

A Discourse to Knowers of Veda Tevijja Sutta

A Discourse of the Buddha on the Path to the Divine

Translated by

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With Introduction and Notes

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Introduction

The quest for God and the communion with him constitute among the manifold strivings of humanity its most ardent and deepest concern. At the bottom of this quest, it seems, lies an ineradicable yearning for peace, security and well-being. There seems to reside a mysterious power in the very name of God be it the Brahmā of the Hindus, Allah of the Muslims or the Heavenly Father of the Christians. Gandhi once confessed that whenever his lips uttered the name of Rāma his innermost being was shaken to its very foundations and his heart filled with unspeakable joy. Under whatsoever name God is called upon, this name has always been linked up with the idea of highest spirituality, absolute invulnerability, and final deliverance from the burden of suffering.

This spiritual potency called God is not always personified. Sometimes it is thought of as a mode of being in its loftiest possible state of immateriality without any notion of individualized existence as, for instance, the impersonal Brahmā of Hinduism or the “Godhead”—the hidden, unmanifested deity—of the great German mystic, Meister Eckhart. In Buddhism and in Jainism the concept of “God” in the Western sense is entirely unknown; although both acknowledge the existence of Divine Beings higher than Man but still imperfect and impermanent.

Nowadays, even in widely different cultural settings, wherever men believe and aspire to that communion with God, holding out for them the promise of eternal salvation, the question arises whether it will be God who takes the initiative in approaching man or, whether it is man, the creature, who must lift himself up to God. The answer to this question will depend entirely on man’s image of God. If God is seen as a Father having compassion with his weak children, leading them to their heavenly home, he will be thought of as a person not unlike a human father. It is in this way that the Christian churches have depicted their God in the shape of a man, hoary with age.

If, however, God is not being conceived of as a person but as a mode of the utmost purity and spirituality of being, then the quest assumes an entirely different character. Communion, or better the Union with God, can in this case only be consummated through a steadfast and progressive purification of heart in the believer. Of this condition the Sermon of the Mount speaks: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

In a similar vein Angelus Silesius, the Christian mystic of the seventeenth century, exclaims:

“Man, do not stop at man
The highest must thou win!
To God, to Heaven’s bliss,
Gods only can come in.”

To the enlightened mind of our day it is hardly palatable, if not to say repugnant, to conceive of an anthropomorphized Creator of the Universe who in the end destroys his own handiwork in a cataclysm of fire. And similarly the more sophisticated idea of an immaterial, i.e. spiritual, mode of being, a “World Soul” with all its accompanying connotations, religious and otherwise, can hardly find acceptance either. Utterly bewildered we ask ourselves: where shall we go from here, are there no sign-posts to show us the way out of this dilemma?

The answer is: go nowhere: stay where you are. From the exploration of Outer Space turn your gaze inward into the depths of consciousness, from the “projection” to the projecting psyche itself. And there you will find precisely the modes of being with which you, in your former nescience, endowed a mythical creator. It is in our innermost selves wherein we discern darkness and light, creative and destructive urges, and only there, in our very inwardness, the solution to the riddle of existence.

It is exactly from these psychological, ethical, and metaphysical perspectives that the problem of “God” and the “communion” with him is viewed and understood by the Buddha. The text that follows is taken from the 13th Discourse in the Longer Collection (Dīgha Nikāya) as preserved in the Pali Canon (Tipiṭaka). First of all the following points deserve to be noted. The Brahmin priests who approach the Buddha obviously believe that communion with Brahmā equals perfect holiness and the highest state to which mortal man can aspire. Brahmā’s realm means to them absolute security and eternal peace. The Buddha does not deny that Brahmā existence is indeed far above the human condition with its intermingling joys and sorrows. However, the Buddha’s penetrating insight realizes that even the lofty realm of Brahmā is no more than a temporary refuge of transitory bliss and a far cry from his own teaching of final deliverance. On this deliverance the Enlightened One keeps silent and there is a reason for it. Because what he tells the priests may be for them a starting point, leading—as we may hope—to a higher development. They may in some future day surpass the Brahmā state, attain perfect holiness and complete emancipation from all fetters, human or Brahmā Divine.

On the other hand, and this is clearly shown in many of the Discourses, the Buddha’s Path to final deliverance need not include the way to Brahmā or God. This goal is entirely realizable without concerning oneself with the so-called supernatural or, better to be called, the super-terrestrial.

Paul Debes

Tevijja Sutta¹

1. Thus have I heard. When the Exalted One was once journeying through Kosala with a great company of the brethren, with about five hundred brethren, he came to the Brahman village in Kosala which is called Manasākaṭa.²

And there at Manasākaṭa the Exalted One stayed in the mango grove, on the bank of the river Aciravatī, to the north of Manasākaṭa.

2. Now at that time many very distinguished and wealthy Brahmans were staying at Manasākaṭa: to wit, Caṅkī the Brahman, Tārukka the Brahman, Pokkharasādī the Brahman, Jāṇussoṇi the Brahman, Todeyya the Brahman, and other very distinguished and wealthy Brahmans.

3. Now a conversation sprung up between Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, when they were taking exercise (after their bath) and walking up and down, strolling up and down, in thoughtful mood, as to which was the true path, and which the false.

4. The young Brahman Vāseṭṭha spoke thus;

“This is the straight path, this the direct way which makes for salvation, and leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahmā. I mean that which has been announced by the Brahman Pokkharasādī.”

5. The young Brahman Bhāradvāja spoke thus;

“This is the straight path, this the direct way which makes for salvation, and leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahmā. I mean that which has been announced by the Brahman Tārukka.”³

6. But neither was the young Brahman Vāseṭṭha able to convince the young Brahman Bhāradvāja, nor was the young Brahman Bhāradvāja able to convince the young Brahman Vāseṭṭha.

7. Then the young Brahman Vāseṭṭha said to the young Brahman Bhāradvāja:

“That Samana Gotama, Bhāradvāja of the sons of the Sakyas, who went out of the Sakya clan to adopt the religious life, is now staying at Manasākaṭa, in the mango grove, on the bank of the river Aciravatī, to the north of Manasākaṭa. Now regarding that Venerable Gotama, such is the high reputation that has been noised abroad: ‘That Exalted One is an Arahāt, Fully Enlightened One, abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide to mortals willing to be led, a teacher of gods and men, an Exalted One, a Buddha.’ Come, then, Bhāradvāja, let us go to the place where the Samana Gotama is; and when we have come there, let us ask the Samana Gotama touching this matter. What the Samana Gotama shall declare unto us, that let us bear in mind.”⁴

“Very well, my friend!” said the young Brahman Bhāradvāja, in assent, to the young Brahman Vāseṭṭha.

8. Then the young Brahman Vāseṭṭha and the young Brahman Bhāradvāja went on to the place where the Exalted One was.

And when they had come there, they exchanged with the Exalted One the greetings and compliments of politeness and courtesy, and sat down beside him.⁵

And while they were thus seated the young Brahman Vāseṭṭha said to the Exalted One:

“As we, Gotama, were taking exercise and walking up and down there sprung up a conversation between us on which was the true path, and which the false. I said thus:

‘This is the straight path, this the direct way which makes for salvation, and leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahmā. I mean that which has been announced by the Brahman Pokkharasādi.’

Bhāradvāja said thus:

‘This is the straight path, this the direct way which makes for salvation, and leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahmā. I mean that which has been announced by the Brahman Tārukkha.’

Regarding this matter, Gotama, there is a strife, a dispute, a difference of opinion between us.”

9. “So you say, Vāseṭṭha, that you said thus:

‘This is the straight path, this the direct way which makes for salvation, and leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahmā. I mean that which has been announced by the Brahman Pokkharasādi.’

“While Bhāradvāja said thus:

‘This is the straight path, this the direct way which makes for salvation,, and leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahmā. I mean that which has been announced by the Brahman Tārukkha.’

“Wherein, then, O Vāseṭṭha, is there a strife, a dispute, a difference of opinion between you?”

10. “Concerning the true path and the false, Gotama, various Brahmans, Gotama, teach various paths; The Addhariya Brahmans, the Tittiriya Brahmans,⁶ the Chandoka Brahmans,⁷ the Bavharijjha Brahmans.⁸ Are all those saving paths? Are they all paths which will lead him, who acts according to them, into a state of union with Brahmā?

“Just, Gotama, as near a village or a town there are many and various paths, yet they all meet together in the village—just in that way are all the various paths taught by various Brahmans—the Addhariya Brahmans, the Tittiriya Brahmans, the Chandoka Brahmans, the Bavharijjha Brahmans. Are all these saving paths? Are they all paths which will lead him, who acts according to them, into a state of union with Brahmā?”

11. “Do you say that they all lead aright, Vāseṭṭha?”

“I say so, Gotama.”

“Do you really say that they all lead aright, Vāseṭṭha?”⁹

“So I say, Gotama.”¹⁰

12. “But yet, Vāseṭṭha, is there a single one of the Brahmans versed in the three Vedas who has ever seen Brahmā face to face?”¹¹

“No, indeed, Gotama!”

“Or is there then, Vāseṭṭha, a single one of the teachers of the Brahmans versed in the three Vedas who has seen Brahmā face to face?”

“No, indeed, Gotama!”

“Or is there then, Vāseṭṭha, a single one of the Brahmans back to the seventh generation of a teacher’s teacher who has seen Brahmā face to face?”

Ño, indeed, Gotama!”

13. “Well then, Vāseṭṭha, those ancient Rishis of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas, the authors of the verses, the utterers of the verses, whose ancient form of words so chanted, uttered or composed, the Brahmans of today chant over again or repeat; intoning or reciting exactly as has been intoned or recited—to wit, Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu—did even they speak thus, saying; ‘We know it, we have seen it, where Brahmā is, whence Brahmā is, whither Brahmā is?’ ”¹²

Ñot so, Gotama!”

14. “Then you say, Vāseṭṭha, that none of the Brahmans, or of their teachers, or of their pupils, even back to the seventh generation of a teacher’s teacher has ever seen Brahmā face to face. And that even the Rishis of old, the authors and utterers of the verses, of the ancient form of words which the Brahmans of today so carefully intone and recite precisely as they have been handed down—even they did not pretend to know or to have seen where or whence or whither Brahmā is. So that the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas have forsooth said thus; ‘What we know not, what we have not seen, to a state of union with that we can show the way, and can say: This is the straight path, this is the direct way which makes for salvation, and leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahmā!’

Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Does it not follow, this being so, that the talk of the Brahmans, versed though they be in the Three Vedas, turns out to be foolish talk?”¹³

“Verily, Gotama, that being so, it follows that the talk of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas is foolish talk.”

15. “Verily, Vāseṭṭha, that Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas should be able to show the way to a state of union with that which they do not know, neither have seen—such a condition of things can in no wise be.

“Just, Vāseṭṭha, as when a string of blind men are clinging one to the other, neither can the foremost see, nor can the middle one see, nor can the hindmost see¹⁴ just even so, it seems to me, Vāseṭṭha, is the talk of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas but blind talk: the first sees not, the middle one sees not, nor can the latest see. The talk then of these Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas turns out to be ridiculous, mere words, a vain and empty thing.”¹⁵

16. Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Can the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas—like other, ordinary folk—see the Moon and the Sun as they pray to, and praise, and worship them, turning round with clasped hands towards the place whence they rise and where they set?”

“Certainly, Gotama, they can!”

17. Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? The Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas, who can very well—like other, ordinary folk—see the Moon and the Sun as they pray to, and praise, and worship them, turning round with clasped hands to the place whence they rise and where they set—are those Brahmans, versed in the Three Vedas, able to point out the way to a state of union with the Moon or the Sun, saying: ‘This is the straight path, this the direct way which makes for salvation, and leads him, who acts according to it, to a state of union with the Moon or the Sun?’ ”¹⁶

“Certainly not, Gotama!”

18. “So you say, Vāseṭṭha, that the Brahmans are not able to point out the way to union with that which they have seen, and you further say that neither any one of them, nor of their pupils, nor of their predecessors even to the seventh generation has ever seen Brahmā. And you further say that even the Rishis of old, whose words they hold in such deep respect, did not pretend to

know, or to have seen where, or whence, or whither Brahmā is. Yet these Brahmans versed in, the Three Vedas say, forsooth, that they can point out the way to union with that Brahmā whom they know not, neither have seen. Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Does it not follow that, this being so, the talk of the Brahmans, versed though they be in the Three Vedas, turns out to be foolish talk?"

"Verily, Gotama, that being so, it follows that the talk of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas is foolish talk."

19. "Very good, Vāseṭṭha. Verily then, Vāseṭṭha, that Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas should be able to show the way to a state of union with that which they do not know, neither have seen—such a condition of things can in no wise be.

"Just, Vāseṭṭha, as if a man should say, 'How I long for, how I love the most beautiful woman in this land!' And people should ask him, 'Well, good friend, this most beautiful woman in the land, whom you thus love and long for, do you know whether that beautiful woman is a noble lady or a Brahman woman, or of the trader class, or a Sudra?'

"But when so asked, he should answer: 'No.'

"And when people should ask him, 'Well, good friend, this most beautiful woman in all the land, whom you so love and long for, do you know what the name of that most beautiful woman is, or what is her family name, whether she be tall or short or of medium height, dark or brunette or golden in colour, or in what village or town or city she dwells?'

"But when so asked, he should answer: 'No.'

"And then people should say to him, 'So then, good friend, whom you know not, neither have seen her, do you love and long for?'

"And then when so asked, he should answer: 'Yes.'

Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Would it not turn out that being so, that the talk of that man was foolish talk."

"Verily, Gotama, that is so."

20. "And just even so, Vāseṭṭha, though you say that the Brahmans are not able to point out the way to union with that which they have seen, and you further say that neither any one of them, nor of their pupils, nor of their predecessors even to the seventh generation has ever seen Brahmā. And you further say that even the Rishis of old, whose words they hold in such deep respect, did not pretend to know, or to have seen where, or whence, or whither Brahmā is. Yet these Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas say, forsooth that they can point out the way to union with that which they know not, neither have seen! Now, what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Does it not follow that, this being so, the talk of the Brahmans, versed though they be in the Three Vedas, is foolish talk?"

"Verily, Gotama, that being so, it follows that the talk of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas is foolish talk."

"Very good, Vāseṭṭha. Verily then, Vāseṭṭha, that Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas should be able to show the way to a state of union with that which they do not know, neither have seen—such a condition of things can in no wise be."

21. "Just, Vāseṭṭha, as if a man should make a staircase in the place where four roads cross, to mount up into a mansion. And people should say to him, 'Well, good friend, this mansion, to mount up into which you are making this staircase, do you know whether it is in the east, or in the south, or in the west, or in the north, whether it is high or low or of medium size?'

“And when so asked, he should answer: ‘No.’

“And people should say to him, ‘But then, good friend, you are making a staircase to mount up into something—taking it for a mansion—which, all the while, you know not, neither have seen.’

“And when so asked, he should answer: ‘Yes.’

Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Would it not turn out, that being so, that the talk of that man was foolish talk?”

“Verily, Gotama, it would turn out, that being so, that the talk of that man was foolish talk!”¹⁷

22. “And just even so, though you say that the Brahmans are not able to point out the way to union with that which they have seen, and you further say that neither any one of them, nor of their pupils, nor of their predecessors even to the seventh generation has ever seen Brahmā. And you further say that even the Rishis of old; whose words they hold in such deep respect, did not pretend to know, or to have seen where or whence or whither Brahmā is. Yet these Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas say, forsooth, that they can point out the way to union with that which they know not, neither have seen! Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Does it not follow that, this being so, the talk of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas is foolish talk?”

“Verily, Gotama, that being so, it follows that the talk of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas is foolish talk!”

23. “Very good, Vāseṭṭha. Verily then, Vāseṭṭha, that Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas should be able to show the way to a state of union with that which they do not know, neither have seen—such a condition of things can in no wise be.”

24. “Again, Vāseṭṭha, if this river Aciravatī were full of water even to the brim and overflowing. And a man with business on the other side, bound for the other side, making for the other side, should come up, and want to cross over. And he, standing on this bank, should invoke the further bank, and say. ‘Come hither, O further bank! Come over to this side!’^{18 19}

Now what think you Vāseṭṭha? Would the further bank of the river Aciravatī, by reason of that man’s invoking and praying and hoping and praising, come over to this side?”

“Certainly not, Gotama!”

25. “In just the same way, Vāseṭṭha, do the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas—omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahman, and adopting the practice of those qualities which really make men non-Brahmans—say thus: ‘Indra we call upon, Soma we call upon, Varuna we call upon, Isāna we call upon, Pajāpati we call upon, Brahmā we call upon, Mahiddhi we call upon, Yama we call upon!’ Verily, Vāseṭṭha, that those Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas, but omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahman, and adopting the practice of those qualities which really make men non-Brahmans—that they, by reason of their invoking and praying and hoping and praising, should, after death and when the body is dissolved, become united with Brahmā—verily such a condition of things can in no wise be²⁰.”

26. “Just, Vāseṭṭha, as if this river Aciravatī were full, even to the brim, and overflowing. And a man with business on the other side, making for the other side, bound for the other side, should come up, and want to cross over. And he, on this bank, were to be bound tightly with his arms behind his back, by a strong chain. Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha, would that man be able to get over from this bank of the river Aciravatī to the further bank?”

“Certainly not, Gotama!”²¹

27. “In the same way, Vāseṭṭha, there are five things leading to lust,²² which are called, in the Discipline of the Arahats, a ‘chain’ and a ‘bond.’

“What are the five?”

“Forms perceptible to the eye; desirable, agreeable, pleasant; attractive forms, that are accompanied by lust and cause delight. Sounds of the same kind perceptible to the ear. Odours of the same kind perceptible to the nose. Tastes of the same kind perceptible to the tongue. Substances of the same kind perceptible to the body by touch. These five things leading to lust are called, in the Discipline of the Arahats, a ‘chain’ and a ‘bond.’ And these five things leading to lust, Vāseṭṭha, do the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas cling to, they are infatuated by them, attached to them, see not the danger of them, know not how to escape from them, and so enjoy them.”

28. “And verily, Vāseṭṭha, that Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas, but omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahman, and adopting the practice of those qualities which really make men non-Brahmans—clinging to these five things leading to lust, infatuated by them, attached to them, seeing not their danger, knowing not how to escape from them, and so enjoying them—that these Brahmans should after death, on the dissolution of the body, become united to Brahmā—such a condition of things can in no wise be!”²³

29. “Again, Vāseṭṭha, if this river Aciravatī were full of water even to the brim and overflowing. And a man with business on the other side, making for the other side, bound for the other side, should come up and want to cross the river. And if he, covering himself up, even to his head, were to lie down, on his bank; to sleep.

Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Would that man be able to get over from this bank of the river Aciravatī to the further bank?”²⁴

“Certainly not, Gotama!”

30. “And in the same way, Vāseṭṭha, there are these five hindrances in the Discipline of the Arahats, which are called ‘veils,’ and are called ‘hindrances,’ and are called ‘obstacles,’ and are called ‘entanglements.’

“Which are the five?”

“The hindrance of worldly lusts, the hindrance of ill-will, the hindrance of torpor and sloth of heart and mind, the hindrance of flurry and worry, the hindrance of doubt.

“These are the five hindrances, Vāseṭṭha, which, in the Discipline of the Arahats, are called veils, and are called hindrances, and are called obstacles, and are called entanglements.”²⁵

Now with these five hindrances, Vāseṭṭha, the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas are veiled, hindered, obstructed, and entangled.

“And verily, Vāseṭṭha, that Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas, but omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahman, and adopting the practice of those qualities which really make men non-Brahmans—veiled, hindered, obstructed, and entangled by these five hindrances—that these Brahmans should after death, on the dissolution of the body, become united to Brahmā—such a condition of things can in no wise be!”

31. Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha, and what have you heard from the Brahmans aged and well-stricken in years, when the learners and teachers are talking together? Is Brahmā in possession of wives and wealth, or is he not?”^{26,27}

“He is not, Gotama.”

“Is his mind full of anger, or free from anger?”

“Free from anger, Gotama.”

“Is his mind burdened or unburdened?”²⁸

“Free from burden, Gotama.”

“Is his mind tarnished, or is it pure?”

“It is pure, Gotama.”

“Has he self-mastery, or has he not?”

“He has, Gotama.”²⁹

32. Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha; are the Brahmans versed in the Vedas in the possession of wives and wealth or are they not?³⁰

“They are, Gotama.”

“Have they anger in their hearts, or have they not?”

“They have, Gotama.”

“Are their minds burdened, or are they not?”

“They are, Gotama.”

“Are they pure in heart, or are they not?”

“They are not, Gotama.”

“Have they self-mastery, or have they not?”

“They have not, Gotama.”

33. “Then you say, Vāseṭṭha, that the Brahmans are in possession of wives and wealth and that Brahmā is not. Can there, then, be agreement and likeness between the Brahmans with their wives and property, and Brahmā who has none of these things?”³¹

“Certainly not, Gotama!”

34. “Very good, Vāseṭṭha., But, verily, that these Brahmans versed in the Vedas, who live married and wealthy, should after death, when the body is dissolved, become united with Brahmā, who has none of these things—such a condition of things can in no wise be!”

35. “Then you say, too, Vāseṭṭha that the Brahmans bear anger and burdens in their hearts, and are tarnished in heart and uncontrolled, whilst Brahmā is free from anger and burdens, pure in heart and has self-mastery. Now can there, then, be concord and likeness between the Brahmans and Brahmā?”

“Certainly not, Gotama!”³²

36. “Very good, Vāseṭṭha! That these Brahmans versed in the Vedas and yet bearing anger and burdens in their hearts, sinful, and uncontrolled, should after death, when the body is dissolved, become united to Brahmā, who is free from anger and burdens, pure in heart, and has self-mastery—such a condition of things can in no wise be.

“Here then, Vāseṭṭha, the Brahmans, versed though they be in the Three Vedas, while they (confidently) settle down (in their views), are sinking down (in the mire) and so sinking they are arriving only at despair thinking that they are crossing over to dry land.”³³

“Therefore, is it that the threefold wisdom of the Brahmans, wise in their Three Vedas, is called a pathless jungle, their threefold wisdom is called a waterless desert, their threefold wisdom is called perdition!”³⁴

37. When he had thus spoken, the young Brahman Vāseṭṭha said to the Blessed One:

“It has been told me, Gotama, that the Samana Gotama knows the way to the state of union with Brahmā.”³⁵

“What do you think, Vāseṭṭha, is not Manasākaṭa near to this spot, not distant from this spot?”

“Just so, Gotama, Manasākaṭa is near to, is not far from here.”

Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha, suppose there were a man born and brought up in Manasākaṭa, and people should ask him, who had just now left Manasākaṭa, which was the way to Manasākaṭa. Would that man born and brought up in Manasākaṭa, be in any doubt or difficulty?”

“Certainly not, Gotama! And why? If the man had been born and brought up in Manasākaṭa, every road that leads to Manasākaṭa would be perfectly familiar to him.”

38. “That man, Vāseṭṭha, born and brought up at Manasākaṭa might, if he were asked the way to Manasākaṭa, fall into doubt and difficulty, but to the Tathāgata, when asked touching the path which leads to the world of Brahmā, there can be neither doubt nor difficulty. For Brahmā, I know, Vāseṭṭha, and the world of Brahmā, and the path which leads unto it. Yea, I know it even as one who has entered the Brahmā-world, and has been born within it!”³⁶

39. When he had thus spoken, Vāseṭṭha, the young Brahman, said to the Blessed One:

“Just so has it been told me, Gotama, even that the Samana Gotama knows the way to a state of union with Brahmā. It is well! Let the Venerable Gotama be pleased to show us the way to a state of union with Brahmā. Let the Venerable Gotama save the Brahman race.”³⁷

“Listen then, Vāseṭṭha, and give ear attentively, and I will speak!”³⁸

“So be it, Lord!” said the young Brahman Vāseṭṭha, in assent, to the Blessed One.

40. Then the Blessed One spoke and said:

“Know, Vāseṭṭha, that (from time to time) a Tathāgata is born into the world, an Arahat, a fully awakened one, abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide to mortals willing to be led, a teacher of gods and men, a Blessed One, a Buddha. He, by himself, thoroughly understands and sees, as it were, face to face this universe-including the worlds above with the gods, the Māras, and the Brahmas; and the world below with its Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas, its princes and peoples; and he then makes his knowledge known to others. The truth does he proclaim both in the letter and in the spirit, lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation; the higher life does he make known, in all its purity and in all its perfectness.

41. “A householder (*gahapati*), or one of his children, or a man of inferior birth in any class, listens to that truth. On hearing the truth he has faith in the Tathāgata, and when he has acquired that faith he thus considers with himself:

“Full of hindrances is household life, a path defiled by passion: free as the air is the life of him who has renounced all worldly things. How difficult it is for the man who dwells at home to live the higher life in all its fullness, in all its purity, in all its bright perfection! Let me then cut off my hair and beard, let me clothe myself in the orange-coloured robes, and let me go forth from a household life into the homeless state!”

“Then before long, forsaking his portion of wealth, be it great or be it small; forsaking his circle of relatives, be they many or be they few, he cuts off his hair and beard, he clothes himself in the orange-coloured robes, and he goes forth from the household life into the homeless state.”

42. “When he has thus become a recluse he passes a life self-restrained by that restraint which should be binding on a recluse. He is possessed of right behaviour and conduct, and, seeing danger in the slightest faults, he adopts and trains himself in the precepts. He encompasses himself with goodness in word and deed. He sustains his life by means that are quite pure; good is his conduct, guarded the door of his senses; mindful and self-possessed, he is altogether happy!”³⁹

43–75. “And how, Vāseṭṭha, is his conduct?”

“In this, Vāseṭṭha, that the Bhikkhu putting away the killing of living things, holds aloof from the destruction of life. The cudgel and the sword he has laid aside, and ashamed of roughness, and full of mercy, he dwells compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life.

“Putting away the taking of what has not been given, he lives aloof from grasping what is not his own. He takes only what is given, and expecting that gifts will come, he lives his life in honesty and purity of heart.

“Putting away unchastely, he is chaste. He holds himself aloof, far off, from the vulgar practice, the sexual act.

“Putting away lying words, he holds himself aloof from falsehood. He speaks truth, from the truth he never swerves; faithful and trustworthy, he breaks not his word to the world.

“Putting away slander, he holds himself aloof from calumny. What he bears here he repeats not elsewhere to raise a quarrel against the people there: what he hears elsewhere he repeats not here to raise a quarrel against the people there. Thus does he live as a binder together of those who are divided, an encourager of those who are friends, a peacemaker, a lover of peace, delighted in peace, a speaker of words that make for peace.

“Putting away rudeness of speech, he holds himself aloof from harsh language. Whatsoever word is blameless, pleasant to the ear, lovely, reaching to the heart, urbane, pleasing to the people, beloved of the people—such are the words he speaks.

“Putting away frivolous talk, he holds himself away from vain conversation. In season he speaks, in accordance with the facts, words full of meaning, on the doctrine, on the discipline of the Order. He speaks, and at the right time, words worthy to be laid up in one’s heart, fully illustrated, clearly divided, to the point.

“He abstains from causing injury to seeds or plants. He takes but one meal a day, not eating at night, refraining from food after hours (after mid-day). He refrains from being a spectator at shows, at fairs, with nautch dances, singing, and music. He abstains from wearing, adorning or ornamenting himself with garlands, scents, and unguents He abstains from the use of large and lofty beds. He abstains from accepting silver or gold. He abstains from accepting uncooked grain. He abstains from accepting raw meat. He abstains from accepting women or girls. He abstains from accepting bondsmen or bondwomen. He abstains from accepting sheep or goats. He abstains from accepting fowls or swine. He abstains from accepting elephants, cattle, horses, and mares. He abstains from accepting cultivated fields or waste. He abstains from the acting as a go-between or messenger. He abstains from buying and selling. He abstains from cheating with measures, metals, or weights. He abstains from the crooked ways of bribery, cheating, and fraud. He abstains from maiming, murder, putting in bonds, highway robbery, dacoity, and violence.

“This is part of the good conduct that he has.”⁴⁰

(Here follow another two sections on Conduct, given in detail in the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1) and the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* (DN 2).⁴¹ The text continues:)

“And then, Vāseṭṭha, that Bhikkhu being thus possessed of good conduct, sees no danger from any side: that is, so far as concerns his self-restraint in conduct. Just, O Vāseṭṭha, as a sovereign duly crowned, whose enemies have been beaten down, sees no danger from any side; that is so far as enemies are concerned, so is the Bhikkhu confident. And endowed with this so noble a body of morals, he experiences within himself a sense of ease without alloy. Thus is it, Vāseṭṭha, that the Bhikkhu is possessed of good conduct.”⁴²

Sense-control

“And how, Vāseṭṭha, is the Bhikkhu guarded as to the door of his sense? When, Vāseṭṭha, he sees an object with his eyes he is not entranced in the general appearance or the details of it. He sets himself to restrain that which might give occasion for evil states, covetousness, and dejection, to flow in over him so long as he dwells unrestrained as to his sense of sight. He keeps watch upon his faculty of sight, and he attains to mastery over it. And so, in like manner, when he hears a sound with his ear, or smells an odour with his nose, or tastes a flavour with the tongue, or feels a touch with his body, or when he cognizes a phenomenon with his mind, he is not entranced in the general appearance or the details of it. He sets himself to restrain that which might give occasion for evil states, covetousness, and dejection, to flow in over him so long as he dwells unrestrained as to his mental faculty. He keeps watch upon his mental faculty, and he attains to mastery over it. And endowed with this so noble a self-restraint as regards the senses, he experiences, within himself, a sense of ease into which no evil state can enter. Thus is it, Vāseṭṭha, that the Bhikkhu becomes guarded as to the doors of his senses.”⁴³

Mindfulness and Full Awareness

“And how, Vāseṭṭha, is the Bhikkhu mindful and self-possessed? In this matter, Vāseṭṭha, the Bhikkhu in going forth or in coming back is self-possessed in his actions. And so also in looking forward or in looking round; in stretching forward his arm or in drawing it in again; in eating or drinking, in masticating or swallowing, in obeying the calls of nature, in going or standing or sitting, in falling asleep or waking, in speaking or in being still, he is self-possessed in his actions.”⁴⁴

Contentedness

“And how, Vāseṭṭha is the Bhikkhu content? In this matter, Vāseṭṭha, the Bhikkhu is satisfied with his robes to cover his body, with the alms food to provide for his stomach’s needs. Whithersoever he may go, these he takes with him as he goes—just as a bird with his wings, whither so ever he may fly, carries his wings with him as he flies. Thus it is, Vāseṭṭha, that the Bhikkhu becomes content.”⁴⁵

Conquest of the Five Hindrances

“Then, being thus endowed with this so noble body of morals, endowed with this so noble sense-control, endowed with this so noble mindfulness and self-possession, endowed with this so noble contentedness, he chooses some lonely spot in the woods, at the foot of a tree, on a hill side, in a mountain glen, in a rocky cave, in a charnel place, or on a heap of straw in the open field. And returning thither after his round of alms he seats himself, when his meal is done, cross-legged, keeping his body erect, and his mindfulness alert.

“Putting away the hankering after the world, he remains with a heart that hankers not, and purifies his mind of lusts. Putting away the corruption of hate, he remains with a heart free from ill-temper, and purifies his mind of malevolence. Putting away sloth and torpor, perceiving the light, mindful, and self-possessed, he purifies his mind of sloth and torpor. Putting away flurry and worry, he remains free from fretfulness, and with heart serene within, he purifies his mind of flurry and worry. Putting away doubt, he remains as one passed beyond perplexity, and no longer in suspense as to what is good, he purifies his mind of doubt.”⁴⁶

“So long, Vāseṭṭha, as these five Hindrances are not put away within him the Bhikkhu looks upon himself as in debt, diseased, in prison, in slavery, lost on a desert road. But when these five Hindrances have been put away within him, he looks upon himself as freed from debt, rid of disease, out of jail, a free man and secure.

“And gladness springs up within him on his realising that, and joy arises to him thus gladdened, and so rejoicing all his frame becomes at ease, and being thus at ease he feels happy, and a happy mind finds concentration.”

76. “And he lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world—above, below, around, and everywhere—does he continue to pervade with heart of love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure.”

77. “Just, Vāseṭṭha, as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard—and that without difficulty—in all the four directions; even so, if love, the heart’s liberation, has been developed, not any limited kamma (of the sense sphere)⁴⁷ will be left over there, will remain there.”⁴⁸

78. “And he lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of pity, ... sympathy, ... equanimity, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure.”

79. “Just, Vāseṭṭha, as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard—and that without difficulty—in all the four directions; even so, if pity, ... sympathy, ... equanimity, the heart’s liberation, have been developed, not any limited kamma (of the sense sphere) will be left over there, will remain there.

“Verily this, Vāseṭṭha, is the way to a state of union with Brahmā.”

80. Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha, will the Bhikkhu who lives thus be in possession of women and of wealth, or will he not?”

“He will not, Gotama!”

“Will he be full of anger, or free from anger?”

“He will be free from anger, Gotama!”

“Will his mind be burdened, or unburdened?”

“Unburdened, Gotama!”

“Will his mind be tarnished, or pure?”

“It will be pure, Gotama!”

“Will he have self-mastery, or will he not?”

“Surely, he will, Gotama!”

81. “Then you say, Vāseṭṭha, that the Bhikkhu is free from household and worldly cares, and that Brahmā is free from household and worldly cares. Is there then agreement and likeness between the Bhikkhu and Brahmā?”⁴⁹

“There is, Gotama!”

“Very good, Vāseṭṭha! Then verily, Vāseṭṭha, that the Bhikkhu who is free from household cares should after death, when the body is dissolved, become united with Brahmā, who is the same—such a condition of things is every way possible!

“And so you say, Vāseṭṭha, that the Bhikkhu is free from anger, and free from burdens, pure in mind, and master of himself. Then verily, Vāseṭṭha, that the Bhikkhu who is free from anger, free from burdens, pure in mind, and master of himself should after death, when the body is dissolved, become united with Brahmā, who is the same—such a condition of things is every way possible!”⁵⁰

82. When he had thus spoken, the young Brahmans Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja addressed the Blessed One and said:

“Most excellent, Lord, are the words of thy mouth, most excellent! Just as if a man were to set up that which is thrown down, or were to reveal that which is hidden away, or were to point out the right road to him who has gone astray, or were to bring a lamp into the darkness, so that those who have eyes can see external forms—just even so, Lord, has the truth been made known to us, in many a figure, by the Exalted One. And we, even we, betake ourselves, Lord, to the Blessed One as our refuge, to the Truth, and to the Brotherhood.⁵¹ May the Blessed One accept us as disciples, as true believers, from this day forth, as long as life endures!”⁵²

The Tevijja Suttanta

Translated by Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids. From *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part 1 (Pali Text Society, London).

Notes

Key: Notes marked “PD” are by Paul Debes;
RhD. are by Rhys-Davids.
All others are by the editor of *The Wheel* series.

¹ Literally, “The Sutta (spoken) to knowers of the Three Vedas.”

² Manasākaṭa is a Brahmin village. The Brahmins think of themselves as the “pure ones” (Brahmā = pure). It is the first and highest caste of the four existing at that time. To this caste belong the priests exclusively, but not all members of the caste are officiating priests. Many of them are hardly acquainted with Brahmanical lore and engaged in a variety of other occupations.

Manasākaṭa, the village of the Brahmins, therefore, must not be understood as being populated exclusively by those who performed priestly functions. The Awakened One stayed near that village on the bank of a river with a great company of brethren. The Buddha never entered a village or a town to teach, except when invited. He always dwelt outside the abode of men in the open air, in quiet groves or parks so that enquirers could come out to see him.

At that time the Awakened One was accompanied by 500 monks. These monks did not always gather round the Great Teacher. Those already initiated into the Norm and the Discipline lived in seclusion in the forest, nearly all day long given to exercises in mental concentration according to the directions given by the Buddha. The novices among them were instructed in small groups by elder and experienced brethren. In general, the monks met for talk only in the night after their period of meditation was over. At this point it might not be amiss to say a few words about the monastic life so utterly strange and foreign to the mentality of modern man. One may ask: Is it then impossible to pursue a high religious ideal as a householder, a businessman, a father of a large family? It is certainly not impossible, but very difficult; even if the ideal is restricted to the one aspired to by the Brahmin priests. Also for their ideal, the communion with God, the conditions of achieving it as mentioned by the Buddha later in this discourse, demand a degree of purity and devoted effort that is very hard to achieve for a householder. And still more so it is for one who aims at the attainment of Nibbāna, the complete eradication of greed, hatred, and delusion. Hence, from the beginning of his career the Enlightened One stresses the value of the “homeless life” of a monk. Nevertheless, many admirable virtues can be acquired by the breadwinner who cares and provides for his loved ones. The Sublimely Awakened One has only words of praise for the devout householder. Monastic life, however, a life dedicated exclusively to constant mindfulness and self-discipline, is not a calling for the many but only an ideal for the few; but many a man may make himself ripe for it. An identical point of view can be found in the Gospel where the distinction between householder and discipleship is clearly drawn. The rich young man, aspiring to the higher life, asks Jesus what he must do to be saved. To which Jesus replies: “Keep the commandments!” When the youth tells him that he had done so from childhood on, Jesus shows him the way leading from a life of disciplinary virtue to the summit of perfection: “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.” Jesus himself had left his mother and sisters and did not take up married life. (P.D.)

³ It was without doubt a high ideal that found expression in the young Brahmins’ quest for the Path of Communion with their god. They knew well that living a righteous life, as best as humanly possible, will lead to rebirth among humans in favourable conditions, repeating itself, birth after birth, as long as they continue doing good and shunning evil.

They also knew that a still more strenuous effort along the Path will lead them to higher spheres of divine nature, realms of existence between the human and the Brahmā world, spheres of a greater happiness than human life can bestow, both in intensity and duration. Yet, both these aims—the human as well as the lower divine—left them dissatisfied. They sensed the transitoriness in them, and

the dread of a possible fall into lower states of existence in human and even sub-human worlds. They knew that life in any sphere even the highest, of saṃsāric existence was subject to the Law of Kamma: as you act so you will become and having been reborn, you will through new deeds create new life, and so on ceaselessly.

Brahmā, so they were taught, was exempt from the law of causation. Effect and cause held no sway over him. In his heaven was security, eternal peace, and ecstatic bliss. Brahmā the Eternal, Brahmā the Supreme, the Absolute Ruler, Lord and Creator of the Universe, Brahmā the Father of all that is and all that is to be: The union with such a deity was their highest aspiration. The Buddha with his profound vision saw the error of their belief. Yet, with incomparable pedagogic insight he did not fulminate against the error but rather helped the erring priests along the Path of their own choosing. (P.D.)

⁴ To behold these two young Brahmins who could not agree with each other to go to the Buddha to let him be the arbiter must seem rather strange to the present-day reader. As already mentioned before, the Buddha's teaching differed fundamentally from the concepts and doctrines of Brahmanism. However, exactly here do we come to the root of that tolerance which to this very day predominates the religious climate of both India and the Far East. We find it exemplified in the Buddha's friendly attitude to Brahmins and Jains alike which won him their respect and admiration during the 45 years of his public life. In him there is not to be found a trace of that aggressive self-righteousness which is still permeating the air of religious controversy in the West. Whatever his utterances, all of them are uncontentious, factual, and convincing.

A rather curious parallel to the above can be found in the Christian Scriptures. There the Jewish priests, too, ply Jesus with questions concerning the Law of Moses, the ritual observances and the conflict of duties which might arise in serving either God or Caesar. And, similarly, they display all outward signs of respect and admiration: "We know Thou art a Master in Israel." However, they approach him not with the desire of gaining knowledge or insight but only to trap and ensnare him. Behind the mask of feigned benevolence lurks unmitigated hatred, defiance and contempt.

There is something unique and awe-inspiring in the person of the Buddha which won him fame throughout the land. Its echo is heard in a paean of praise uttered by those who have come in contact with his mighty presence. Thus we hear the two young Brahmins allude to him as:

"The Sublime Lord, the Arahāt, the perfect Enlightened One, Endowed with Knowledge and Conduct, the Happy One, Knower of the Worlds, the Peerless charioteer of men to be tamed, Teacher of Gods and men, Buddha, the Lord."

This is an unusual appellation, both solemn and sublime, through which the young priest pays homage to the incomparable teacher. And here again we become aware of the wide gulf that separates Eastern and Western attitudes of religious expectation and fulfilment.

In the West an "Anointed One," a "Messiah," is expected to come down from on high. In Christianity he is identified with Jesus of Nazareth. In Judaism the "Messiah" is still expected and thought to be the Messenger of God who cares for none but the children of Israel, his chosen people. In this small and insignificant nation the Kingdom of God shall then be established, and the Israelites miraculously transformed into light-bearers for the illumination of the benighted "heathen."

In the East and particularly in India no such national "Saviour" has ever been dreamed of, much less a divine messenger or a prophet. It is always a fully enlightened Man, a Buddha, to which the hopes and aspirations of the East have turned from time immemorial. A human being, it has to be that, makes his appearance only in the world of humans of which there have been many in aeons past and of which many more are expected in aeons to come. Not a "Saviour" who atones for the "sins" of his chosen people but a fully Awakened One who, by overcoming the Kamma of saṃsāric existence, has broken the vicious circle of birth and death; one who by his teaching and example demonstrates how deliverance can be won by all and sundry. Such a Buddha is called "The Exalted One, the Arahāt, the fully Enlightened One, endowed with Wisdom and Conduct, the Happy One, Knower of the Worlds, the Peerless Charioteer of Men to be tamed, the Teacher of Gods and Men, Buddha, the Lord."

That is the meaning of “The Noble Sound of Praise” the young Brahman uttered without being aware of its full significance. For him and his companion it was Brahmā only in whom deliverance was to be found. (P.D.)

- ⁵ “The Brahman priests sat down beside him.” The sitting-down position, without facing each other, is worth of note. Between two people engaged in some business transaction the seating order would be different: two business men would be seated facing each other. The same would hold with two lovers. Their happiness lies in beholding the face of the beloved. The Buddha and his enquirers sit side by side because the subject-matter of their discussion calls for undivided attention, concentration and practical application. A learning situation between Master and pupil is established here which is typical for the whole East. (P.D.)
- ⁶ According to the Sub-commentary, these two are Yajurveda priests. *Addhariyā: addharo* (Skr.: *adhvara*) is a kind of sacrifice. Sacrificial prayers (*yajūni*) concerned with it are called *addhariya* (Skr.: *adhvaryu*), and also those who recite them. *Tittiriya* (Skr.: *taittiriya*) are those who recite the mantras composed by the sage Tittiri. “Tittira” is a name for the Yajurveda.
- ⁷ Chandoka (Skr.: *chandoga*). Sub-Cy.: *chando* (“verse”) especially applied to the Sāma Veda.
- ⁸ Bavharijha, Sub-Cy.: Because there are many hymns of praise in it (*bhavo iriyo thomanā ettha’ti*), the Rigveda (Pali: *irubbedā*) is called *bhavi*.
- ⁹ Cy: The Blessed One uttered this question three times and made Vāsetṭha confirm his reply. Why did he do that? Because sectarians, after having made an assertion, often deny having made it when refuted. Having been questioned thrice, they cannot do so.
- ¹⁰ Here the assertion is made and answered three times. The reason is obvious: Vāsetṭha’s statement is the starting point for the discussion to follow. He reiterates his conviction that the guidance of the priests towards Union with Brahmā is absolutely necessary. (P.D.)
- ¹¹ The Awakened One opens the discussion with a very elementary question about the source of their knowledge of the Path to Brahmā. Is there a single one among the Brahmans, he asks, who has ever seen Brahmā face to face? The biblical prophets, at least, could tell the Jews that, although they had not seen God, however, they heard his voice. The young priests are in quite a quandary here because they do not know of anybody who knew Brahmā from personal acquaintance. (P.D.)
- ¹² Admittedly, the young priests failed to present the evidence of their ever having heard or seen Brahmā. But what about their teachers? Or the teachers of these up to the seventh generation, from Master to pupil and so on? Did not the Brahmins glorify themselves and their ancestors of being the pure offspring of Brahmā’s mouth? The Buddha, pursuing this line of questioning, continues; “and what of the Rishis through whom the Vedas were given? Did they ever say they had seen Brahmā?” To all that the young priests can only answer in the negative. (P.D.)
- ¹³ By pursuing this line of questioning the Buddha achieved his purpose, i.e., to arouse these tradition-bound young minds from their dogmatic slumber. In pointing out to them the unreasonableness of blind belief unsupported by any evidence, he shook their smug self-complacency, making them alert and eager to inquire further. How different we find the apostles in the New Testament narratives. When “doubting Thomas” could not believe that Christ had risen: “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into them,” Jesus appeared to him saying: “Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed.” So deeply convinced was Jesus of the rightfulness of his mission that he beseeches, as it were, his followers to pay no attention to wavering doubts but to follow him blindly and without reserve.

On the other hand, the Buddha, without being one iota less convinced of the rightfulness of his Mission, cautions his followers to beware of blind belief, hearsay, or tradition. The supreme Enlightened One knew the dangers of trusting credulity, the fallacy of hide-bound tradition, the craftiness of priests, and the exploitation of the faithful.

Thomas, the doubting Apostle, would only believe in the testimony of the senses, which is quite right as far as it goes. It would be foolish, however, to narrow the range of experience down to sense perception only. There exists an inner world in man, a world of feelings, volitions, tendencies, and mind. We cannot separate the one from the other: the two of them together constitute what is called

human experience. The ideal to which we must give our allegiance is a comprehensive one which involves the total personality of body and mind. We shall later see in the Discourse how the striving for this ideal widens our outlook and deepens our insight. (P.D.)

- ¹⁴ String of blind men (*andhaveni*) Cy.: The end of a stick held by a man who can see, is caught by a blind man; to him another blind man clings, to him again another. If in that way fifty to sixty blind men are joined in a line, it is called a 'string of blind men' (*andhapaveni*).

Clinging to each other (*paramparaṃ saṃsatta*) Cy.: This means: being bereft even of that seeing man who holds the stick.

In a Viennese museum there is a striking picture by the Flemish painter Pieter Breughel jr., of such a "string of blind men," led by a drunkard who takes them towards a precipice—the blindness of ignorance (*avijjā*) led on by the intoxication of craving (*taṇhā*).

- ¹⁵ Here we have a paradoxical situation: the priests pretend to know the right path leading to Brahmā, yet they have never seen him nor heard his voice. They say: "We are following his footprints," without realizing that they are only deceiving themselves as did their progenitors up to the seventh generation. The Buddha compares the endless generations of priests with a string of blind men being led by a leader who is himself blind. Which brings to mind the saying of Jesus in the Gospels: "Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (P.D.)

- ¹⁶ It must be remembered that the Sun and the Moon were gods just much as Brahmā. (Rh.D.)

- ¹⁷ The parable about the most beautiful woman nobody knows, and the one that follows, about the staircase leading nowhere, illustrate two important facts. First, the absurdity of the priests attributing to Brahmā the title "highest" in complete ignorance of the criterion upon which to base such sublime an epithet. It is like an ardent lover's yearning to behold the most beautiful maiden. Only the poor youth has not the faintest idea whether such an exquisite beauty exists, let alone where to find her. Secondly, the staircase parable. The man who builds the staircase does not know where the location of the tower is he wants to climb. The priests find themselves in the same predicament. They are offering prayers, invocations, rites and sacrifices to Brahmā without knowing where he is or whether he will be able to receive their offerings and answer their supplications. (P.D.)

- ¹⁸ The Buddha, as usual, here takes the "further bank" in the meaning attached to it by the theologians he is talking to, as union with Brahmā. In his own system, of course, the "further-bank" is Arahantship. See *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, V 232, 233, and elsewhere. (Rh.D.)

- ¹⁹ In the parable of the two banks of a river, the Buddha covers the basic theme of the whole Sutta: how can the union between God and Man be brought about, or in our specific situation, the union between Brahmā and the priests. Hither bank stands for the world of human; the bank beyond for the world of Brahmā, the abode of the gods. The twain will never meet unless man bestirs himself and, by his own efforts, crosses the river to the bank beyond. (P.D.)

- ²⁰ Here the Buddha applies the riverbank parable to the priests. They call themselves Brahmans, which means the "pure" ones, yet in their innermost thoughts they turned away from Brahmā leading lives that are anything but Brahmanical. So it was they that created the gulf existing between themselves and Brahmā. And for the same reason, because they are no longer "pure," a marked deterioration of character had taken place dragging them down to the level of the common herd of men.

The same sad state of affairs re-echoes through Christian teachings also. Mankind—according to them—has fallen away from its divine source, has split up into countless fragments that fight each other, has lost its original unity with its Creator. That is the meaning of the biblical myth of the "Fall" by which the progenitors of mankind were driven out of paradise; and, in the celestial realm, there was a "War in Heaven" whereby Lucifer the "Lightbearer" turned into Satan, the Prince of Darkness. He became the ruler of this manbearing globe, and with him mankind finds itself alienated from God, the Father of Light, and tainted with "original sin." It is against this sinister background that the Apostle John admonishes the early Christians:

"Do not love the world nor what is in it. Anyone who loves the world, in him the Father's love does not dwell. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is

not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John, 15–17.

The world of men dominated by greed, hatred and lust, and the world of God, as its opposite, appear in the Sutta as the two banks of a river, separated by an unbridgeable gulf.

It is a well-known fact in the history of religions that a change of attitude manifests itself as soon as religious institutions begin to settle down comfortably in the world of men. In ages where the life of the spirit still predominates, men's thoughts turn inwardly. The great conflict between the powers of light and darkness is being fought in the heart of men. They realize that salvation is not something to be achieved by external observances, ritualistic prayers, and incantations but by treading the lonely path of purification and self-abnegation. Conversely, when men try to serve two masters at the same time, chasing after sensuous pleasures and serving their God, deterioration of both the temporal and the spiritual order will follow. (P.D.)

²¹ The parable of the two river banks explains quite clearly the problem of the union of man with Brahmā. However, as we shall see presently, the very act of crossing the river cannot be performed by sheer power of will; for the will finds itself obstructed, hampered and impeded by five fetters, or hindrances, as the Buddha calls them. Thus before the crossing can start at all man has to loosen and get rid of these five fetters first. (P.D.)

²² Kāmaguṇa, "strands (or bonds) of sense desires," the sense objects.

²³ The Buddha states that the five fetters binding man to the hither bank of earthly existence are his senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and the sense of touch. We may wonder why the five senses, of all things, are denounced by the Enlightened One as if there were anything morally wrong with them. Besides, how is man to get rid of them and, if that be possible at all, survive as a human being? It stands to reason that the Buddha touches here on something far more significant than the mere *existence* of our physical sense organs. In this particular passage the Buddha does not discuss as yet the true meaning of the term "fetters"; in other words, the *ethical* side of the uses and abuses of the senses is to be elaborated later in the Sutta.

At this point it will be fitting to turn our attention once more to the world of man in which we all live and move and have our being. The mere physical aspect of it reveals a bewildering variety of drives some constructive, some destructive, some of a neutral nature. In this teeming chaos a guiding principle is needed which the ethical teachings of all great religions set down and enunciated under the name of the "Golden Rule" which says: "Do unto others what you would want them to do unto you!" By observing the Golden Rule justice and peace can be maintained among human beings and the welfare of all guaranteed. However, the Golden Rule must not be conceived of as a panacea to bring about a miraculous change in human character with its almost unlimited potentialities for better and worse.

We have seen how this teeming mass of humanity, as soon as it organises itself into societies, cannot dispense with some principle in inter-personal relationships and how the "Golden Rule" establishes such a principle as a basic ethical standard. Although from the eagle's point of view humanity might appear as an amorphous mass, to the discriminating observer on the ground level forms are seen to be moving about. Or—to use a somewhat abstract type of reasoning—it is the existence of individual forms that makes for multiplicity. This world of innumerable things could not be apprehended were it not through individualized forms, assuming the shape of men here, the shape of beast, plant, or stone there. Form is limitation, no matter its size or shape of manifestation. Through his body man appears as form, through his sense organs he becomes aware of being localized in space and time. He hears sounds, he sees contours and colours, he smells odours, he tastes flavours, he touches bodies. He is attracted by beautiful forms and repelled by ugly and monstrous forms. Love and hatred, sympathy and antipathy are all aroused by form. Therefore, the Buddha says: "Where there is form there is hatred, rage and the shedding of blood, war and discord, quarrels and disputes, fraud and lies. In a world of no-form (*arūpa*) these cannot be found." The Buddha, now turning to the priests, points out to them the cause and cure of their predicament. Because of their being in bondage to the world of form they are fettered and chained to this world of limitation and can never reach Brahmā, unless they unshackle themselves and get rid of their fetters.

It has to be made clear, however, that sense perception by itself is ethically neutral. This cannot be said plain enough. Not the use but the abuse of sense experience leads to bondage and alienation from the Brahmā state. Bondage constitutes the inevitable effect of lustful attachment to the object of sense of which the latter is the cause. The conquest of lust, the overcoming of attachment to the world of sense experience, is, therefore, the main objective of all religious teaching, Buddhist as well as Christian. The great Christian mystic, Angelus Silesius, puts it succinctly:

“Friend, leave behind the joy,
flee what men’s hearts desire
then otherwise you will
here never peace acquire.
We could have tasted lust
of the eternal bliss,
if not in carnal sphere
we ate too much of this.”

For anyone who loves the world of sense objects, who craves sense satisfaction, there is no room left for the serene calm of Brahmā’s world, for the bliss divine, for the union with god. Thus, we see, there exists a state of indescribable sublimity where the rules of ethics are not applicable any more, where the opposites of good and evil are transcended. In our world of greed, hatred and delusion the observation of rules regulating inter-personal relations is of paramount importance. Their disregard would cause chaos and universal anarchy. Therefore, as already mentioned, the founders of the Great Religions did lay down specific rules of conduct known either as the Ten Commandments of Moses or the Five Silas of the Buddha. Those who conscientiously observe these ethical rules are rightly called the just and the righteous among men. Yet there exists a more excellent way, a Path leading to heights beyond the mere disciplinary observances of the worldling, called the path of Beyondless Liberation, the Highroad to ultimate deliverance and immortality. (P.D.)

- ²⁴ Another parable. Again we are told of a man lying on the ground on hither side of the river. He is neither shackled nor bound but wrapped up in his clothes to his head. He would be capable of crossing the river were it not for the restraining clothes that render any movement impossible. (P.D.)
- ²⁵ See *The Five Hindrances and their Conquest, The Wheel*, No. 26, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy.
- ²⁶ *Sapariggaho vā Brahmā apariggaho vā ti*. Cy.: “Owing to the absence of worldly lusts (*kāmacchanda*, ‘sense desire’), he is free of possessing wives (*itthipariggahena*)” Rh.D.: ... thus restricting the “possession” to women. But the reference is, no doubt, to the first Hindrance; and the word in the text, though doubtless alluding to possession of women also, includes more. Compare, on the general idea of the passage, the English expression, “no encumbrance.”
- ²⁷ This dialogue is significant for the reason that the Buddha makes here a comparison between Brahmā’s sublime characteristics, on the one hand, and the human foibles of the Three-Vedas-Priests, on the other. In Socratic fashion the Sublime Lord draws the answers out from the young Brahmans. A sad catalogue of human shortcomings is now being revealed while Brahmā emerges pure and undefiled. (P.D.)
- ²⁸ *Sabyāpajja-citto vā abyāpajja-citto vā’ti*. The meaning of *sabyāpajja* that applies here is, no doubt, “being oppressed”, and not “malicious.” Also the explanation of the Cy., in the next note points to it.
- ²⁹ The Cy. identifies now the subject of the other four questions with the last four of the five hindrances: “Being without ill-will, he is free from any thought of hate. Being without sloth and torpor, he is unoppressed (unburdened) by that oppression which is also called a ‘mental ailment’. Being without flurry and worry, his mind is undefiled (untarnished; *asaṅkiliṭṭha*) and pure, with regard to these and other defilements (*kilesa*). Being without doubt, he has mastery over his mind (*vasavatti*); he is not like those Brahmans who are carried away by their thoughts, are mastered by them,”
- ³⁰ Against the radiant image of their god the Three-Vedas-Priests make a pitiful showing, indeed. Once more the priests are induced by the Buddha to admit their teachers’ shortcomings. “Our teachers,” they say, “bear anger and malice in their hearts. Attached to mundane possessions, surrounded by wives, children and servants, they are overbearing, harsh and contemptuous toward their inferiors.”

Unintentionally, however, the young priests bear witness here to their own high standard of morals by saying that a man's character is already tarnished even if he only once flares up in anger. How different from that is Brahmā's all-embracing kindness. His love, sympathy, and benevolence pervade the whole world. By his very nature he dispels even the faintest shadow of anger, malice, or ill-will. By the way: the discourse casts a rather sad reflection on our own personal weaknesses so well hidden behind the mask of polite manners but when aroused, striking like blind furies against our adversaries. (P.D.)

- ³¹ Let us assume two vessels on different water levels; how can they ever meet or even hold on to the same course? Similarly, the absence of a common level separates human beings from the Brahmanic realm of absolute Oneness. And just as two vessels, sailing alongside on the same water surface, so can human beings share Brahmā's abode only by lifting themselves up to the god's level of existence. (P.D.)
- ³² In this passage the Buddha states unequivocally that the Three-Vedas-Priests "after death and the dissolution of the body" will never achieve union with Brahmā. This may sound like a harsh saying were it not based upon the very facts of existence. Analysing these facts, we arrive at a two-fold mode of human conduct, namely, the outer appearance through which man confronts his fellow-beings, and the inner life through which man confronts himself. The outer appearance, that is, the bodily shape and peculiar characteristics of an individual remain fairly the same. The inner life by which we summarise feelings, tendencies, volitions and attitudes, is subject to change either for better or for worse. These forces of the inner man are moulding right now, in this present life, the exterior shape in which the life-continuum will re-emerge in its next birth. The inner life of a person may sometimes reflect itself in a beautiful form while, on the other hand, a face of repelling ugliness may conceal a saintly character. Thus the angel of light, Lucifer, as Christian tradition has it, rebelled against God, was cast out from heaven, passed away and reappeared in hell as Satan, the Prince of Darkness. The Buddha, therefore, proclaims the Law of Moral Causation: as you act so you shall become. In other words, it is your character that builds your future abode. Consequently: let your volitions be Brahmanic and in your next existence you shall dwell with Brahmā. (P.D.)
- ³³ *Āsīditvā samsidanti*. Cy: "Settling down (in their views), i e., taking the wrong path for the right one, they sink down, i e., they enter, as it were, a mire, in the belief that it is level and firm ground. Like those deceived by a mirage think that they have to cross a brimful river, they, struggling with hands and feet, press on in the belief that it is a crossing to drier land."
- ³⁴ The daily routine of the young priests consisted primarily in learning by rote the countless Vedic Hymns and committing to memory the ritualistic directions of properly performing sacrifices. Taking the dead letter of the scriptures for their guide, they imagined themselves as the only true followers of Brahmā; although to their credit it must be said that they were not yet steeped so deeply in their self-deception as to preclude any possibility of better judgment. No wonder they become alarmed when they hear the Buddha denounce the Three-Vedas-Priests as a "waterless desert," a "pathless jungle" and a "way to perdition." Their self-confidence is shaken, and now they lift their eyes up to the Buddha seeking his guidance. But the Buddha keeps silent. It is left to the priests to ask for more light, to prove the sincerity of their interest and the seriousness of their quest for Brahmā. (P.D.)
- ³⁵ Again they start questioning the Buddha yet in a somewhat guarded manner. "We understand," so they say, "the ascetic Gotama knows the way to Brahmā." These words reveal the high esteem in which the Enlightened One is held even by the adherents of Brahmanism, the ruling religion of the day. (P.D.)
- ³⁶ The Awakened One, first of all, by-passes the question of the Path. What he does, however, is to make such a startling pronouncement that the young priests are taken by sudden surprise. The Buddha declares, namely, that he knows Brahmā face to face and, consequently, the Path leading to him; but even more: he knows how Brahmā gained dominion over his realm. The priests are baffled. If a foolish person sounded off with a statement like this, it would be downright blasphemous. Even in the mouth of a wise man it would sound reckless. But coming from no less a person than the Buddha—no exception is taken by the young priests. (P.D.)
- ³⁷ *Brahmaṇiṃ pajam*, 'the Brahmanical offspring'. Cy.: "May the venerable Gotama extricate me, the son of the Brahmans, from the road to perdition and set me on the road to the Brahmā world!"

³⁸ “Let the Venerable Gotama save the Brahman race ...”—with these words the young priests express their confidence in the Buddha and a sincere concern for the purity of their own calling. They now beg the Buddha to explain to them, step by step, the Path to Brahmā. The Buddha willingly consents. (P.D.)

³⁹ “A Tathāgata is born into the world, an Arahāt, a fully Awakened One, abounding in Wisdom and Conduct ...” With these solemn words the Great Way of a World-Illuminator, a Buddha, is declared open; we find these words spoken in many Suttas, particularly in the Dīgha Nikāya. The Path is declared open, the landmarks of the Dhamma are being laid out, the steep ascent to the summit of final Liberation is now made possible. Householders or their sons hear the call, abandon worldly life, free themselves from sensual attachments and, under the guidance of the Buddha, attain to Sainthood or Arahātship.

Only a Buddha possesses all the qualifications that are spoken of in the above solemn annunciation. He has not only realized the Path by going it: he has become the Path itself. What is this Noble Path and what are its stages?

The first stage of the Noble Eightfold Path is designated by the Buddha as Right and wholesome View, the first prerequisite to be acquired by the pilgrim. “Right” and “wholesome” have here quite specific connotations. Right refers to the Buddha’s Norm and wholesome to the Buddha’s discipline which, when adhered to, results in wholesome consequences.

In aeons past all the Buddhas have taught the same Doctrine of universal suffering and the way out of it. Because the human situation has not changed—and history bears witness thereto—the Buddhas promulgated in essence the same truth of humanity’s fatal clinging to evanescent possessions in its endless turning on the wheel of birth and death. The Noble Path of the Buddhas includes the one leading to Brahmā. However, the Pali Texts firmly put Brahmā in his proper place; he is neither omniscient nor omnipotent, and his present position, like that of other beings, is the result of past actions—Kamma. He occupies a lofty, but still mundane plane of existence.

“Full of hindrances is the household life, a path defiled by passion ... how difficult it is for a householder to live the higher life in all its fullness, in all its purity, in all its bright perfection.” Out of these considerations householders or their sons leave their families and devote themselves to wholesome pursuits that lead to the state of holiness or Arahātship.

Family life is part and parcel of life’s manifold expressions; it is the sphere of social intercourse which can be either one of hostile encounter or one of gentle approach. In this mingling of groups with their conflicting interests, the family stands out as an island of peace and order, the maintenance of which works for warmth and security. Through unity and concord within the family, all its members are sheltered from disaster caused by unbridled greed with all its dire consequences of rivalry, hate, quarrel, and destruction. In family life the art of the gentle approach is cultivated; therefore, it is justly spoken of as good and valuable, while those tendencies that cause the family to split asunder are spoken of as dangerous and disruptive.

However, on a higher level, beyond mankind’s manifold strivings, there exists a world of One-ness which in all religions is designated as the sphere of the Divine. There the longings for the affections of family life are transcended and transformed. Because “from affection,” declares the Buddha in the Dhammapada, “is born grief; from affection fear is begotten” (213). Only *mettā*, the all-inclusive love, leads to the state of union with Brahmā. As the Christian Gospels say: “The children of this world marry and are given in marriage. But they which shall be accounted worthy to inherit that other world and the resurrection of the dead neither marry, nor are given in marriage” (Luke, 20, 34). Consequently, in the Brahmanic sphere of oneness neither separation of the sexes nor their mating takes place any more. Family life, celibacy, chastity or its counterpart, have entirely lost their meaning.

The resolve of a householder to leave family and possessions, to go forth into homelessness can be included into the second stage of the Noble Eightfold Path, namely: Right Aspiration or Right Resolve. (P.D.)

⁴⁰ Here the Path of Purification begins, leading from the state of the worldling to the state of Brahmā. In this passage the pilgrim’s first steps on the Path are outlined in detail, not unlike a compendium of Buddhist ethics—however, with one fundamental difference: in the Ten Commandments a personal

God is the Law-giver meting out rewards or punishments, according to obedience or disobedience of the doer. In Buddhist ethics no external Law-giver determines the motive of man's actions. Buddhists do not rely on such external sanctions as God, Church or State. In the Buddha's Code of Ethics we, too, are enjoined not to take life nor to lie or to bear false testimony, etc. However, the Buddha counsels, he never threatens. Instead of saying: "Thou shalt not...!" he says: "He (the disciple) avoids the killing of living beings and abstains from it." And likewise: "he avoids taking what is not given to him and abstains from it." Here the Buddha emphasizes not so much the outer deed but rather the inner or mental attitude of the doer. Not by a cold command is the latter motivated from taking life, nor does he feel that formal compliance with a disciplinary code renders his deeds ethically meaningful—it is compassion and kindness that move him and not fear of punishment. The same inner attitude obtains in the case of theft, unchastity, lying, calumny, and rudeness of speech. By keeping the Buddha's counsels in mind and applying them to his daily actions, the disciple will soon discover a new and purified atmosphere around him in which virtue comes with joy and vice loses the lure of its seductive power.

The third precept enjoins complete abstention from sexual intercourse upon those who tread the Path of Brahmā and upon others on the Path to even higher perfection. From those who cannot leave their families the Buddha demands self-control as against licentiousness and self-indulgence. He warns against seduction of virgins still under parental guardianship and against unlawful sex practices with persons under the bond of matrimony. The second counsel concerning speech requires abstinence from frivolous and senseless talk. Not only calumny is frowned upon but also reporting with malicious intent what is meant to be secret.

The first three commands deal with the acts of men, the others with his speech. The four demands of speech belong to the third and the three commands of acting belong to the fourth stage of the Noble Eightfold Path. All the other commands beginning with ... "he holds himself aloof from causing injury to seeds or plants," till the end of this passage, belong to the fifth stage of the Noble Eightfold Path and are principally, but not exclusively, for the monk who wants to detach himself from the turmoil of the world. The last lines, however, are directed to all and sundry, because their observance tends to make human life smooth and tolerable. (P.D.)

⁴¹ "Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to the injury of seedlings and growing plants whether propagated from roots or cuttings or joints or buddings or seeds—Gotama the recluse abstains from such injury to seedlings and growing plants."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to the use of things stored up; stores, to wit, of foods, drinks, clothing, equipages, bedding, perfumes, and curry-stuffs—Gotama the recluse abstains from such use of things stored up."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to visiting shows; that is to say, nautch dances, singing of song, instrumental music, shows at fairs, ballad recitations, hand music, the chanting of bard, tam-tam playing, fairy scenes, acrobatic feats by candālas, combats of elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, cocks, and quails, bouts at quarter-staff, boxing, wrestling, sham-fights, roll-calls, manreuvres, reviews.—Gotama the recluse abstains from visiting such shows."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to games and recreations; that is to say, games on boards with eight, or with ten, rows of squares, the same games played by imagining such boards in the air, keeping going over diagrams drawn on the ground so that one steps only where one ought to go, either removing the pieces or men from a heap with one's nail, or putting them into a heap, in each case without shaking it, he who shakes the heap, loses, throwing dice, hitting a short stick with a long one, dipping the hand with the fingers stretched out in lac, or red dye, or flour-water, and striking the wet hand on the ground or on a wall, calling out 'what shall it be?' and showing the form required—elephants, horses, &c, games with balls, blowing through toy pipes made of leaves, ploughing with toy ploughs, turning summersaults, playing with toy windmills made of palm-leaves, playing with toy measures made of palm-leaves, playing with toy carts or toy bows, guessing at letters traced in the air, or on a playfellow's back,

guessing the playfellow's thoughts, mimicry of deformities, Gotama the recluse abstains from such games and recreations."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to the use of high and large couches; that is to say, moveable settees, high, and six feet long, divans with animal figures carved on the supports, (3) goats' hair coverlets with very long fleece, patchwork counterpanes of many colours, white blankets, woollen coverlets embroidered with flowers, quilts stuffed with cotton wool, coverlets embroidered with figures of lions, tigers, &c, rugs with fur on both sides, rugs with fur on one side, coverlets embroidered with gems, silk coverlets, carpets large enough for sixteen dancers, elephant, horse, and chariot rugs, rugs of antelope skins sewn together, rugs of skins of the plantain antelope, carpets with awnings above them, sofas with red pillows for the head and feet."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to the use of means for adorning and beautifying themselves; that is to say,—rubbing in scented powders on one's body, shampooing it, and bathing it. patting the limbs with clubs after the manner of wrestlers. the use of mirrors, eye-ointments, garlands, rouge, cosmetics, bracelets, necklaces, walking-sticks, reed cases for drugs, rapiers, sunshades, embroidered slippers, turbans, diadems, whisks of the yak's tail, and long-fringed white robes— Gotama the recluse abstains from such means of adorning and beautifying the person."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to such low conversation as these: tales of kings, of robbers, of ministers of state; tales of war, of terrors, of battles; talk about foods and drinks, clothes, beds, garlands, perfumes; talks about relationships, equipages, villages, town, cities, and countries; tales about women, and about heroes; gossip at street corners, or places whence water is fetched; ghost stories; desultory talk; speculations about the creation of the land or sea, or about existence and non-existence—Gotama the recluse abstains from such low conversation."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to the use of wrangling phrases: such as—"You don't understand this doctrine and discipline, I do." "How should you know about this doctrine and discipline?" "You have fallen into wrong views. It is I who am in the right." "I am speaking to the point, you are not." "You are putting last what ought to come first, and first what ought to come last." "What you've excogitated so long, that's all quite upset." "Your challenge has been taken up." "You are proved to be wrong." "Set to work to clear your views." "Disentangle yourself if you can."—Gotama the recluse abstains from such wrangling phrases."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to taking messages, going on errands, and acting as go-betweens; to wit, on kings, ministers of state, Kshatriyas, Brahmans, or young men, saying: 'Go there, come hither, take this with you, bring that from thence'—Gotama the recluse abstains from such servile duties."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, are tricksters, droners out (of holy words for pay), diviners, and exorcists, ever hungering to add gain to gain— Gotama the recluse abstains from such deception and patter."

"Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as these:-- palmistry-prophesying long life, prosperity, &c. (or the reverse), from marks on a child's hands, feet, &c, divining by means of omens and signs, auguries drawn from thunderbolts and other celestial portents, prognostication by interpreting dreams, fortune-telling from marks on the body, auguries from the marks on cloth gnawed by mice, sacrificing to agni, offering oblations from a spoon, making offerings to gods of husks, of the red powder between the grain and the husk, of husked grain ready for boiling, of ghee, and of oil, sacrificing by spewing mustard seeds, &c., into the fire out of one's mouth, drawing blood from one's right knee as a sacrifice to the gods, looking at the knuckles, &c., and, after muttering a charm, divining whether a man is well born or lucky or not, determining whether the site, for a proposed house or pleasance, is lucky or not, advising on customary law, laying demons in a cemetery, laying ghosts, knowledge of the charms to be used when lodging in an earth house, snake charming, the poison craft,

the scorpion craft, the mouse craft, the bird craft, the crow craft, foretelling the number of years that a man has yet to live, giving charms to ward off arrows, the animal wheel—Gotama the recluse abstains from such low arts.”

“Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as these—knowledge of the signs of good and bad qualities in the following things and of the marks in them denoting the health or luck of their owners:-- to wit, gems, staves, garments, swords, arrows, bows, other weapons, women, men, boys, girls, slaves, slave-girls, elephants, horses, buffaloes, balls, oxen, goats, sheep, fowls, quails, iguanas, earrings, tortoises, and other animals—Gotama the recluse abstains from such low arts.”

“Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as soothsaying, to the effect that—the chiefs will march out, the chiefs will march back, the home chiefs will attack, and the enemies’ retreat, the enemies’ chiefs will attack, and ours will retreat, the home chiefs will gain the victory, and the foreign chiefs suffer defeat, the foreign chiefs will gain the victory, and ours will suffer defeat—thus will there be victory on this side, defeat on that—Gotama the recluse abstains from such low arts.”

“Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by such low arts as foretelling—there will be an eclipse of the moon, there will be an eclipse of the sun, there will be an eclipse of a star, there will be aberration of the sun or the moon, the sun or the moon will return to its usual path, there will be aberrations of the stars, the stars will return to their usual course, there will be a fall of meteors, there will be a jungle fire, there will be an earthquake, the god will thunder, there will be rising and setting, clearness and dimness, of the sun or the moon or the stars, or foretelling of each of these fifteen phenomena that they will betoken such and such a result”

“Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as these:--foretelling an abundant rainfall, foretelling a deficient rainfall, foretelling a good harvest, foretelling scarcity of food, foretelling tranquillity, foretelling disturbances, foretelling a pestilence, foretelling a healthy season, counting on the fingers, counting without using the fingers, summing up large totals, composing ballads, poetizing, casuistry, sophistry—Gotama the recluse abstains from such low arts.”

“Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as—arranging a lucky day for marriages in which the bride or bridegroom is brought home, arranging a lucky day for marriages in which the bride or bridegroom is sent forth, fixing a lucky time for the conclusion of treaties of peace [or using charms to procure harmony], fixing a lucky time for the outbreak of hostilities [or using charms to make discord], fixing a lucky time for the calling in of debts [or charms for success in throwing dice], fixing a lucky time for the expenditure of money [or charms to bring ill luck to an opponent throwing dice], using charms to make people lucky, using charms to make people unlucky, using charms to procure abortion, incantations to bring on dumbness, incantations to keep a man’s jaws fixed, incantations to make a man throw up his hands, incantations to bring on deafness, obtaining oracular answers by means of the magic mirror, obtaining oracular answers through a girl possessed, obtaining oracular answers from a god, the worship of the sun, the worship of the great one, bringing forth flames from one’s mouth, invoking sirî, the goddess of luck—Gotama the recluse abstains from such low arts.”

“Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, earn their living by wrong means of livelihood, by low arts, such as these:-- vowing gifts to a god if a certain benefit be granted, paying such vows, repeating charms while lodging in an earth house, causing virility, making a man impotent, fixing on lucky sites for dwellings, consecrating sites, ceremonial rinsings of the mouth, ceremonial bathings, offering sacrifices, administering emetics and purgatives, purging people to relieve the head (that is by giving drugs to make people sneeze), oiling people’s ears (either to make them grow or to heal sores on them), satisfying people’s eyes (soothing them by dropping medicinal oils into them), administering drugs through the nose, applying collyrium to the eyes, giving medical ointment for the eyes, practising as an oculist, practising as a surgeon, practising as a doctor for

children, administering roots and drugs, administering medicines in rotation—Gotama the recluse abstains from such low arts.”

(Copied from the *Dialogues of the Buddha* html files on www.sacred-texts.com.) (P.D.)

⁴² The two fruits of virtuous conduct named here can be reaped already in this life. If the doer, by steadfast practice, acquires the habit of clean living, he will—in spite of occasional relapses—gain in strength of character and eventually overcome the promptings of his lower nature. On the other hand, an immoral conduct, marked by a brazen defiance of every rule of decency, leads only to harsh encounter and violence; whereas a kindly person full of consideration to his fellow-human beings calls forth the same qualities in others. Not infrequently, alas, even the kindest of men meets with adversity of fate, painful encounters, and tragedies which must be attributed to moral failures in former lives. However, if he clings to right conduct and fair play in all his dealings he can be assured of his well-being in this life and the life to come. And this may justly be called the first fruit of virtue.

The second fruit consists in an inwardly felt sense of unalloyed happiness which cannot be diminished nor taken away from him. Just as the body of a sick person is being restored to its former physical health and well-being, so does moral health strengthen the inner man, moulding him to a well-integrated personality. (P.D.)

⁴³ Restraint of the senses or, better, *guarding* the doors of the senses, constitutes the first step on the Path to sainthood; it leads to a higher mode of living than the mere virtuous conduct of which we spoke before and is harder to achieve. A virtuous person is not entirely free from tensions and inner conflicts. Objects of desire present themselves, attractions are felt, and yet he will not yield. Situations arise that are charged with emotions, yet he will exercise moderation. Feelings of extreme dislike will suddenly well up, yet he will bring them under conscious control. All these attitudes—praiseworthy in themselves—are not at par with “guarding of the sense-doors,” for the virtuous person is still of the world entangled in its multitudinous cares, whereas the guardian of his sense-doors aims at nothing less than the *overcoming* of the world.

At this point we have to make a clear distinction: when we speak of restraining the senses we do not mean to put a stop to their normal functioning. It stands to reason that to do so would make a person totally unfit to live in this world. Besides, it is not in the sense organs as such where we must look for the seat of covetousness and the wellsprings of craving; the roots lie deeper. The guardian of his senses perceives everything just like anybody else, however, with one fundamental difference: he does not clutch the object of desire to his heart, he is not losing himself in it. He will never say to the passing moment, “Oh linger on, how fair thou art...” As we said before, by suppressing the instruments of perception no virtue is won. Behind them lurks the dragon-head of covetousness, and not until this dragon is slain will victory be won.

Earlier in the text we have noted that the Buddha compares the five senses to fetters by which a man is chained to this river bank of worldly desire. We have seen that not the sense organs but the insatiable craving behind them is the real culprit. This culprit has been forging the chains that bind every one of us to the object of sense gratification. The guarding of the sense-doors is then, indeed, the first stage in the removal of the chains which in the end leads to untrammelled freedom.

Alas, our present state of mind is still a far cry from the goal so ardently desired. To mention an example: there goes a charming figure—and longing arises. Lo! An enchanting voice sends its seductive tunes over the air—and we are all ears. Forgotten are the most pressing duties of the hour. We are as if hypnotically entranced, irresistibly drawn to the source of our spellbound condition. And then again, when eager desire meets with resistance frustration sets in, ill-humour, and irritation. A whole hornet nest of bitter feelings is stirred up; we plot vengeance and want to get even with the world. If we only realised that the fault lies entirely with us, and the world at which we now look with jaundiced eyes—is nothing but a miscreation of our own deluded minds! How are we going to disentangle us from this our self-made dilemma. It is no easy task. First, we must realise that frustration is the twin-sister of desire. Second, we must try to keep our emotions on an “even keel.” From past experience we ought to know by now that, arousing them, there is trouble brewing. Sense impressions, awakening desires, come and go ceaselessly; we cannot and must not withdraw from them. However, we must pay attention to the road we are travelling. We have to keep our eyes open

for the stop-signs and the dangerous crossings. We must learn to think objectively and watch our feelings; they may lie in ambush eagerly waiting for the weak moment to attack, conquer, and subdue us. By trying to work out the foregoing suggestions we shall eventually develop an attitude of detachment in the face of tempting objects. And as a result the turgid waters of our stormy cravings will subside; peace and serenity will enter again into our troubled hearts.

A word of caution must be added here: what was said before was not meant to be a short-cut to the summit of perfection. There are no child prodigies in the arena of spiritual combat; first things will have to come first. This is said explicitly in the 125th Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya:

“And when the noble disciple has become steadfast in morals, in noble virtue firmly established, pure and undefiled in all his dealings, watchful for the slightest error in conduct; an intrepid warrior never relenting, then the Exalted Lord admonishes him further, saying: “Come you, monk, be watchful at the doors of your senses.”

From this solemn utterance of the Buddha it becomes imperative that the code of morals, obligatory for all of us, has to be adhered to first. This is the irremissible prerequisite upon which to build the guardianship of the senses. It would be futile—if not downright dangerous—for a person who is still given to lying to begin practising restraint of the senses. As indicated already, not a “perfect” observance of the ethical code makes one eligible to enter the Path. What matters above all is steadfastness of character, persistence in practice and watchfulness over one’s conscience. It goes without saying that relapses will occur, temper may rise, “white” lies be said to escape from embarrassing situations. What matters most, however, has been emphasized and need not repeating. (P.D.)

- ⁴⁴ From the first step on the Path to Deliverance, the guardianship of the senses, we arrive now at the second step called mindfulness. The guardianship or restraint of the senses belongs to the sixth stage of the Noble Eightfold Path of which mindfulness is the seventh. Stages six and seven complement each other. They cannot be separated as they always go together. Likewise must it not be understood that the single factors of that Path have to be taken up consecutively, one after the other, in fact, all Paths and their respective stages interpenetrate each other.

In actual practice the following results will emerge: in spite of the same intensity of external stimuli their impressibility and suggestibility will be felt less and less. What before seemed exciting is now perceived as a hindrance, if not an annoyance, on the way to that inner calm which is the precious fruit of sense-control. The disciple is now disengaged; his attention can be focussed on the next task on hand: to keep the mind’s eye steadily on specific body movements and functions. This exercise goes against the grain of most average, i.e., habit-ridden people. With them the trouble lies in their being “enfleshed” so hopelessly in their bodies as to be hardly aware of anything else. With those people the body is the EGO writ large; the only true centre of their being. The aim of the practice of mindfulness is just the reverse: to make the body the object of observation.

Let us consider for a moment how this can be done. First, we try to focus our attention on a single body movement, say, breathing. Mindful we breathe in, mindful we breathe out. This may sound very simple, but it is not. For ours is a wandering mind that, like a grasshopper, hops from one spot to the other. To discipline the mind we shall have to put a stop to the flow of distracting thoughts. It will be sufficient, if we catch only one moment of fixed attention, to recognize that this body of ours is something distinct from the observing “I,” just as the writing pen is distinct from the hand that guides it. By the same token the body is seen as a mere instrument through which we satisfy our feelings, desires, volitions, drives, urges, and so on. Now let’s go one step further. This body of ours which has become an object of our fixed attention reveals itself as an intricate network of bones, muscles, sinews, interior organs, water, lymph, slime, etc; thus we have detached the body from the subject. We have made it an object for the onlooker; we are not identifying any more our personality with its instrument, the body.

If we succeed with the practice of mindfulness, which, of course, cannot be done in one day, we shall find ourselves on the threshold of a new consciousness. We begin to see ourselves, the things around us, the whole exterior world in an entirely new light. (P.D.)

⁴⁵ The meaning of Contentment along the Path will be easily understood. It is not that the disciple-in training is at every moment contented. Contentment has to be won; it is just as much a matter of exercise and constant practice as is the perfection of mindfulness which has been spoken of before. Of course, in those rare moments when the practising disciple experiences the indescribable raptures of heavenly bliss, both contentment and discontent have lost their meaning for him. Yet, the award is not for the beginner in the race but only for the swift runner who, in spite of obstacles, undaunted, keeps his eyes uplifted toward the shining goal.

Contentment still remains a boon which cannot be dismissed lightly. Without it even the noblest endeavours are bound to weaken. Take an apprentice, for instance, in whatsoever trade he may exert himself; unless he has the aim of mastery constantly before his mind the pains, the failures, the frustrations inherent in the process of learning, do not count. From this attitude only contentment is begotten and with it the firm assurance of ultimate success. (P.D.)

⁴⁶ We come now to the discussion of the five mental hindrances, so called because they hinder, obstruct and impede the Mind from progressing in the practice of the Buddha's Teaching in general and meditative training in particular. Among the many obstacles that block the road to spiritual progress, five are named specifically in the Suttas:

1. Sense desire
2. Ill-will
3. Sloth and Torpor
4. Restlessness and Worry
5. Sceptical Doubt.

Here we have the five root-causes of that obfuscation of mind from which we all suffer, carrying in its wake all those debilities which obstruct our best mental efforts. We have already spoken of them when we compared the Brahmanic frame of mind with its human counterpart. The Buddha elucidates the difference in two parables.

He likens the person driven by sense-desire to a business man who has gotten into heavy debts of which the burden becomes intolerable. The business activities of this man are compared with the innumerable sense objects that crowd around him and call for attention. The burden of the man's debts the Buddha likens to the futile chase after gratification through sense-desires which will not bring satiety, just as the drinking of salt water never quenches the mariner's thirst.

The second hindrance, ill-will, the Awakened One compares with a sick person who is unable to digest food and wastes away. In the same way ill-will spoils all goodness, destroys harmony and kills joy.

The third, sloth and torpor, he compares with a prison. Just as a prisoner is prevented from escaping his cell by walls and iron bars, so do sloth and torpor bind a person to the prison of his own obtuse mind.

Restlessness and worry are compared with slavery. As a slave follows his master's bidding, often against his own will, so the restless mind of a man compels him to think confused thoughts. It shuts out that stillness and lucidity of mind which leads to single-pointedness and insight.

Sceptical doubt the Buddha compares to an endless road leading nowhere and beset with dangers. But the one who overcomes sceptical doubt is likened to a person who has set foot on firm ground, who has found the way home. These are the five hindrances which impede the mental life of most of us. To such an extent are they part and parcel of our natures that—for lack of comparison with their opposites—we simply take them for granted.

In the second parable the Buddha compares the mind free of the five hindrances with a crystal-clear lake where the pebbles on the bottom can be seen and the fishes gliding swiftly to and fro. Conversely, trying to meditate while the mind is disturbed by the hindrances is like expecting to see the reflection of one's face in water wherein various colours have been mixed, or in boiling water, or in water covered by aquatic plants, or in water whipped up into waves by the wind, or in water that is turbid and muddy. How the nature of mental dispositions and propensities depends on the prevalence of the five hindrances has been clearly shown in the foregoing parables. However, the Tevijja Sutta, which is

the main subject of our present discussion, seems to contradict the above statements. Yet, on closer scrutiny, we shall see that this is not the case.

We remember how the Buddha compared the five objects of craving with a man, bound with chains to the hither bank of a river, whereas the five mental hindrances are likened to a man lying there without chains. In the same context the Buddha emphasizes “restraint of the senses” combined with “body-mindfulness,” first, and, only after that, he mentions the suppression of the five mental hindrances as a special exercise. This seeming paradox can easily be dissolved: for the five objects of craving are identical with the first hindrance, i.e., sense desire. The overcoming of the five objects of craving means, therefore, the suppression of mental hindrance number one. Furthermore, sense desire cannot be overcome in the presence of sloth and torpor, which constitutes mental hindrance number three. Again, we recall “sense restraint” and “body-mindfulness” recommended as a practice continually to be performed which cannot be done under the strain of “restlessness and worry,” much less in the face of “sloth, torpor, and sceptical doubt” (hindrances Nos. 4, 3, 5). “Ill-will” which is hindrance number two, is always closely coupled with “sense desire.” The latter is by nature ambivalent; i. e., manifesting always in pairs of opposites: love-hate, attraction-repulsion, sympathy-antipathy. Thus the conquest of “sense desire” results in the ultimate elimination of “ill-will.”

The river-bank parable will confirm this even more. Common sense contends that the man in chains is in no condition whatsoever to reach the farther shore, as compared with the man who, of his own free-will, lay down, unfettered and unimpeded. In reality, however, this is not quite so. The man in chains suffers and, through marshalling his wits and will-power, will eventually free himself, cross the river and make the other shore. The other fellow has by his own volition incapacitated himself; he will lie there for ever, until he bestirs himself and changes his mind.

By the same token will-power is called for when treading the path of purification. The aim is the uprooting of the five mental hindrances. This is the ever recurring theme of the Suttas. Purification of the inner man cannot be achieved in one fell swoop; it has to be done gradually one step, after another. To use a simile: first the coarse layers of filth must go; then comes the removal of the remaining impurities, hidden, as it were, in crevices and crannies.

The general cleansing consists in breaking the chains of covetousness which is the prime cause of all the hindrances that open the gulf between Brahmā and the priests, between God and man. This purpose is served by the above-mentioned four exercises: virtue, sense-restraint, mindfulness, contentment. This done, the removal of the hidden impurities can begin, thereby coming to grips with the five mental hindrances.

We must now direct our attention to the removal of the finer impurities in order to begin with the above-mentioned important task. It is said in the Scriptures: “Putting away the hankering after the world, he (the disciple) remains with a heart that hankers not, and purifies his mind of lusts.” This quotation contains three essential criteria. First, he repudiates worldly lust according to the insight gained by practising the first and second stages of the Noble Eightfold Path. The second criterion: he remains with a heart that hankers not. And the third specifies: “he purifies his mind of lusts.” That means: a monk who, for a long time, has successfully loosened the fetters of the five hindrances, well-nigh gotten rid of them, chooses a lonely spot and seats himself cross-legged. In this posture he remains, unruffled, without the faintest stirring of worldly lust, “remains with a heart that hankers not.” All the same, he is well aware that, at any other time and in different surroundings, sense desire may rise again. For this reason he holds fast to the “blessed mood,” lets its bliss suffuse his whole being, taking umbrage in its calming and purifying light. He is now unshackled and free, flooded with an overwhelming joy of untrammelled freedom that cannot be described: it defies verbal communication. Neither is this joy connected with sensual pleasure nor with the feeling of triumphant victory. It passes on to tranquil felicity, fills the body to its brim until, overflowing, the awareness of the body itself is left behind and fades away. With the body-consciousness gone, nothing is left but a radiant centre of timeless bliss.

We cannot do better than letting the Exalted Lord himself indicate the unique flavour of the four sublime contemplations (*jhāna*) by quoting his utterances of breath-taking beauty and power:

“Free from sensual desires, free from evil thoughts he attains and abides in the first jhāna of joy and pleasure, which is accompanied with reasoning and investigation and arises from seclusion. He suffuses, pervades, fills, and permeates his body with the pleasure and joy arising from seclusion, and there is nothing in all his body untouched by the pleasure and joy arising from seclusion.

“Again the monk with the ceasing of reasoning and investigation, in a state of internal serenity, with his mind fixed on one point, attains and abides in the second jhāna of joy and pleasure arising from concentration, and free from reasoning and investigation. He suffuses, pervades, fills, and permeates his body with the pleasure and joy arising from concentration, and there is nothing in all his body untouched by the pleasure and joy arising from concentration.

“Again the monk with indifference towards joy, abides with equanimity, mindful and self-possessed, and with his body experiences what the noble ones call, ‘dwelling with equanimity, mindful, and happy,’ and attains and abides in the third jhāna. He suffuses, pervades, fills, and permeates his body with pleasure without joy, and there is nothing in all his body untouched by his pleasure without joy.

“Again the monk, with the dispelling of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of elation and depression achieved before attains and abides in the fourth jhāna which is without pain and pleasure and with the purity of equanimity and mindfulness. He sits permeating his body with mind purified and cleansed, and there is nothing at all in his body untouched by his mind purified and cleansed.”

These supramundane (not: supernatural) meditative absorptions, or jhānas, do not in themselves vouchsafe that Unshakable Deliverance of the Mind which is the goal of even profounder meditations. And yet they are able to lift the practitioner immeasurably above the mundane sphere of common sense pleasures, in spite of their being only temporary and evanescent. However they give a foretaste of Brahmanic bliss and are a mightily strengthening influence for the pilgrim on his Path to the union with Brahmā.

In the foregoing discussions much space was given to the elucidation of those exercises which lead to the overcoming of the five sense objects of craving and elimination of the five hindrances. If this meant a complete emptying of the mind of all worldly objects, so does the exercise of mettā, of which more presently, manifest the positive nature of the disciple’s self-sacrifice. Mettā, unbounded benevolence and loving-kindness, of which the Buddha says: “This is the Path to the state of union with Brahmā.” The exercise of mettā, which, psychologically-speaking, is a moral attitude, tends to the cultivation of goodwill rather than meditation itself. Mettā does not consist in thinking of oneself as expanding the feeling of loving-kindness until it becomes all-embracing but in expanding the actual feeling of loving-kindness itself—a subtle but supremely important distinction. Of the four methods of practising mettā that appear in the Doctrinal Discourses, the one in the Tevijja Sutta deals principally with the method of “suffusing.” This consists in suffusing the whole world with the thought of mettā, expanded in all directions, and is associated with the “jhānas” or meditative absorptions. The method of mettā as depicted above marks a high level of achievement which is beyond the attainment of the ordinary mortal. For him the exercise should start from a lower level. Let him think of any beloved or less beloved or even disliked person with benevolent thoughts. Feelings of anger and malice will arise in him who thinks of an enemy. Feelings of lust may arise in him who develops mettā towards his wife or any person of the opposite sex:

When this happens the beginner must enter upon a series of meditations, to dispel either lust or hatred by persistently dwelling upon love, directed towards this person and so continue until his mind is rendered tender and calm. Once this tenderness is cultivated and the five hindrances overcome he pervades the whole universe with his power of loving-kindness. And like unto a mighty trumpeter who makes himself heard in all four directions without difficulty, so does he radiate loving-kindness from one direction to the second, the third, the fourth; from above and below until, like the sun, he becomes a radiant centre of light, the embodiment of the very spirit of loving-kindness. Many are the blessings of mettā enumerated in the Scriptures: happy he sleeps, happy he awakes; he is dear to men; dear to non-human beings; the gods guard him and, if he realizes no further attainment, he goes to the world of Brahmā. (P.D.)

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- ⁴⁷ Sub-Cy.: “the sensuous sphere (*kāmāvacara*) is called ‘*kamma* with limits’ (*pamāṇakatam kammaṃ*), because it does not suppress those defiling qualities which produce limitation” Cy.: “Unlimited *kamma*” (*appamāṇakatam kammaṃ*) is that of the fine-material and immaterial sphere.”
- ⁴⁸ Cy.: “No *kamma* of the sensuous sphere is left behind in that *kamma* of the fine material and immaterial sphere. What is meant by that statement? The *kamma* of the sensuous sphere cannot cling to or subsist within the *kamma* of the fine-material and immaterial sphere; it cannot establish itself there, by pervading or overpowering it, or by making room in it for itself. On the contrary, it is the *kamma* of the fine-material and immaterial sphere that pervades and overpowers the *kamma* of the sensuous sphere like a mighty flood will cover a small expanse of water; it will make room for itself and stay there; it will supersede its result, and as to itself, it will lead to union with Brahmā.”
- ⁴⁹ Such a monk is free of wife and wealth, free from the world’s cares; he is untrammelled like Brahmā. Anger, malice, impure thoughts no longer arise in him. He has attained to purity of mind, has his emotions under control, has achieved self-mastery like Brahmā. He reflects now Brahmanic qualities on earth as Brahmā does in his heaven, and “after death when the body is dissolved he can be united with Brahmā.” (P.D.)
- ⁵⁰ The same thought is being repeated. More characteristics are enumerated which make for Brahmanic qualities in a true follower of Brahmā. And so the Buddha’s teaching of the Path leading to the state of union with Brahmā is completed. (P.D.)
- ⁵¹ Cy.: “This was their second going for refuge. For the first time they did it after listening to the Vāseṭṭha Sutta which is included in the Middle Fifties (of the Majjhima Nikāya). Now after hearing the Tevijja Sutta they went for refuge a second time. After a few days they got first ordination, and (as reported) in the Aggañña Sutta (DN 27), they later received the full ordination and attained to holiness (*arahatta*).”
- ⁵² The two young priests have fully understood. They beg to be the followers of the All-Enlightened One. Their request is granted and they become members of the Noble Brotherhood. (P.D.)
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