were those who came first?’

‘The Four Great Divine Kings, Upāsikā.’

‘Are you, then, greater than they?’ she asked.

‘They are like temple attendants,’ said the Elder. ‘Ever since our Master took rebirth they have stood guard over him with swords in hand.’

‘After they had left, who was it that came then, dear?’

‘It was Sakka, King of the Gods.’

‘Are you then greater than the King of the Gods, dear?’

‘He is like a novice who carries a bhikkhu’s belongings,’ answered Sāriputta. ‘When our Master returned from the Heaven of the Thirty-three (Tāvātimsa), Sakka took his bowl and robe and descended to earth together with him.’

‘And when Sakka had gone, who was it that came after him, filling the room with his radiance?’

‘Upāsikā, that was your own Lord and Master, the Great Brahmā.’

‘Then are you greater, my son, even than my Lord, the Great Brahmā?’

‘Yes, Upāsika. On the day when our Master was born, it is said that four Great Brahmās received the Great Being in a golden net.’

Upon hearing this, the Brahmin lady thought: ‘If my son’s power is such as this, what must be the majestic power of my son’s Master and Lord?’ And while she was thinking this, suddenly the fivefold rapture arose in her, suffusing her entire body.

The Elder thought: ‘Rapture and joy have arisen in my mother. Now is the time to preach Dhamma to her.’ And he said: ‘What was it you were thinking about, Upāsikā?’

‘I was thinking,’ she replied, ‘if my son has such virtue, what must be the virtue of his Master?’

The Venerable Sāriputta answered: ‘At the moment of my Master’s birth, at his Great Renunciation (of worldly life), on his attaining Enlightenment and at his first turning of the Dhamma Wheel,—on all these occasions the ten-thousand world system quaked and shook. None is there who equals him in virtue, in concentration, in wisdom, in deliverance and in the knowledge and vision of deliverance.’ And he then explained to her in detail the words of homage: ‘Such indeed is that Blessed One... (Iti pi so Bhagavā...). And thus he gave her an exposition of the Dhamma, basing it on the virtues of the Buddha.

When the Dhamma talk given by her beloved son had come to an end, the Brahmin lady was firmly established in the Fruition of Stream-entry, and she said: ‘Oh, my dear Upatissa, why did you act like that? Why, during all these

years, did you not bestow on me this Ambrosia (the knowledge of the Deathless)?'

The Elder thought: 'Now I have given my mother, the Brahmin lady Rūpa-Sārī, the nursing-fee for bringing me up. This should suffice.' And he dismissed her with the words: 'You may go now, Mahā-Upāsika.'

When she was gone, he asked: 'What is the time now, Cunda?'

'Venerable Sir, it is early dawn.'

And the Elder said: 'Let the community of bhikkhus assemble.'

When the bhikkhus had assembled, he said to Cunda: 'Lift me up to a sitting position, Cunda.' And Cunda did so.

Then the Elder spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: 'For forty-four years I have lived and travelled with you, my bretheren. If any deed or word of mine was unpleasant to you, forgive me, bretheren!'

And they replied: 'Venerable Sir, not the least displeasure has ever come from you to us, who followed you inseparably like your shadow. But may you, Venerable Sir, grant forgiveness to us!'

After that the Elder gathered his large robe around him, covered his face and lay down on his right side. Then, just as the Master was to do at his Mahā-Parinibbāna, he entered into the nine successive attainments of meditation, in forward and reverse order, and beginning again with the first Absorption he led his meditation up to the fourth Absorption. And at the moment after he had entered it, just as the crest of the rising sun appeared over the horizon, he utterly passed away, into the Nibbāna-element which is without any remnant of clinging.

And it was the full-moon day of the month Kattika, which by the solar calendar is between October and November.

The Brahmin lady in her room, thought: 'How is my son? He does not say anything.' She rose, and going into the Elder's room she massaged his legs. Then, seeing that he had passed away, she fell at his feet, loudly lamenting: 'O my dear son! Before this, we did not know of your virtue. Because of that, we did not gain the good fortune to have seated in this house, and to feed, many a hundred bhikkhus! We did not gain the good fortune to have built many monasteries!' And she lamented thus up to sunrise.

As soon as the sun was up, she sent for goldsmiths and had the treasure room opened and had the pots full of gold weighed on a large scale. Then she gave the gold to the goldsmiths with the order to prepare funeral ornaments. Columns and arches were erected, and in the centre of the village the Upāsikā had a pavilion of heart-wood built. In the middle of the pavilion a large, gabled structure was raised, surrounded by a parapet wall of golden arches and columns. Then they began the sacred ceremony, in which men and deities mingled.

After the great assembly of people had celebrated the sacred rites for a full week they made a pyre with many kinds of fragrant woods. They placed the body of the Venerable Sāriputta on the pyre and kindled the wood with bundles of Usīra roots. Throughout the night of the cremation the concourse listened to sermons on the Dhamma. After that the flames of the pyre were extinguished by the Elder Anuruddha with scented water. The Elder Cunda gathered together the relics and placed them in a filter cloth.

Then the Elder Cunda thought: 'I cannot tarry here any longer. I must tell the Fully-Enlightened One of the Final Passing Away of my elder brother, the Venerable Sāriputta, the Marshal of the Law.' So he took the filter cloth with the relics, and the Venerable Sāriputta's alms bowl and robes, and went to Sāvattī, spending only one night at each stage of the journey.

These are the events related in the Commentary to the Cunda Sutta of the Satipaṭṭhāna-Saṃyutta, with additions from the parallel version in the Commentary to the Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta. The narrative is taken up in the *Cunda Sutta* which follows.

Cunda Sutta *

Once the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattī, in Anāthapiṇḍika's park. At that time the Venerable Sāriputta was at Nālaka village in the Magadha country, and was sick, suffering, gravely ill. The Novice Cunda** was his attendant.

And the Venerable Sāriputta passed away finally through that very illness. Then the Novice Cunda took the alms bowl and robes of the Venerable Sāriputta and went to Sāvattī, to the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's park. There he betook himself to the Venerable Ānanda and, having saluted him, seated himself at one side. Thus seated, he

* Satipaṭṭhāna-Saṃyutta, No. 23.

** Cunda Samanuddesa. Comy: 'He was the Venerable Sāriputta's younger brother. Before he received Higher Ordination the Bhikkhus used to call him 'Novice Cunda', and even when he was an Elder he was still so addressed.' (See p. 54).

spoke to the Venerable Ānanda, saying: Venerable Sir, the Venerable Sāriputta has had his final passing away. These are his bowl and robes.'

'On this matter, Cunda, we ought to see the Blessed One. Let us go, friend Cunda, and meet the Master. Having met him, we shall acquaint the Blessed One with that fact.'

'Yes, Venerable Sir,' said the Novice Cunda.

They went to see the Blessed One, and having arrived there and saluted the Master, they seated themselves at one side. Then the Venerable Ānanda addressed the Blessed One:

'O Lord, the Novice Cunda has told me this: "The Venerable Sāriputta has had his final passing away. These are his bowl and robes." Then, O Lord, my own body became weak as a creeper; everything around became dim and things were no longer clear to me, when I heard about the final passing away of the Venerable Sāriputta.'

'How is this, Ānanda? When Sāriputta had his final passing away, did he take from you your portion of virtue, or your portion of concentration, or your portion of wisdom, or your portion of deliverance, or your portion of the knowledge and vision of deliverance?'

'Not so, Lord. When the Venerable Sāriputta had his final passing away he did not take my portion of virtue... concentration...wisdom...deliverance, or my portion of the knowledge and vision of deliverance. But, O Lord, the Venerable Sāriputta has been to me a mentor, a teacher and instructor, one who rouses, inspires and gladdens, untiring in preaching Dhamma, a helper of his fellow monks. And we remember how vitalizing, enjoyable and helpful his Dhamma instruction was.'

‘Have I not taught you aforetime, Ānanda, that it is the nature of all things near and dear to us that we must suffer separation from them, and be severed from them? Of that which is born, come to being, put together, and so is subject to dissolution, how should it be said that it should not depart? That, indeed, is not possible. It is, Ananda, as though from a mighty hardwood tree a large branch should break off so has Sāriputta now had his final passing away from this great and sound community of bhikkhus. Indeed, Ānanda, of that which is born, come to being, put together, and so is subject to dissolution, how should it be said that it should not depart? This, indeed, is not possible.

‘Therefore, Ānanda, be ye an island unto yourself, a refuge unto yourself, seeking no external refuge; with the Teaching as your island, the Teaching your refuge, seeking no other refuge.’

The Commentary takes up the narrative thus:

The Master stretched forth his hand, and taking the filter with the relics, placed it on his palm and said to the monks:

‘These, O monks, are the shell-coloured relics of the bhikkhu who, not long ago, asked for permission to have his final passing away. He who fulfilled the Perfections for an incalculable aeon and a hundred thousand kalpas, - this was that bhikkhu. He who helped me in turning the Wheel of the Law that was first turned by me, - this was that bhikkhu. He who obtained the seat next to me, - this was that bhikkhu. He who, apart from me, had none to equal him in wisdom throughout the whole ten-thousandfold universe, - this was that bhikkhu. Of great wisdom was this bhikkhu, of broad wisdom, bright wisdom, quick wisdom, of penetrative wisdom was this bhikkhu. Few wants had this bhikkhu; he was contented, bent on seclusion, not fond

of company, full of energy, an exhorter of his fellow monks, censuring what is evil. He who went forth into homelessness, abandoning the great fortune obtained through his merits in five hundred existences, - this was that bhikkhu. He who, in my Dispensation, was patient like the earth, - this was that bhikkhu. Harmless like a bull whose horns had been cut, - this was that bhikkhu. Of humble mind like a Candāla boy, - this was that bhikkhu.

‘See here, O monks, the relics of him who was of great wisdom, of broad, bright, quick, keen and penetrative wisdom; who had few wants and was contented, bent on seclusion, not fond of company, energetic, - see here the relics of him who was an exhorter of his fellow monks, who censured evil!’

Then the Buddha spoke the following verses in praise of his Great Disciple:

To him who in five times a hundred lives
Went forth to homelessness, casting away
Pleasures the heart holds dear, from passion free,
With faculties controlled, - now homage pay
To Sāriputta who has passed away !

To him who, strong in patience like the earth,
Over his own mind had absolute sway,
Who was compassionate, kind, serenely cool,
And firm as earth withal, - now homage pay
To Sāriputta who has passed away !

Who, like an outcast boy of humble mind,
Enters the town and slowly wends his way
From door to door with begging-bowl in hand,
Such was this Sāriputta; —homage pay
To Sāriputta who has passed away !

One who in town or jungle, hurting none,
 Lived like a bull whose horns are cut away,
 Such was this Sāriputta, who had won
 Mastery of himself;—then homage pay
 To Sāriputta who has passed away!

* * *

When the Blessed One had thus lauded the virtues of the Venerable Sāriputta, he asked for a Stupa to be built for the relics.

After that, he indicated to the Elder Ānanda his wish to go to Rājagaha. Ānanda informed the monks, and the Blessed One, together with a large body of bhikkhus, journeyed to Rājagaha. At the time he arrived there, the Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna had also had his final passing away. The Blessed One took his relics likewise, and had a Stupa raised for them.

Then he departed from Rājagaha, and going by stages towards the Ganges, he reached Ukkacela. There he went to the bank of the Ganges, and seated with his following of monks he preached the Ukkacela Sutta, on the Parinibbāna of Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna.

Ukkacela Sutta *

Once the Blessed One was dwelling in the Vajji country, at Ukkacela on the bank of the river Ganges, not long after Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna had passed away. And at that time the Blessed One was seated in the open, surrounded by the company of monks.

* Satipaṭṭhāna-Saṃyutta No. 24.

The Blessed One surveyed the silent gathering of monks, and then spoke to them, saying:

‘This assembly, O bhikkhus, appears indeed empty to me, now that Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna have passed away. Not empty, for me, is an assembly, nor need I have concern for a place where Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna dwell.

‘Those who in the past have been Holy Ones, Fully-Enlightened Ones, those Blessed Ones, too, had such excellent pairs of disciples as I had in Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna. Those who in the future will be Holy Ones, Fully-Enlightened Ones, those Blessed Ones too will have such excellent pairs of disciples as I had in Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna.

‘Marvellous it is, most wonderful it is, bhikkhus, concerning those disciples, that they will act in accordance with the Master’s Dispensation, will act according to his advice; that they will be dear to the Four Assemblies, will be loved, respected and honoured by them. Marvellous it is, most wonderful it is, bhikkhus, concerning the Perfect Ones, that when such a pair of disciples has passed away there is no grief, no lamentation on the part of the Perfect One.

‘For of that which is born, come to being, put together, and so is subject to dissolution, how should it be said that it should not depart? That, indeed, is not possible,

‘Therefore, bhikkhus, be ye an island unto yourselves, a refuge unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Teaching as your island, the Teaching your refuge, seeking no other refuge.’

And with that profound and deeply moving exhortation, which echoes again and again through the Buddha's teaching up to the time of his own final passing away, ends the story of the youth Upatissa who became the Master's Chief Disciple, the beloved 'Marshal of the Law.' The Venerable Sāriputta died on the full-moon day of the month Kattikā, which begins in October and ends in November of the solar calendar. The death of Mahā-Moggallāna followed a half-month later, on the Uposatha of the New Moon.* Half a year later, according to tradition, came the Parinibbāna of the Buddha himself.

Could such an auspicious combination of three great personages, so fruitful in blessings to gods and men, have been brought about purely by chance? We find the answer to that question in the *Milinda Pañhā** where Nāgasena says:

'In many hundred thousands of births, too, Sire, the Elder Sāriputta was the Bodhisatta's father, grandfather, uncle, brother son, nephew or friend.'**

So the weary round of becoming, which linked them together in time, came at last to its end; time which is but the succession of fleeting events became for them the Timeless, and the round of birth and death gave place to the Deathless. And in their final lives they kindled a glory that has illumined the world. Long may it continue to do so.

* This is according to the Commentary to the Ukkacela Sutta.

** *Milinda's Questions* tr. by I. B. Horner, Vol. I, p. 295 — See also the chapter "Sāriputta in the Jātakas". (Part V of this book).

PART IV

Discourses of Sariputta

The Suttas attributed to the Venerable Sāriputta cover a wide range of subjects connected with the Holy Life, from simple morality up to abstruse points of doctrine and meditational practice. A list of them, together with a brief description of the subject matter of each, is given below. Their arrangement in the Sutta Piṭaka does not give any indication of the chronological order in which they were delivered. Some few, however, contain references to particular events which make it possible to assign to them a period in the Buddha's ministry. One such is the Anāthapiṇḍika Sutta, preached just before the great lay disciple's death.

MAJJHIMA - NIKAYA

No. 3: *Heirs of Dhamma (Dhammadāyāda Sutta)*

After the Buddha had discoursed on Heirs of Dhamma and Heirs of Worldliness and had then retired into his cell, the Venerable Sāriputta addresses the monks on how they should conduct themselves, and how not, when the Master goes into seclusion. They likewise should cultivate seclusion, should reject what they are told to give up, and should be modest and lovers of solitude. He concludes by speaking on the evil of the sixteen defilements of mind* and says that the Middle Way by which they can be eradicated is the Noble Eightfold Path.

* See 'The Simile of the Cloth' (M. 7), in The Wheel No. 61/62, p. 12.

No. 5: *Guiltfree (Anangana Sutta)*

On four types of persons: those who are guilty of an offence and know it, and those who are guilty and unaware of it; those who are guiltless and know it, and those who are guiltless and unaware of it. The first of each pair is said to be the better one of the two, and the reason is explained. This discourse shows the importance of self-examination for moral and spiritual progress.

No. 9: *Right Understanding (Sammā-diṭṭhi Sutta)*

Summary on p. 40

No. 28: *The Greater Discourse on the Elephant-footprint Simile (Mahā-Hatthi padopama Sutta)*

Summary on p. 42

No. 43: *The Greater Discourse on Explanations (Mahā-vedalla Sutta)*

The Elder answers a number of questions put by the Venerable Mahā-Koṭṭhita, who was foremost in Analytical Knowledge. Sāriputta matches the excellence of the questions with the clarity and profundity of his answers. The questions and answers extend from analytical examination of terms, through the position of Wisdom and Right Understanding to subtle aspects of meditation.

No. 69: *Discourse to Gulissāni (Gulissāni Sutta)*

On the conduct and Dhamma-practice to be followed by a forest-dwelling monk. Questioned by the Venerable Mahā-Moggallāna, the Elder confirms that the same duties apply also to monks living in the vicinity of towns and villages.

No. 97: *Discourse to Dhānañjāni (Dhānañjāni Sutta)*

The Venerable Sāriputta explains to the Brahmin Dhānañjāni that the multifarious duties of a layman are no excuse for wrong moral conduct, nor do they exempt one from painful consequences of such conduct in a future existence.

Later, when Dhānañjāni was on his deathbed he requested the Elder to visit him, and the Venerable Sāriputta spoke to him, on the Way to Brahma through the Brahma-vihāras. The Buddha mildly reproached the Elder for not having led Dhānañjāni to a higher understanding. (See p. 59).

No. 114: *To be Practised and Not to be Practised (Sevitabbā-sevitabba Sutta)*

The Venerable Sāriputta elaborates upon brief indications given by the Buddha on what should be practised, cultivated or used, and what should not. This is shown with regard to threefold action in deed, word and thought; in relation to mental attitudes and views, the six sense objects and the monk's requisites.

No. 143: *Discourse to Anāthapiṇḍika (Anāthapiṇḍika Sutta)*

The Venerable Sāriputta is called to Anāthapiṇḍika's deathbed and admonishes him to free his mind from any attachment whatsoever, beginning with the six sense organs:

‘Thus should you train yourself, householder: “I shall not cling to the eye, and my consciousness will not attach itself to the eye.” Thus, householder, should you train yourself.’ This is repeated in full for each of the other five sense organs, the six sense objects, the sixfold consciousness, sixfold contact, sixfold feeling

born of contact; the six elements, the five Aggregates, the four Incorporeal Jhānas, and concludes with detachment from this world and all other worlds; detachment from all things seen, heard, sensed and thought, from all that is encountered, sought and pursued in mind.

In short, detachment should be practised as to the entire range of experience, beginning with what for a dying person will be his immediate concern: his sense faculties and their function.

This call for detachment, drawing ever wider circles and repeating the same mighty chord of thought, must have had a deeply penetrating impact and a calming, liberating, even cheering influence on the dying devotee's mind. This was what Sāriputta, the skilled teacher, obviously intended. And in fact his words had that impact because our text says that Anāthapiṇḍika was moved to tears by the loftiness of the discourse, one in profundity unlike any he had ever heard before. Anāthapiṇḍika passed away soon after, and was reborn as a deity in Tusita Heaven.

DĪGHA - NIKĀYA

No. 28: Faith-inspiring Discourse (Sampasādanīya Sutta)

An eloquent eulogy of the Buddha by Sāriputta, spoken in the Buddha's presence and proclaiming the peerless qualities (anuttariya) of His teaching. It is an expression and at the same time a justification of Sāriputta's deep confidence in the Buddha. It may be regarded as complementary to Sāriputta's 'Lion's Roar'

which forms the first section of the discourse and is repeated in the Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta.*

No. 33: *Doctrinal Recitation (Sangīti Sutta)* and

No. 34: *Tenfold Series Discourse (Dasuttara Sutta)*
See p. 44f.

ANGUTTARA - NIKĀYA

Roman figures denote the number of the Book (nipāṭa) and arabic figures the number of the Sutta. The division of the suttas in the Anguttara-Nikāya is only numerical.

- II, 37: *Samacitta-Sutta*. On the Stream-winner, the Once-returner and the Non-returner, and on what determines the places of the rebirths they have still before them. See p. 43.
- III, 21: On another classification of Noble Persons (Ariya-puggala): the Body-witness (kāyasakkhi), the one attained to Right Understanding (diṭṭhippatto) and the one Liberated through Faith (saddhā-vimutto).
- IV, 79: Sāriputta asks the Buddha why the enterprises of some people fail, those of others succeed, and those of others even surpass their expectations. The Buddha replies that one of the reasons is generosity, or lack of it, shown to ascetics, priests and monks.
- IV, 156: On four qualities indicative of loss or maintenance of wholesome states of mind.

Here it is said that if one finds in oneself four qualities one can know for certain that one has lost

* See The Wheel No, 67/69, p. 9 f.

- wholesome qualities, and that this is what has been called deterioration by the Blessed One. These four are: excessive greed, excessive hate, excessive delusion and lack of knowledge and wisdom concerning the diverse profound subjects (relating to wisdom).

f, on the other hand, one finds in oneself four other qualities, one can know for certain that one has not lost one's wholesome qualities, and that this is what has been called progress by the Blessed One. These four other qualities are: attenuated hate, attenuated delusion and the possession of knowledge and wisdom concerning the diverse profound subjects (relating to wisdom).

IV, 167 f: The four Types of Progress on the Path. See p. 23.

IV, 171: Sāriputta elaborates a brief statement made by the Buddha on the four forms of personalized existence (*attabhāva*) and puts an additional question. The Buddha's reply to it was later elaborated by Sāriputta in the *Samacitta Sutta* (see above).

IV, 172: Sāriputta states that he attained to the fourfold Analytical Knowledge (*paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*) two weeks after his ordination (i. e., at his attainment of *Arahatta*). He appeals to the Buddha for confirmation. See p. 38.

IV, 173: Discussion with Mahā-Koṭṭhita on the limits of the explainable. The Venerable Sāriputta says: 'As far, brother, as the six Bases of Sense-impression (*phassāyatana*) reach, so far reaches the (explainable) world of diffuseness (*papañca*); and as far as the world of diffuseness reaches, so far reach the

six Bases of Sense-impression. Through the entire fading away and cessation of the six Bases of Sense-impression, the world of diffuseness ceases and is stilled.'

IV, 175: On the need of both Knowledge and Right Conduct (vijjācaraṇa) for the ending of suffering.

IV, 179: On the reasons for obtaining, and not obtaining, Nibbāna in the present life.

V, 165: Five reasons why people ask questions: through stupidity and foolishness; with evil intentions and through covetousness; with a desire to know; out of contempt; with the thought: 'If he answers my question correctly, it is good; if not, then I shall give the correct answer.'

V, 167: On how to censure fellow-monks.

VI, 14-15: Causes of a monk's good or bad dying.

VI, 41: Sāriputta explains that a monk with supernormal powers may, if he so wishes, regard a tree trunk merely as being solid, or as liquid, fiery (calorific) or airy (vibratory), or as being either pure or impure (beautiful or ugly), because all these elements are to be found in the tree.

VI, 66: On respect and reverence. Sāriputta says that these are helpful in overcoming what is unwholesome and developing what is wholesome: that is respect and reverence towards the Master, the Teaching, the Community of Monks, the training, meditation, heedfulness (appamāda) and towards the spirit of kindness and courtesy (paṭisanthāra). Each of

these factors is said to be a condition of the one following it.

- IX, 6: On the two things needful to know about people, robes, almsfood, lodging, villages, towns and countries; that is, whether one should associate with them, use them, or live in them, or whether one should not.
- IX, 11: A second 'Lion's Roar' of Sāriputta, uttered in the Master's presence on the occasion of a monk's false accusation; with nine similes proclaiming his freedom from anger, detachment from the body, and his inability to hurt others. See p. 63.
- IX, 13: A discussion with the Venerable Mahā-Koṭṭhita about the purpose of living the Holy Life.
- IX, 14: The Venerable Sāriputta questions the Venerable Sāmidhhi about the essentials of the Dhamma and approves of his answers.
- IX, 26: This text illustrates the Venerable Sāriputta's scrupulous fairness even towards antagonists. He corrects a statement attributed to Devadatta which was probably wrongly formulated by one of Devadatta's followers who reported it to Sāriputta. Later, Sāriputta speaks to that monk on the fully developed and steadfast mind, which is not shaken by even the most attractive sense impressions.
- IX, 34: On Nibbāna, which is described as happiness beyond feelings.
- X, 7: Sāriputta describes his meditations, during which he had only the single perception that 'Nibbāna is

the ceasing of existence.' See p. 37.

- X, 65: To be reborn is misery; not to be reborn is happiness.
- X, 66: To have delight in the Buddha's Teaching and Discipline is happiness; not to have delight in them is misery.
- X, 67-68: Causes of progress and decline in the cultivation of what is salutary.
- X, 90: On the ten powers of a canker-free Arahant that entitle him to proclaim his attainment.

SAMYUTTA - NIKĀYA

Nidāna-Samyutta

- 24: Sāriputta rejects the alternatives that Suffering is produced either by oneself or by another, and explains the conditioned arising of Suffering through the (sixfold sense-) contact (phassa).
- 25: The same is stated with regard to both happiness and suffering (sukha-dukkha).
- 31: On the conditioned arising of existence from nutriment.
- 32: *Kalāra Sutta*: Questioned by the Buddha, Sāriputta says that the knowledge inducing him to declare his attainment of Arahantship was that he knew: the cause of Birth being extinct, the result, i. e., future birth becomes extinct. Hence he was able to say, in the words of the stock formula declaring Arahantship: 'Extinct is birth.....'

(khīṇā jāti). He then replies to further questions of the Buddha about the cause and origin of Birth, Becoming and the other terms of Dependent Origination, leading up to Feeling, the contemplation of which had served the Venerable Sāriputta as the starting-point for his attainment of Arahantship. He says that, as he sees impermanence and suffering in all three kinds of feeling, there is in him no arising of any hedonic gratification (nandi).

Khandha-Samyutta

1: Sāriputta explains in detail the Buddha's saying: 'Even if the body is ill, the mind should not be ill.'

2: Monks going to distant border districts are instructed by Sāriputta on how to answer questions posed to them by non-Buddhists. He tells them that the removal of desire for the Five Aggregates is the core of the Teaching.

122-123: On the importance of reflecting on the Five Aggregates. If one who possesses virtue (or, in Text 123, learning) contemplates the Five Aggregates as impermanent, bound up with suffering and void of self, he may be able to attain to Stream-entry. If a Stream-winner, Once-returner or Non-returner thus contemplates, he may be able to win to the next higher stage. An Arahant should also contemplate the Five Aggregates thus, as it will conduce to his happiness here and now, as well as to mindfulness and clear comprehension.

126: On ignorance and knowledge.

Sāriputta-Saṃyutta

- 1-9: In these nine texts Sāriputta speaks of his having developed all nine meditative attainments; i. e., from the first jhāna up to the Cessation of Perception and Feeling; and states that in doing so he was always free of any self-affirmation. See p. 37.
- 10: Once, at Rājagaha, after the almsround the Venerable Sāriputta was taking his food near a wall. A female ascetic called Sucimukhī (Bright-face) approached him and asked whether when eating he turned to one or other of the directions, as done by some non-Buddhist ascetics. Sāriputta denied it for every one of the directions, explaining them in his own way as being several means of livelihood that are wrong for ascetics, such as geomancy, astrology, going errands, etc. He said that he did not turn to any of those wrong directions, but sought his almsfood in the right manner; and what he had thus obtained righteously, that he would eat. Sucimukhī was deeply impressed, and thereafter went from street to street and place to place loudly proclaiming: 'The Sakya ascetics take their food righteously! They take their food blamelessly! Please give almsfood to the Sakya ascetics!'

Salāyatana-Saṃyutta

- 232: Not the senses and their objects, but the desire for them is the fetter that binds to existence.

* Sāriputta's method of teaching in this discourse invites comparison with the Buddha's in the Sigālovāda Sutta (Digha-Nikāya, 31).

Jambukhādaka-Saṃyutta

Sāriputta replies to questions put by his nephew, Jambukhādaka, who was a Paribbājaka, i. e. , a non-Buddhist ascetic :

- 1-2: He defines Nibbāna and Arahantship as the elimination of Greed, Hatred and Delusion.
- 3-16: He replies to questions about those who proclaim Truth; about the purpose of the Holy Life; about those who have found true solace. He explains Feeling, Ignorance, the Taints, Personality, etc., and speaks on what is difficult in the Buddha's Doctrine and Discipline.

Indriya-Saṃyutta

- 44: Questioned by the Buddha, Sāriputta says that not out of faith in Him, but from his own experience he knows that the Five Spiritual Faculties (Confidence, etc.) lead to the Deathless.
- 48-50: On the Five Spiritual Faculties. (These texts are translated in 'The Wheel' No. 65/66, 'The Way of Wisdom', pp. 47f, 49f.)

Sotāpatti-Saṃyutta

- 55: On the four conditioning factors of Stream-entry (sotāpattiyaṅga).

PART V

Sariputta in the Jatakas

As might be expected, the Venerable Sāriputta makes frequent appearances in the jātakas, the stories of the Buddha's previous lives. In these, the Bodhisatta and Sāriputta assume various roles; in some existences we find Sāriputta as the teacher and the Bodhisatta as pupil, as for example in the Susīma (163), Cūla-Nandiya (223), Sīlavimamsa (305), Kārandiya (356) and Mahā Dhammapāla (447) Jātakas. In the last-mentioned Jātaka, however, the Bodhisatta, as pupil, gives his teacher, Sāriputta, a valuable lesson: not to give the Five Precepts indiscriminately to those who have no desire to accept them nor the intention to observe them.

In several births Sāriputta appears as a human being and the Bodhisatta an animal. Some examples are the Cūla-Nandiya Jātaka (223), the Romaka Jātaka (277), where Sāriputta, as a wise ascetic, instructs a partridge, the Bodhisatta, the Bhojājaniya Jātaka (23) and the Dummedha Jātaka (122);

In other stories the roles are reversed, as in the Jarudapāna (256) and Kuṇḍakakucchi-Sindhava (254) Jātakas (for the latter, see below), where Sāriputta is an animal and the Bodhisatta human. Sometimes, as in the Kurunga-miga Jātaka (206), both are animals.

The following are summaries of Jātakas in which the Venerable Sāriputta's previous personalities appear.

Lakkhaṇa Jātakā (11): As the wise one of two brother-stags, each leader of a herd, Sāriputta brings his herd safely back to the hills from a dangerous track, while his foolish brother (Devadatta) loses his whole herd.

Bhojājaniya Jātaka (23): The Bodhisatta is a superb war-steed, while Sāriputta is a knight entrusted with the task of capturing seven hostile kings. He succeeds, thanks to the endurance and sacrificing spirit of the steed.

Visavanta Jātaka (69): Sāriputta is a snake which refuses to suck back its poison from a man bitten by it, preferring death. This Jātaka was told when Sāriputta, the Great Disciple, gave up the eating of meal cakes, which he enjoyed, and never went back on his resolution.

Parosahassa Jātaka (99): Sāriputta, as pupil of a hermit teacher, is able to understand short, enigmatic sayings. A comment on his penetrative mind.

Dummedha Jātaka (122): Sāriputta, as a king of Benares, is able to appreciate excellence when he sees it. The Bodhisatta is a superb white elephant. Devadatta, as king of Magadha, had owned that elephant but lost it through jealousy.

Rājovāda Jātaka (151): Sāriputta and Mahā Moggallāna are both charioteers of powerful kings. Meeting one another on a narrow road, each expects the other to give way, and they decide the issue by proclaiming the virtues of their respective monarchs. Sāriputta, whose king is the Bodhisatta, wins the contest by showing that his master's virtue is superior: he is not only good to those who are good, he is good to the bad as well.

Alīnacitta Jātaka (156): Sāriputta, as an elephant, shows the virtue of gratitude.

Kurungamiga Jātaka (206): Sāriputta as a woodpecker, and Mahā Moggallāna as a tortoise save the life of the Bodhisatta, who is an antelope, from a hunter (Devadatta).

Later, the woodpecker saves the imprisoned tortoise.

Cūla-Nandiya Jātaka (223): As a wise Brahmin teacher, Sāriputta advises his pupil, Devadatta, not to be harsh, cruel and violent, but his exhortation is in vain.

Kuṇḍakakucchi-Sindhava Jātaka (254): Sāriputta, as a wondrous horse owned by the Bodhisatta, a horse-dealer, benefits an impoverished old woman who had owned the horse previously.

Jarudapāna Jātaka (256): Sāriputta, as a Nāga king, helps the Bodhisatta, a merchant, to transport some treasure which the latter had found.

Vyaggha Jātaka (272): In a former life as a Yakkha, the monk Kokālika could not live together with Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna, nor could he live without them.

Romaka Jātaka (277): Sāriputta, as a wise ascetic, instructs a partridge, the Bodhisatta.

Abbhantara (281) and *Supatta* (292) *Jātakas*: Incidents of Sāriputta's last life. Rāhula, whose mother is a Bhikkhuni, requests the Venerable Sāriputta to get sugared mango juice as a medicine for her flatulence, which he does. In (292), for another illness of hers, the Venerable Sāriputta procures rice cooked with ghee and flavoured with red fish (*rohita-maccha*).

Sayha Jātaka (310): Ānanda, as a king, sends his courtier, Sayha (Sāriputta) to a friend of his youth (the Bodhisatta) who had become an ascetic, asking him in vain to return and be the court Brahmin.

Khantivādi Jātaka (313): When the Bodhisatta was a wise

ascetic, the Preacher of Patience (*Khantivādi*), and was tortured by King Kālābu (Devadatta), Sāriputta was that king's Commander-in-Chief of the army. Sāriputta bandaged the Bodhisatta's wounds.

Mamsa Jātaka (315): Sāriputta was a hunter and the Bodhisatta a merchant's son. Addressing the hunter as 'friend,' and winning him over with kind words, the Bodhisatta persuaded him to give up his cruel profession.

Vaṇṇaroḥa Jātaka (361): In their last lives, when the Great Disciples Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna were living in solitude, a beggar who attended on them and ate the remnants of their food, tried to set them at variance, but failed. Each of them just smiled at the calumnies and told him to go away. The *Jātaka* relates that the same had happened in an earlier life when the beggar was a jackal and Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna were a lion and a tiger.

Koṭṭisimbali Jātaka (412): Sāriputta, as a king of the Garuḍas (*supaṇṇa-rājā*) saves a tree which was the home of a tree spirit, the Bodhisatta.

Kaṇha-Dīpāyana Jātaka (444): Sāriputta is the ascetic Āṇi-Maṇḍaviya. Impaled by the king on a false accusation, he bears the torture patiently and without resentment, knowing it to be the result of past evil kamma. The Bodhisatta is his brother-ascetic, Kaṇha-Dīpāyana, who in an Act of Truth confesses that all throughout he has lived the ascetic life unwillingly, except for the first week.

Mahā-Paduma Jātaka (472): Sāriputta, as a hill spirit, saves the life of the Bodhisatta, who is Prince Mahā-Paduma.

APPENDIX

A Note on the Relics of Sariputta and Maha-Moggallana

On Sānchi Hill in Bhopal are the remains of ten stūpas which are among the oldest buildings still standing in India. By their architectural features and sculpture they have always been recognised as belonging to the high noon of Buddhist art, the characters in which their numerous inscriptions are written placing them at about the period of Asoka; that is, some time around the middle of the third century B. C. Some are in good preservation, whilst others have been reduced in the course of centuries to mere mounds of earth and stone.

It was in one of these, the now famous Third Stūpa, that Sir Alexander Cunningham discovered the sacred Body Relics of the Buddha's Chief Disciples, Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna, in 1851. At about the same time, more relics of the two great Arahats were found in a stūpa at Satadhāra, about six miles distant from Sānchi.

On sinking a shaft in the centre of the Stūpa on Sānchi Hill Cunningham came upon a large stone slab, upwards of five feet in length, lying in a direction from north to south. Beneath the slab were found two boxes of grey sandstone, each with a brief inscription in Brahmi characters on the lid. The box to the south was inscribed '*Sāriputasa*', '(Relics) of Sāriputta,' while that to the north bore the legend '*Mahā-Mogallānasa*,' '(Relics) of Mahā Moggallāna'.

The southernmost box contained a large flat casket of white steatite, rather more than six inches broad and three inches in height. The surface was hard and polished and the box, which had been turned on a lathe, was a beautiful piece of workmanship. Around this casket were

some fragments of sandalwood believed to have been from the funeral pyre, while inside it, besides the Relic, various precious stones were found. This casket contained a single Bone Relic of the Venerable Sāriputta, not quite one inch in length.

The stone box to the north enclosed another steatite casket, similar to that of Sāriputta but slightly smaller and with a softer surface. Inside it were two Bone Relics of the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, the larger of them being something less than half an inch in length.

Each of the two steatite caskets had a single ink letter inscribed on the inner surface of the lid: 'Sā' for Sāriputta on the southern and 'Mā', for Mahā-Moggallāna on that to the north. In Cunningham's words, 'Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna were the principal followers of the Buddha, and were usually styled his right and left hand disciples. Their ashes thus preserved after death the same positions to the right and left of Buddha which they had themselves occupied in life.* This is explained by the fact that the Buddha customarily sat facing east.

In the stūpa at Satadhāra, one of a group which Cunningham noted was called locally '*Buddha Bhīṭā*' or 'Buddha Monuments', he discovered two caskets of pale mottled steatite. These were inscribed, like those at Sānchi, '*Sāriputasa*' and '*Mahā Mogalānasa*' respectively. This stūpa showed signs of having been violated by robbers, but the Bone Relics had been left undisturbed. Cunningham, who seems to have been a very capable archaeologist, has left a detailed account of everything his excavations brought to light in these and other stūpas, and it is thanks to him that the authenticity of the Relics is established beyond all doubt.

* Bhilsa Topes, p. 300.

The Relics from both stūpas were removed to England and placed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, but some discrepancies between Cunningham's description of the caskets and the actual boxes in which the Relics were deposited gives reason to believe that he, or someone else, transferred the Relics from Sānchi to the caskets discovered at Satadhāra, and what became of the Sānchi steatite caskets is not known for certain.

The Sacred Relics were preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum until 1939, when the Mahā Bodhi Society approached the British government with a request that they be returned to India. The request was at once granted, but owing to the outbreak of the second World War in that year, the actual transfer was delayed for reasons of safety until Feb. 24th 1947. On that date they were handed over to the representatives of the Mahā Bodhi Society at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and so began their journey back to the land of their origin.

Before being restored to India, however, the Relics were taken to Ceylon, where they were received with great honour and amid general rejoicing. For two and a half months in 1947. they were displayed for public worship at the Colombo Museum, where it has been estimated that well over two million people paid homage to them. It is said* that not only Buddhists but Hindus, Christians and Muslims joined in paying reverence to them.

The next stage of their journey to the new Vihāra that was being erected for their re-enshrinement at Sānchi, was Calcutta. There the Relics were displayed for public homage at the Dharmarājika Vihāra, headquarters of the Mahā Bodhi Society of India. The same scenes of religious devotion were enacted there. Every day for two weeks an unbroken

* *The Cynosure of Sānchi*, p. 28.

stream of people filed past the shrine where the Relics were exposed, from morning until late evening. Most of the devotees were Hindus, but there was also a large number of Muslims among them, and the reverence shown by all was a deeply impressive sight. Many had come from distant parts to pay their respects to the remains of these great sons of India.

Next came a request from Burma that the Relics should be taken for exposition there. This was readily granted. The reception given to them in that country revived all the pomp and religious fervour of ancient times. In order that everyone in Burma should be given an opportunity of worshipping them, the Relics were conducted on a riverine tour along the Irrawaddy from Mandalay to Rangoon. The steamer that conveyed them was escorted by boats decorated in traditional Burmese style, and at every town along the river the Relics were taken ashore in procession for worship at the chief pagoda. At the same time religious meetings were held, drawing vast crowds of people from the adjacent villages to hear - sermons and the recitation of Suttas, which usually continued all through the night.

Subsequently, at the request of the respective governments the Relics were taken for exposition to Nepal and Ladakh.

After they were returned to India the Burmese government asked that a portion of the Sacred Relics should be given to Burma. The Maha Bodhi Society of India agreed to this, and the then Prime Minister of Burma went in person to Calcutta to receive them. They were ceremonially transferred to him on the 20th October, 1950. The portion allotted to Burma was afterwards enshrined in the Kaba Aye Zedi (World Peace Pagoda), built on the site of the Sixth Great Buddhist Council, close to Rangoon. The elaborate

ceremonies connected with the crowning of the pagoda and the installation of the Relics lasted from the 5th to 11th of March, 1952,

Another portion was given to Ceylon, to be enshrined in a new stupa built by the Maha Bodhi Society of Ceylon to receive them. At the time of writing, they are housed in the temple of the Maha Bodhi Society, Colombo, awaiting the completion of the building.

On the 30th November 1952 the remaining Relics were duly enshrined at Sanchi on completion of the new Chetiya-giri Vihara built to receive them. There they remain, objects of the deepest veneration to pilgrims from every Buddhist country, and a lasting reminder of the lives of those in whom the Buddha's Teaching bore its finest fruit.

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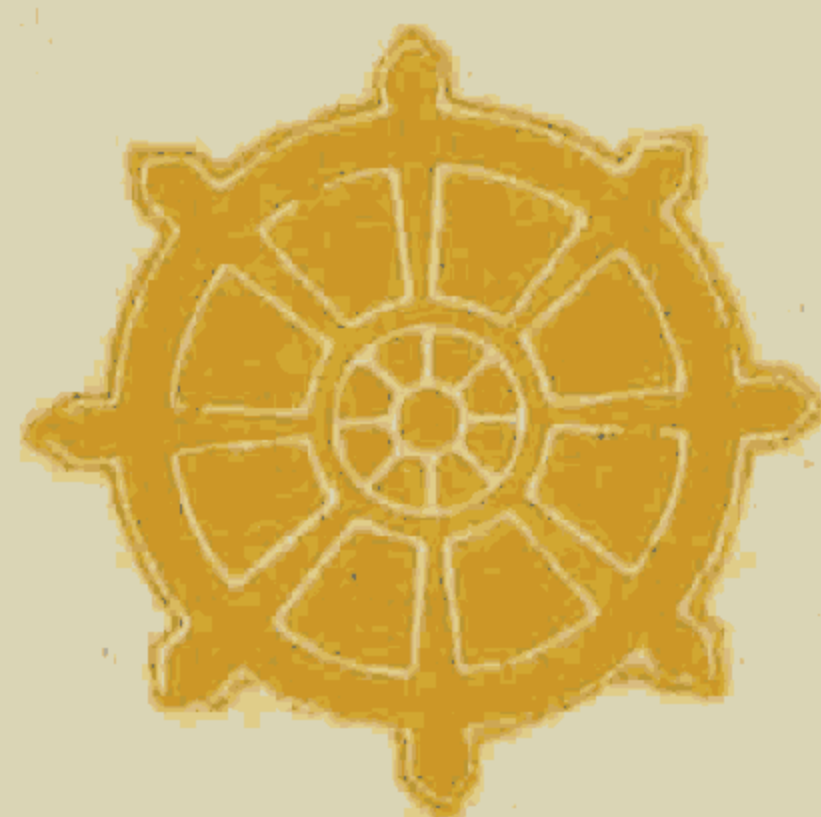
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from the Majjhima Nikaya

The Greater Discourse on the
Elephant-Footprint Simile



The Wheel Publication No. 101

**The Greater Discourse on the
ELEPHANT – FOOTPRINT SIMILE**

From the Majjhima Nikāya

**With Introduction and Notes
edited by**

Nyanaponika Thera

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
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Introduction

THE Greater Discourse on the Elephant-footprint Simile (*Mahā-hatthipadopama Sutta** is the 28th Sutta of the Majjhima-Nikāya (Middle Collection).** This Discourse was spoken by the great chief disciple of the Buddha, the Venerable Sāriputta, whose wisdom, it is said, was surpassed only by that of the Buddha Himself.

It may well have been intended as a formal recognition of that fact when the Master chose the Venerable Sāriputta to repeat to the monks the gist of His first discourse, the Sermon of Benares, in which the Four Noble Truths were for the first time proclaimed to humanity. Sāriputta's version of it is recorded in the Discourse called 'Analysis of the Truths' (*Sacca-vibhaṅga Sutta*; *Majjh*, 141).

How profoundly the Great Elder had understood the vast range of these Four Noble Truths*** is illustrated by the Discourse translated in the following pages. To impress upon his hearers the all-comprehensive scope of the Four Noble Truths, the Venerable Sāriputta begins by comparing these Truths with the great footprint of the elephant, which can encompass the foot mark of

* The 'Lesser Discourse' was spoken by the Buddha. A translation of it has been published in the series '*Bodhi Leaves*' No. B5 (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy).

** On this Discourse see also 'The Life of Sāriputta', by Nyana-ponika Thera (The Wheel No. 90/92), p. 40f.

*** See 'The Four Noble Truths', by Francis Story (The Wheel No. 34/35).

any smaller being. Similarly, the Four Noble Truths comprise, as the Elder says, all that is beneficial; i.e., all that is truly worth knowing and following after. This he illustrates by making explicit some of the insights contained in the Truths and the practical conduct deriving from those insights.

The way in which the two great strands of the Teaching, Knowledge (*viññā*) and Conduct (*caraṇa*), are subtly interwoven in the development of the theme is characteristic of this Discourse, and of the Great Elder's mastery of exposition. It is shown how, from a detailed meditative analysis of the four elements of matter can issue the challenge and the strength to stand firm in personal afflictions, and how such afflictions can be made the starting-point of liberating Insight (*vipassanā*).

In a wide sweep, the impermanence of the physical elements is shown in this tiny body of ours as well as in the cataclysmic destruction of our planet caused by these very elements. If the significance of that universal impermanence is fully comprehended, any concern with anger, fear or self-assertion will be seen as quite incongruous. It will vanish; and the mind thus become unperturbed will be able to view all factors of any given situation in their true light – as conditioned and transient phenomena. (§ 11).

Situations of adversity are then taken as a reminder of the Three Gems, the Buddha, His Teaching and the Community; and the recollection of them serves to arouse a sense of urgency to maintain or to recover the equanimity of mind required for the development of Insight (§ 13).

All that sequence of thought and practice is repeated with each of the four elements.

The Truth of the Origin of Suffering is derived from

the sixfold process of perception (§ 37) and the Five Aggregates (§ 38) involved in it and forming the First Truth (see § 4). It is the desire for these which constitutes Craving (*taṇhā*), and this, according to the Second Truth, is the originator of suffering.

The removal of that desire for the six fields of perception (internal and external) is the Cessation of Suffering, the Third Noble Truth. And with that the Discourse ends.

This development of the Second and Third Truth out of the sixfold sense activity was also stated, in a different way, by the Master Himself in the Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, in the section on the Truths:

‘But where does this craving arise and take root? Wherever in the world there are delightful and pleasurable things, there this craving arises and takes root. Eye, ear visual forms, sounds eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness . . . these are delightful and pleasurable; there this craving arises and takes root. This, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

‘But where may this craving be abandoned, where may it be extinguished? Wherever there are in the world delightful and pleasurable things, there this craving may be abandoned, there it may be extinguished. Eye, ear are delightful and pleasurable; there this craving may be abandoned, there it may be extinguished. This, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.’

In both texts – the above utterance of the Master and the Venerable Sāriputta’s Discourse – the intention is to show how the Four Noble Truths may be applied

to our constant encounter with the world of bodily and mental experience. And such, or similar, application may be made by the earnest disciple whenever he feels that the Four Noble Truths are in danger of becoming for him an all too familiar and lifeless formula.*

To those who wish to explore the wide reaches of the Four Truths or to contemplate their depth dimension, this Discourse of the Great Disciple is recommended for close and repeated study.

For the present version of the Discourse, the late Venerable Nānamoli Thera's translation of the Majjhima Nikāya (in unpublished manuscript) has been used in parts. For some sections and terms, however, the Editor's own rendering has been used, and the notes are also supplied by him. The Venerable Nānamoli's translation, as he left it, was obviously in an experimental stage, as indicated by pencilled alternatives in the ink-written manuscript. He had, for instance, experimented with newly-coined renderings of doctrinal terms to be used consistently, which in the progress of translation, however, did not seem to be applicable throughout. Hence it was not feasible to use his version in full.

Nyanaponika Thera.

In the commentary to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Four Noble Truths are applied to all meditation exercises given in the Sutta. See *The Way of Mindfulness*, by Soma Thera, pp. 52, 57 etc.

The Greater Discourse on the Elephant = footprint Simile

1. Thus I heard.

On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There the Venerable Sāriputta addressed the bhikkhus thus, "Friends, bhikkhus," — "Friend," they replied. The Venerable Sāriputta now said this:

2.* "Friends, just as the footprint of any breathing thing that walks can be placed within an elephant's footprint, and so the elephant's footprint is declared the chief of them because of its great size, so too, whatever beneficial ideas there are can all be included in the four Noble Truths. What four?

3. In the Noble Truth of suffering, in the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering, in the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering, and in the Noble Truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

4.* And what is the Noble Truth of suffering? Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering;

* An asterisk (*) after the paragraph number refers to the Notes at the end of the Discourse.

not to get what one wants is suffering; in short the five aggregates affected by clinging are suffering.

5.* And what are the five aggregates affected by clinging? They are the form aggregate affected by clinging, the feeling aggregate affected by clinging, the perception aggregate affected by clinging, the mental-formations aggregate affected by clinging, and the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging.

6.* And what is the form aggregate affected by clinging? It is the four great primaries and any form derived from the four primaries.

7. What are the four great primaries? They are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.

EARTH

8.* And what is the earth element? The earth element is both in oneself and external.

What is the earth element in oneself? Whatever in oneself, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified and clung-to, that is to say, head-hair, body-hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, bowels, entrails, gorge, excrements, or whatever else in oneself, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified and clung-to: this is called earth element in oneself.

Now earth element in oneself and external earth element are simply earth element. That should be seen as it actually is with right understanding thus, 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not myself'. When a man

sees it thus with right understanding as it actually is, he becomes dispassionate towards the earth element, he makes lust for the earth element fade out of his mind.

9.* There is a time when the external water element is disturbed and then the external earth element vanishes.

10.* For even this external earth element, great as it is, can be seen as impermanent, can be seen as liable to destruction, liable to fall, liable to change; so what of this body, which is clung-to by craving and lasts but a while? There can be no (considering) that as 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am'.

11.* So then, (thus having seen this element as it actually is,) if others abuse and scold and curse and threaten a bhikkhu, he understands thus, 'This painful feeling born of ear-contact has arisen in me. That is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact'. Then he sees that contact is impermanent, that feeling is impermanent, that perception is impermanent, that mental formations are impermanent, and that consciousness is impermanent. And his mind enters into that very object (taking it just as an impersonal) element, and acquires confidence, steadiness and decision (herein).

12.* Now if others attack that bhikkhu with the undesirable, unpleasant and disagreeable contact of fists, clods, sticks or knives, he understands thus, 'This body is of such a nature that contact of fists, clods, sticks or knives can occur to it. But this has been said by the Blessed One in his Discourse on the Simile of the Saw: "Even if bandits brutally severed limb from limb with a two-handled saw, he who entertained hate in his heart on that account, would not be one who carried out

my teaching". So tireless energy shall be aroused in me, unremitting mindfulness established, my body shall be tranquil and unexcited, my mind shall be concentrated and unified. And now let contact with fists, clods, sticks or knives occur to this body; for this, indeed, (is an occasion when) the Enlightened One's teaching must be put into effect!

13.* If when he thus recollects the Enlightened One, the Teaching (Dhamma), and the Community (Saṅgha), equanimity with the beneficial as its support, does not persist in him, then he arouses a sense of urgency thus, 'It is a loss for me, it is no gain for me, it is bad for me, it is no good for me, that when I recollect the Enlightened One, the Teaching and the Community thus, equanimity with the beneficial as its support, does not persist in me'. Just as when a daughter-in-law sees her farther-in-law, she has a sense of urgency (to please him), so, too, if a bhikkhu recollects the Enlightened One and equanimity does not persist in him, then he arouses a sense of urgency

14.* But if, when a bhikkhu recollects the Enlightened One, the Teaching and the Community, equanimity with the beneficial as its support, becomes established in him, then he is satisfied. And at that point, friends, much has been done by the bhikkhu.

WATER

15. What is the water element? The water element is both in oneself and external.

What is the water element in oneself? Whatever in oneself, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and

clung-to, that is to say, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or whatever else in oneself, belonging to oneself, is water, watery and clung-to: this is called water element in oneself.

Now water element in oneself and external water element are simply water element. That should be seen as it actually is with right understanding thus, 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not myself'. When a man sees it thus with right understanding as it actually is, he becomes dispassionate towards the water element, he makes lust for the water element fade out of his mind.

16. There is a time when the external water element is disturbed. It carries away village, town, city, district, and country. There is a time when the waters in the great ocean sink down a hundred leagues, two hundred leagues five hundred leagues, six hundred leagues, seven hundred leagues. There is a time when the waters in the great ocean stand seven palm trees deep, six palm trees deep, five , four , three , two palm trees deep, only a palm tree deep. There is a time when the waters in the great ocean stand seven fathoms deep, six fathoms deep, five , four , three , two fathoms deep, only a fathom deep. There is a time when the waters in the great ocean stand half a fathom deep, only waist deep, only knee deep, only ankle deep. There is a time when the waters in the great ocean are not enough to wet even the joint of a finger.

17. For even this external water element, great as it is, can be seen as impermanent, can be seen as liable to destruction, liable to fall, liable to change; so what of this body, which is clung-to by craving and lasts but a while? There can be no (considering) that as 'I', or 'mine' or 'I am',

18-21. So then (thus having seen this element as it actually is), if others abuse (*repeat §§ 11-14*) much has been done by that bhikkhu.

FIRE

22. What is the fire element? The fire element is both in oneself and external.

What is the fire element in oneself? Whatever in oneself, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to, that is to say, that whereby one is warmed, ages, and is consumed, and whereby what is eaten, drunk, chewed and tasted gets completely digested, or whatever else in oneself, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to: this is called fire element in oneself.

Now fire element in oneself and external fire element are simply fire element. That should be seen as it actually is with right understanding thus, 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not myself'. When a man sees it thus with right understanding as it actually is, he becomes dispassionate towards the fire element, he makes lust for the fire element fade out of his mind.

23. There is a time when the external fire element is disturbed. It burns up village, town, city, district, and country. It only goes out when it comes to green grass, or to a road or to a rock or to water or to a fair open space, for want of fuel. (But) there are also times when people have to try making a fire even with fowls' claws or hide-parings.

24. For even this external fire element, great as it is, can be seen as impermanent, can be seen as liable to destruction, liable to fall, liable to change; so what of

this body, which is clung-to by craving and lasts but a while? There can be no (considering) that as 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am'.

25-28. So then (thus having seen this element as it actually is), if others abuse (*repeat §§ 11-14*) much has been done by that bhikkhu.

AIR

29.* What is the air element? The air element is both in oneself and external.

What is the air element in oneself? Whatever in oneself, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to, that is to say, up-going air, down-going air, air in the belly, air in the bowels, air that pervades all the limbs, in-breath and out-breath, or whatever else in oneself, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to: this is called air element in oneself.

Now air element in oneself and external air element are simply air element. That should be seen as it actually is with right understanding thus, 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not myself'. When a man sees it thus with right understanding as it actually is, he becomes dispassionate towards the air element, he makes lust for the air element fade out of his mind.

30. There is a time when the external air element is disturbed. It sweeps away village, town, city, district and country. (But) there are also times when in the last month of the hot season people seek to produce wind by means of a fan or bellows, and even straws in the drip-fringe of the thatch do not stir.

31. For even this external air element, great as it is, can be seen as impermanent, can be seen as liable to destruction,

able to fall, liable to change; so what of this body, which is clung-to by craving and lasts but a while? There can be no (considering) that as 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am'.

32. So then, (thus having seen this element as it actually is), if others abuse and scold and curse and threaten a bhikkhu, he understands thus, 'This painful feeling born of ear-contact has arisen in me. That is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.' Then he sees that contact is impermanent, that feeling is impermanent, that perception is impermanent, that mental formations are impermanent, and that consciousness is impermanent. And his mind enters into that very object (taking it just as an impersonal) element, and acquires confidence, steadiness and decision (herein).

33. Now if others attack that bhikkhu with the undesirable, unpleasant and disagreeable contact of fists, clods, sticks or knives, he understands thus, 'This body is of such a nature that contact of fists, clods, sticks and knives can occur to it. But this has been said by the Blessed One in the Discourse on the Simile of the Saw: "Even if bandits brutally severed limb from limb with a two-handled saw, he who entertained hate in his heart on that account, would not be one who carried out my teaching". So tireless energy shall be aroused in me, unremitting mindfulness established, my body shall be tranquil and unexcited, my mind shall be concentrated and unified. And now let contact with fists, clods, sticks or knives occur to this body; for this, indeed, (is an occasion when) the Enlightened One's teaching must be put into effect!'

34. If when he thus recollects the Enlightened One, the Teaching and the Community, equanimity, with the beneficial as its support, does not persist in him, then

he arouses a sense of urgency thus, 'It is a loss for me, it is no gain for me, it is bad for me, it is no good for me, that when I recollect the Enlightened One, the Teaching, and the Community thus, equanimity, with the beneficial as its support, does not persist in me'. Just as when a daughter-in-law sees her father-in-law, she has a sense of urgency (to please him). so, too, if a bhikkhu recollects the Enlightened One and equanimity does not persist in him, then he arouses a sense of urgency

35. But if, when a bhikkhu recollects the Enlightened One, the Teaching, and the Community, equanimity, with the beneficial as its support, becomes established in him, then he is satisfied. And at this point, friends, much has been done by the bhikkhu.

36.* Just as when a space is equipped with timber and creepers and straw and clay, there comes to be the term 'house'. so too, when a space is equipped with bones and sinews and flesh and skin, there comes to be the term '(bodily) form'.

37.* If the eye in oneself were intact but no external forms came within its range and there were no appropriate (conscious) engagement, then there would be no appearance of the appropriate class of consciousness. If the eye in oneself were intact and external forms came within its range, but there were no appropriate (conscious) engagement, there would (still) be no appearance of the appropriate class of consciousness. But it is owing to the fact that the eye in oneself is intact and that external forms come within its range, and that there is the appropriate (conscious) engagement, that there is appearance of the appropriate class of consciousness.

38.* Any form in what has thus come to be, is included, in the form aggregate affected by clinging. Any feeling in what has thus come to be, is included in the feeling aggregate affected by clinging. Any perception in what has thus come to be, is included in the perception aggregate affected by clinging. Any mental formations in what has thus come to be, are included in the mental-formations aggregate affected by clinging. Any consciousness in what has thus come to be, is included in the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging.

He understands thus, 'In such a way, so it is said, there is an including, a gathering and classifying (of phenomena) into these five aggregates affected by clinging. Now this has been said by the Blessed One, "He who sees dependent origination sees the Teaching (*dhamma*); he who sees the Teaching sees dependent origination". And these five aggregates affected by clinging are dependently arisen. The desire for, attachment to, approval or acceptance of, these five aggregates affected by clinging is the origin of suffering. The removal of desire and lust for them is the cessation of suffering'. And at this point too, friends, much has been done by the bhikkhu.

39 - 40. If the ear in oneself were intact but no external sounds came within its range . . . (as in §§ 37-38) . . . much has been done by the bhikkhu.

41 - 42. If the nose in oneself were intact but no external odours came within its range . . . (as in §§ 37-38) . . . much has been done by the bhikkhu.

43 - 44. If the tongue in oneself were intact but no external tastes came within its range . . . (as in §§ 37-38) . . . much has been done by the bhikkhu.

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45 - 46. If the body in oneself were intact but no external tangibles came within its range . . . (as in §§ 37-38) . . . much has been done by the bhikkhu.

47.* If the mind in oneself were intact but no external idea came within its range and there were no appropriate (conscious) engagement, then there would be no appearance of the appropriate class of consciousness. If the mind in oneself were intact and external ideas came within its range, but there were no appropriate (conscious) engagement, there would (still) be no appearance of the appropriate class of consciousness. But it is owing to the fact that the mind in oneself is intact and external ideas come within its range, and that there is the appropriate (conscious) engagement, that there is appearance of the appropriate class of consciousness.

48. Any form in what has thus come to be, is included in the form aggregate affected by clinging. Any feeling in what has thus come to be, is included in the feeling aggregate affected by clinging. Any perception in what has thus come to be, is included in the perception aggregate affected by clinging. Any mental formations in what has thus come to be, are included in the mental-formations aggregate affected by clinging. Any consciousness in what has thus come to be, is included in the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging.

He understand thus, 'In such a way, so it is said, there is an including, a gathering and classifying (of phenomena) into these five aggregates affected by clinging. Now this has been said by the Blessed One: "He who sees dependent origination sees the Teaching; he who sees the Teaching sees dependent origination". And these five aggregates affected by clinging are dependently

arisen. The desire for, attachment to, approval and acceptance of, these five aggregates affected by clinging is the origin of suffering. The removal of desire and lust for them is the cessation of suffering'. And at this point too, friends, much has been done by the bhikkhu."

That is what the venerable Sāriputta said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and they delighted in his words.

NOTES

Abbreviations :— Cy.: Buddhaghosa's Commentary (*Papañca-sūdanī*),
SubCy.: Sub-Commentary (*Majjhima-ṭīkā*).

Figures refer to the paragraph numbers of Discourse

2. **Beneficial ideas** (*kusalā dhammā*); or wholesome, salutary things.

4. **The five aggregates affected by clinging** (*pañcupādānakkhandha*). Alternative renderings used by Nāṇamoli Thera: “aggregates (as objects) of clinging” (in *Path of Purification*), “categories of clinging's objects” (in *The Wheel No. 17*); by Nyanatiloka Thera: “groups of existence forming the objects of attachment”.

5. **Mental formations aggregate** (*saṅkhāra-kkhandha*). On *sankhāra* see *Buddhist Dictionary*, by Nyanatiloka (2nd ed., Colombo 1956), p. 148.

6. **Form aggregate** (*rūpa-kkhandha*); the aggregate, or group, of corporeality.

The four great primaries (*mahā-bhūta*), also called *dhātu*, the primary elements of matter.—The *Vīśuddhi-Magga* (“Path of Purification”, p. 381) says that the meditation subject of “Defining of the Elements” (*dhātu-vavatthāna*) is given in brief in the Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Dīgha-N. 22), and is explained in detail in the Greater Discourse on the Elephant – footprint Simile and in the Mahā Rāhulovāda Sutta (Majjh. 62; translated in *The Wheel No. 33*).

8. **Clung-to** (*upādiṇṇa*), Cy: Strictly spoken, only that corporeal form which is produced by Kamma (*kamma-samuṭṭhāna*), is called 'clung-to' (or 'karmically acquired', Ven. Nyanatiloka's rendering). But, in a general sense, as here, it is a designation for the entire bodily frame. The bodily frame, namely, may be either 'clung-to' ('karmically acquired', *upādiṇṇa*) or 'not clung-to' (not karmically acquired, *anupādiṇṇa*; see Dhammasangani §653-4). But because the whole body is clung-to [tenaciously], grasped at [as 'mine'], and misapprehended [as an Ego]* [namely by way of conceit, craving and wrong views; *māna, taṇhā, diṭṭhi*], the bodily frame in its entirety is here said to be 'clung-to' (by Craving).**

For the external (*bāhira*) earth element, the *Dhātu-vibhaṅga* of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka gives as examples various metals, precious stones, rock, wood and soil.

Cy: While the 'earth element in oneself' has been explained in detail by giving twenty modes of it, the external earth element is treated very briefly in the Discourse. Why is that so? Because it is to the solid element in one's own body that beings have a strong attachment, therefore the Buddhas and their disciples speak of it in detail, for removing that attachment to it.

Cy: are simply earth element (*paṭhavidhātur-ev-esa*). Though the earth element is of two kinds, one's own and external, the Elder shows it to have the common characteristic of being stiff, hard and coarse. In the case of the external earth element, its inanimate nature is clear, but not so with the 'earth element in oneself'.

* *ādinna-gahita-parāmaṭṭha*.

** Additions in square brackets are taken from the SubCy.

But if one takes the latter together with the external earth element, one can easily understand that both are equally inanimate. It is as if an untamed oxen is yoked together with a tame one, the untamed animal may wriggle and struggle for a few days, but before long it will become tame. Similarly, if one takes the internal earth element together with the external, their common inanimate nature may not be apparent for a few days, but before long it will become quite clear.

9. According to ancient Indian cosmological conceptions, the earth may have its cyclical destruction either by water, by fire or by wind.

10. **Clung-to by craving** (*taṇhupādinna*). Cy: Clung-to, grasped at and misconceived by craving (see Note to §5). — The words in the Discourse, ‘I’, ‘mine’, ‘I am’, represent again the threefold clinging to personality, belief, due to conceit (*māna*), craving (*taṇhā*) and wrong views (*diṭṭhi*).

11. **So then, if others . . . abuse . . . that bhikkhu.** Cy: This refers to a bhikkhu who, as shown before, practises the meditation on the elements (*dhātu-kammaṭṭhāniko*). The paragraph under consideration shows the strength of his mind in applying his meditative comprehension of reality to occurrences at the sense-door of hearing (i. e. when he hears words of abuse). — The SubCy adds that this also illustrates the powerful influence which a subject of meditation may have (on one’s attitude to everyday happenings; *kammaṭṭhānassa ānubhāvaṃ dasseti*). The bhikkhu’s strength is that of imperturbability achieved by seeing that the ‘earth element in oneself’ is as inanimate as the external one, and

this makes him as imperturable as a tree` that is being abused or struck.

acquires . . . decision (*ādhimuccati*). Cy: that is, as to its true nature, by seeing it as an impersonal element, and hence the bhikkhu has neither attachment nor aversion concerning it.

And his mind enters into that very object (taking it just as an impersonal) element (*Tassa dhātārammaṇam eva cittaṃ pakkhandhati*); lit.: enters into that very element-object. — The rendering chosen here is based on an explanation in the Commentary which is reproduced here in the following when commenting on the words “acquires decision”. According to that explanation the above textual passage refers to the “auditory object”, that is the words of abuse; and the word “element” (*dhātu*) is to be taken in the sense of an impersonal element in general, not as primary element of matter. The SubCy, however, says that the term “object-element” (*dhātārammaṇa*) refers to the Earth-Element which the bhikkhu had contemplated earlier. In the present context this would mean that the bhikkhu is supposed to return to his original subject of meditation, the Earth Element. This explanation, though likewise feasible, is perhaps less likely than the earlier interpretation which relates the term to the “auditory object”.

acquires . . . decision (*adhimuccati*). Cy: That is, he comes to a decision (as to its true nature), by seeing it as an (impersonal) element (*dhātu-vasena*) and hence the bhikkhu has neither attachment nor aversion concerning it. This monk, that is to say, applies here to the auditory object, his comprehension (*pariggaha*) by way of the ‘accurate knowledge of the root’ (*mūla-pariññā*) and by way (of contemplating the casual (*āgantuka*) and

temporary (*tāvakālika*) state of the object, as described in detail in the Commentary to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.* There, however, it is explained with regard to the sense-door of the eye, but here with regard to the sense-door of the ear.

When in such a way correct comprehension has been applied by one who practises the element-meditation, even if (SubCy: due to long habituation in the beginningless Saṃsāra) unwise Adverting (or Attention; *ayoniso āvajjanam*)** occurs with a visual or other perception, then there will be three alternative reactions: (1) In the case of one with strong insight (*balavā-vipassanā*), the cognitive series will reach the stage of Determining (*voṭṭhapana*), occurring once or twice, and after that the consciousness will just fall into Bhavaṅga, and there will be no arising of greed, etc. So it is with one of keen Insight who has reached its culmination (*koṭipatto tikkha-vipassako*).— (2) In the case of another meditator, Impulsion (*javana*) impels the mind (only) once, by way of greed, etc. But because at the end of that (single moment of) Impulsion, he becomes aware***, ‘Impulsion has impelled me by way of greed, etc.,’ the object is (then) correctly comprehended (*pariggahitam eva*), and Impulsion does not arise again in that way. @ — (3) Again, in the case

* See *The Way of Mindfulness* by Soma Thera, p. 79ff

** Here and in the following, reference is made to the Abhidhamma teaching of the cognitive series, or process of cognition (*citta-vithi*), on which see ‘The Wheel’ No. 67/64 ‘Aids to Abhidhamma Philosophy’, p. 21ff and Chart II.

*** *āvajjato*; lit.: because his mind adverts,

@ SubCy: By his establishing thus that Impulsion and its object have vanished after having existed, it has become a legitimate subject of meditation (*sārammaṇassa javanassa “hutvā-abhāva”-vavatthāpanassa kammaṭṭhānabhāvato*).

of another whose mind has adverted once, yet Impulsion arises for a second time by way of greed, etc. But because at the end of that second Impulsion, he becomes aware as stated above, the object is then correctly comprehended and impulsion does not arise for a third time in that way.

The Insight of the first person is very keen; that of the third person is very slow; as to the second, his nature should be understood as explained in the “Simile of the Quail” (*Lakūṭakopama Sutta*, M. 66) ‡ and as in the Discourse on the “Cultivation of the Sense-faculties” (*Indriya-bhāvanā Sutta*, M. 151).

Enters into . . . acquires confidence, steadiness and decision (*pakkhandati paṭīdati santiṭṭhati adhimuccati*). — This sequence of terms occurs so frequently in the Discourses that the following illuminating explanations given in the SubCy may be found helpful to students of the Pali scriptures. The SubCy, however, reads the last of the above terms as *vimuccati* (“is freed”) instead of *adhimuccati* (“acquires decision”). This reading is also found in other text editions (e. g., the Siamese) of the present Discourse and in parallel passages of other Suttas.

SubCy: Enters into (*pakkhandati*): The mind engaged in Insight meditation penetrates (its object) by way of comprehending it as impermanent, also as suffering, and also as not-self (*vipassanā-cittam*) *aniccan’ti pi dukkhan’*

‡ In the “Simile of the Quail” it is said: “While he is practicing for the abandoning of clinging, towards the discarding of clinging, memories and thoughts connected with clinging beset him from time to time, due to confusion. Slow, Udāyi, is the arising of mindfulness, but quickly he abandons that (clinging), dispels it, makes an end of it, brings it to destruction.”

ti pi anattan'ti pi sammasanavāseṇa anupavīsati). Hereby the absence of distractions from outside is stated.

Acquires confidence (*pasādati*), Hereby is indicated that the meditation is progressing smoothly on its road (*kammaṭṭhānassa vīthi-paṭipannatam*).

Is freed (*vimuccati*), by loosening the grip of craving, conceit and wrong views.

12. Now if others attack that bhikkhu with fists . . .“
Cy: In the preceding section the inner strength of a meditating bhikkhu was shown on the occasion when there were undesirable objects at the sense-door of hearing; now the same is illustrated with occurrences at the sense-door of the body. For, when one is confronted with an undesirable experience, there may be failure (in mind-control) in two ways, at the sense-door of hearing and that of the body.

The Great Elder proceeds here like a farmer who makes the round of his field, and whenever he notices that he has not put sufficient earth (at the sides of the irrigation channel), he cuts the ground with his mamoty and, at the weak spots only, he puts some lumps of earth together with grass. Similarly, the Great Elder introduces this section of his discourse for the purpose of strengthening the monks' mind-control (*samvara*) at those two sense-doors only. He did so with the wish: 'May those noble sons of the future, who are desirous of training themselves, and engage in meditative effort, make speedily an end of birth, decay and death, after establishing firm control at those sense-doors!'

13. If, when he thus recollects the Enlightened One, the teaching and the Community . . . Cy: There is

Recollection of the Buddha (*Buddhānussati*) not only by way of (reciting the traditional text): “This indeed is the Blessed One. . .” (*Iti pi so Bhagavā*), but also if (as here) a saying of His is remembered. There is Recollection of the Dhamma not only by way of (reciting) “Well proclaimed is the Teaching. . .”, but also when the Admonition called the Simile of the Saw is remembered (as done here). And there is Recollection of the Sangha not only by way of reciting “O! good conduct is the Order of the Blessed One. . .”, but also when remembering the virtue of a monk who patiently endures even when assaulted with a saw.

Equanimity, with the beneficial as its support, does not persist in him (*upekkhā kusalanissitā na saṇṭhāti*), — Cy: Here the equanimity of (still mundane) insight (*vipassanupekkhā*) is meant. — SubCy: He has not yet obtained equanimity of outlook (*ajjhupekkhatā*) with regard to everything conditional.

14. Equanimity, with the beneficial as its support, becomes established in him. — Cy: This refers to the Sixfold Equanimity (*chaḷangupekkhā*). Though this type of equanimity arises (strictly speaking, only) in the canker-free Saint who has neither attachment nor aversion with regard to the six sense-objects, be they desirable or undesirable; yet in the case of the monk spoken of here, through the strength of his energy (*virīya-bala*) and the potency of his meditation (*bhāvanā siddhi*), his Insight approximates to the Sixfold Equanimity of a canker-free Saint.

29. Here and in the following, the Pāli term is *vātā*, lit. ‘winds’.

36. Just as when a space is equipped with timber . . . , there comes to be the term 'house', so too, when a space is equipped with bones . . . , there comes to be the term '(bodily) form'.

Cy: Hereby the impersonal nature of the great elements spoken of before, is shown.— House is a mere concept (*paññatti-matta*). If timber, etc., is placed separately in heaps, it is called just a "heap of timber", etc.. — Just as a house that is so termed on account of timber etc., may be called a 'nobleman's house' or a 'brahmin's house', similarly one speaks of the body of a nobleman or a brahmin; but no abiding being (*satta*) or soul (*jīva*) is found here.

37. If the eye in oneself were intact.— Cy: Why has this subject matter been introduced here? In the preceding part of this discourse, materiality derived (from the four elements; *upādā-rūpa*), the four mental Aggregates, and (the last) three of the four Noble Truths have not been dealt with as yet; for speaking of them now, this present exposition is being introduced here.

Appropriate (conscious) engagement (*tajjo saman-nāhāro*).—*Appropriate*, i. e. suitable (*anurūpa*) for the arising of visual consciousness (SubCy). — (*Conscious*) *engagement*. — Cy: This refers to (initial) attention (*manasikāra*), which, dependent on eye and visual objects, arises after having deflected the life-continuum (*bhavaṅgam āvaṭṭetvā*). It belongs to the class of consciousness called 'functional Mind-element' (*kiriya-manodhātu-citta*), which is capable of deflecting the (subconscious) Life-continuum. When no visual objects enter the range of perception, it does not arise with objects of another type. (This

last statement is made for emphasizing again the term 'appropriate'.— Ed.)

38. **Any form in what has thus come to be** (*yam tathābhūtassa rūpaṃ*). Cy: In this section and in the following, the Four Truths are explained by way of the sense-doors.

In what has thus come to be. Cy: (The entire complex of bodily and mental processes) that have arisen together with visual consciousness as its adjuncts (*samaṅgino*).

Any form (*yam rūpaṃ*). Cy: Because visual consciousness is not a producer of form (material processes), form (materiality) with (only) three (of the four) producers (*ti-samuṭṭhāna-rūpa*) applies here at the moment of visual consciousness (that is, without the fourth Producer, mind; the other three being temperature, kamma and nutriment). But in the subsequent moment of consciousness, all four producers of materiality obtain.*

Any feeling . . . perception . . . mental formations: these are those conjoined with visual consciousness; and **consciousness** is that very visual consciousness. *Mental Formations:* this refers in particular to volition (*cetanā*); (though also contact, attention, vitality and mental stability belong here to the Aggregate of Formations: SubCy).

“He who sees dependent origination, sees the Teaching (dhamma); he who sees the Teaching, sees dependent origination”.

* See *Visuddhi-Magga*, ch. XIV, §75.

Cy: He who sees conditions, sees also the things dependently arisen; and he who sees the things conditionally arisen, sees also the conditioning things.

Here, in the canonical text, three Truths are mentioned, while the fourth, the Path Truth, has to be taken by implication. It is the Penetration by Meditation and Cultivation (*bhāvanā-paṭivedha*)* applied to those three items (the first three Truths) which constitutes the (Eightfold) Path, namely by way of (right) understanding, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration.

47. **Cy:** As to the mind-door, the mind in oneself is the life-continuum consciousness (*bhavaṅga-citta*). If it has ceased (to function) and thus is incapable of being a condition of the Adverting Consciousness (*āvajjana-citta*); and also if it proceeds in an enfeebled state (as in deep sleep: *SubCy*), it is called not intact (or damaged, *paribhinna*). When capable of being a condition of Adverting, it is called intact (or undamaged, *aparibhinna*).

There would still be no appearance of the appropriate class of consciousness. **Cy:** This applies only to the phase of the Life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*).—As to the second instance (given in the Discourse), this refers to a case when (the mind is preoccupied) by something else, e. g. with reviewing a familiar jhāna, or with attention to a familiar subject of meditation or with the recitation of a familiar Buddha-word. (In such a case, though the sense-organs are intact and

* The word *bhāvanā* has here both these meanings, meditation and cultivation.

sense-objects are present, the mind will not be 'engaged, by them, being fully absorbed by the aforementioned activities. — Ed.)

Here, (*bodily*) *form* has all four Producers, as mind-consciousness can produce bodily processes. *Feeling, perception* and *formations* are those conjoined with mind-consciousness. *Consciousness* is that very mind-consciousness. But the *formations* included here are contact and volition. (SubCy: These are mentioned because they are the most prominent; not because the others are absent.)

After the Great Elder had first considered only one part (of the Four Truths and of the Five Aggregates as stated at the beginning), and having reached now this point of his Discourse, he now deals with everything he had omitted above, namely in the context of the respective sense-door, and thus concludes the Suttanta in accordance with the sequence of meaning (outlined before).

The Structure of the Discourse

as explained in the Commentary

Suppose there is a skilled craftsman who fashions bamboo goods. First he selects a well-grown bamboo and cuts it into four. Putting aside three sections he takes the fourth and divides it into five parts. Of these, again, he lays aside four, takes the fifth and splits it into five pieces. Again he puts away four pieces, takes the fifth and splits it into a lower and a top portion. Laying aside the top portion, he takes the lower one (being softer) and fashions of it various kinds of bamboo goods. But this does not mean that he will not utilize for his work the remaining portions of the bamboo, that is, the top portion, the other four small pieces, the larger four parts and the original three sections. He cannot make use of them all at once, but he utilizes them gradually.

Likewise the Venerable Sāriputta, too, when starting his great Discourse takes up as the main subject (*mātikā*) the four Truths, corresponding to the bamboo worker's first four sections. Then, as the man puts aside three of them, takes the fourth and divides it into five parts, similarly the Great Elder lays aside three of the Truths, takes one, *the Truth of Suffering*, and gives it a fivefold division, by way of the *five Aggregates* (*khandha*). Then, again similar to the bamboo worker, he puts aside four of them, the four mental Aggregates, and takes one, *the Aggregate of Form* (*rūpa-kkhandha*) and gives it a fivefold classification, namely as the *four Great Elements and form derived from the four Great Elements* (*cattāro ca mahābhūtāni catunnañca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya rūpaṃ*). Again, as the bamboo

worker puts aside four pieces, takes the fifth and splits it into a top and lower portion, so the Elder lays aside derivatory form and three of the elements and divides the remaining one, the Earth Element, into two, as being *in oneself (ajjhatta)* and *external (bāhira)*. As the craftsman puts aside the top portion and makes various bamboo articles from the lower portion, so the Great Elder, laying aside the external Earth Element, divides the "*Earth Element in oneself*" into twenty modes, namely in the Discourse passage beginning "*What is Earth Element in oneself?*". And finally, just as the man utilizes gradually the remaining sections, parts, pieces and portions for his work, as he could not use them all at once, so the Venerable Sāriputta, too, gradually explains also the remaining parts of his subject matter namely: the external Earth Element, the other three Elements, derivatory form,* the four mental Aggregates and the other three Noble Truths,** as he could not do so all at once.

* *Derivatory Form (upādāya-rūpa)* is mentioned in the Discourse by way of a prominent part of it, i. e. the six sense organs and their objects (§ 37-46).

** The Fourth Truth of the Path is not stated explicitly in the Discourse. But the sections concerned with conduct and meditation extend to all three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path, i.e. Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom. The moral restraint of the bhikkhu when insulted or assaulted, shows his Virtue (*sīla*). The sections referring to his firmness of mind and to various meditations (on the four Elements, recollection of the Triple Gem), indicate the practice of Concentration (*samādhi*). The Wisdom-group (*paññā*) of the Path is represented in the meditator's Insight-practice (*vipassanā*) when seeing the Elements as void of self (§10) and the five Aggregates as conditioned and impermanent (§11). (*Ed.*)

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