

**STUDIES ON  
HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM ❶**

Foundational Thoughts  
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and  
Nan Tien Institute, Australia

# The Buddha in Humanistic Buddhism



**Guang Xing**  
*Associate Professor,  
Centre of Buddhist Studies  
University of Hong Kong*

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**Guang Xing** received his PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He is an Associate Professor at the University of Hong Kong's Centre of Buddhist Studies. He was the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation Visiting Professor in Buddhism and Contemporary Society at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver in 2007, and Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies at the Buddhist College of Singapore from 2010-2014. His publications include *The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikaya Theory* (Routledge 2005). He is currently working on two monographs, *Filial Piety in Chinese Buddhism* and *Buddhism and Chinese Culture*, and has published many articles, such as "A Buddhist-Confucian Controversy on Filial Piety" in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* and "Buddhist Impact on Chinese Culture" in *Asian Philosophy*.

## **Introduction**

Generally speaking, ancient Indian people were more mystic in that they sought by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain unity or identity with the deity Mahābrahma, or the absolute or ultimate reality that is beyond human intellect understanding. But Siddhārtha Gautama, the historical Buddha, was quite different from them. He was more practical and concerned only with the things that were conducive to the elimination of human suffering and he did not believe in the very existence of a supreme god and an eternal soul. As it is said in the Buddhist scriptures, “Formerly, Aniruddha, and also now, I make known just suffering and the cessation of suffering.”<sup>1</sup>

The practical attitude towards life shown by the Buddha is quite similar to Confucius, who said, “While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?” (季路問事鬼神。子曰：未能事人，焉能事鬼？) when Ji Lu 季路, his student, asked him about ghost. Confucius also said, “While you do not know life, how can you know about death?” (敢問死？曰：“未知生，焉知死？” [論語·先進]) when Ji Lu, the same student, asked him about death. ([論語·先進] *Lunyu*: 11.12)

This reminds me that the Buddha probably did not belong to the Aryans, but to the Mongolian race as Smith, the author of *The Oxford History of India*, also believed.<sup>2</sup> This implies that pre-Brahmanic Nepal was inhabited by hill-men, like the Gurka nowadays, who are Mongolian by birth. He presented a rough race-map of the area around the Buddha’s birthplace, Lumbini, but no distinct proof. There were discussions about this topic at the dawn of Buddhist Studies, but definite answers were not reached. However, it has been said that there are some points in the Buddhist canonical texts to support the idea that the Buddha was non-Aryan.

Many scholars express their admiration and reverence towards Gautama Buddha in their writings, claiming that he was one of the greatest personages in the whole of human history, and the intuitive wisdom shown in his message to mankind stands the test of time. Just as Foucher said,

Nearly twenty-five hundred years after his death his memory is still very much alive. Apparently as long as world suffering is to last—and it will last as long as the world—the memory of the great doctor of the soul whose life was spent in trying to find its cure will persist as a shining light on the horizon.<sup>3</sup>

Rhys Davids also rightly observed that the doctrine of Early Buddhism are so original that they are far beyond the capacity of the early Buddhists; it is very probably that before the end of his long career Gautama himself had completely worked out and enunciated them.<sup>4</sup> When one reads the Buddhist scripture one will not fail to notice that “the sūtras are full of his inventiveness.”<sup>5</sup> In this paper, I will analyze the personality of the historical Buddha by using the Pali *Nikāyas* and *Vinaya* as well as the Chinese translation of the *Āgamas* and *Vinayas* of different schools, as Buddhist scholars all over the world agree that these are the earliest Buddhist literature and probably contain the real words of its founder.

## **1. The Buddha’s Attitude of Mind**

### **1.1 The Buddha Claimed No Divinity Whatsoever and Rejected All Forms of Divine Power**

As the well-known Buddhist scholar Rahula points out, all founders of religion claimed some kind of divinity either as a god, an incarnation, inspiration, or a messenger.<sup>6</sup> The Buddha was the only teacher who claimed no inspirations in any form from any outside power or agent. He attributed all his achievements to human endeavor and intelligence, and is thus rather the founder of a psychology of not-self rather than of a religion. Therefore, he did not promise anybody salvation by simply believing in him. On the contrary, he advised his disciples to work out their emancipation through their own effort because he recognized the willpower of the individual. Furthermore, the Buddha rejected all forms of divine power and declared that purity and impurity depend on oneself, that no one can purify another.<sup>7</sup> In addition, he did not claim to know everything about the physical world.

Concerning the Buddha’s attainments and achievements, there are two sūtras in the canon, *Ariyapariyesanā* and *Mahāsaccaka*, which relate the Buddha’s exertion in the

search for awakening.<sup>8</sup> In the description of his searching for the truth, Gautama Buddha first learned and practiced meditation under the guidance of two teachers, Ārāḷa Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. However, he could not find the solution to life's problems in their teachings and meditation. He then practiced extreme austerities to such an extent that he was on the verge of death, but he still could not achieve his aim. He then recalled an experience of meditation that he had during his childhood. After abandoning austerities, he went his own way and practiced meditation under the bodhi tree, finally attaining the Supreme Enlightenment through his own effort. In this description there is no mention of any supreme being such as God or a Holy Spirit who helped, revealed, or even inspired him to reach the Dharma, the truth about human life, when he sat at the foot of the bodhi tree resolute for awakening. But by his personal effort and intuition, Gautama Buddha realized the truth, the Dharma.

Some people may argue that the Buddha won his awakening only after the fight of Māra, the demon, which might relate to some kind of mystic. However, Māra in the early Buddhist literature represents defilements, including the worldly attractions and evil thoughts of the human mind, such as discontent, hunger, thirst, craving, etc. There is nothing mysterious. The *Padhana Sutta* of the *Suttanipāta* relates the striving of the Buddha for awakening under a bodhi tree and his fighting with Māra. The Buddha told Māra,

Sensual pleasures are your first army; discontent is called your second; your third is hunger and thirst; the fourth is called craving. Sloth and torpor are your fifth; the sixth is called fear; your seventh is doubt; hypocrisy and obstinacy are your eighth.  
(Verse Nos. 436-437)<sup>9</sup>

Thus, what the Buddha fought against is human weakness rather than anything mysterious. In this description there is also no external supernatural power involved.

With reference to a passage in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, some scholars argue that Gautama Buddha denied even being a human.<sup>10</sup> The *Dona Sutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*:

On seeing him, Dona asks, “Master, are you a deva?”  
“No, brahman, I am not a deva.”  
“Are you a *gandhabba*?”

“No...”

“... a *yakkha*?”

“No...”

“... a human being?”

“No, brahman, I am not a human being.”

.....

“Brahman, the fermentations by which—if they were not abandoned—I would be a deva: Those are abandoned by me, their root destroyed, made like a *palmyra* stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. The fermentations by which—if they were not abandoned—I would be a *gandhabba*... a *yakkha*... a human being: Those are abandoned by me, their root destroyed, made like a *palmyra* stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising.

“Just like a red, blue, or white lotus—born in the water, grown in the water, rising up above the water—stands unsmearred by the water, in the same way I—born in the world, grown in the world, having overcome the world—live unsmearred by the world.

Remember me, brahman, as ‘awakened.’

But in the same passage we find that it is on account of his destroying all defilement (*āsava*), the cause and root for rebirth as a human being, a deva, a *gandharva*, and a *yakṣa*, that he declared he was not a human but a buddha. He proclaimed that he was born in the world, grew up in the world, and having overcome the world he abided in the world unsoiled by it. Spiritually, he transcended the world in which the five kinds of beings are found. This is purely a mental state rather than a physical being, and it is precisely due to such spiritual experience and attainments that Gautama Buddha was greater than and above the ordinary worldly human beings. However, this does not mean that he was away from and above this empirical world; on the contrary, he was born, grew up, lived and taught in the world as all other human beings do, but he was not defiled by worldly passions.

Since Gautama Buddha attained awakening through human effort, he did not promise salvation from suffering and sorrow as a reward for simply believing in him. Hence,

he rejected all forms of divine power and only recognized the willpower of individuals. Therefore, the Buddhist literature argues against the creation of the world and humanity by a god. The *Jātaka* says, “If God designs the life of the entire world—the glory and the misery, the good and the evil acts—man is but an instrument of his will and God (alone is responsible).”<sup>11</sup> Another argument is based on the existence of evil:

If Brahmā is the lord of the whole world and creator of the multitude of beings, then why has he ordained misfortune in the world without making the whole world happy, for what purpose has he made the world full of injustice, deceit, falsehood, and conceit, or the lord of beings is evil in that he ordained injustice when there could have been justice.<sup>12</sup>

As the Buddha totally rejected the almighty power, he often compared himself to a physician and his teaching to medicine.<sup>13</sup> Even taking refuge in the Buddha is only to declare that one becomes his student; it does not guarantee salvation or spiritual attainment. So, when Gaṇaka Moggallāna asked the Buddha whether all those who had been instructed by him attained their goal, the Buddha replied that among his disciples those who practiced diligently would attain nirvāṇa, the ultimate goal, while those who did not follow the instruction would not, because Tathāgatas only shows the way.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, even lying on his deathbed, the Buddha admonished his disciples to rely on the Dharma and to rely on themselves, not anyone else. They should make their own effort and work out their own emancipation.<sup>15</sup> The path to liberation prescribed by Gautama Buddha is the eightfold path, which is simple and practical, acceptable in every civilized society as a description of good life.<sup>16</sup> Nothing mysterious or ceremonious is involved in it; on the contrary, willpower and activity of the individual are emphasized. The individual is the captain of his own destiny, responsible for all he has done. The Buddha is only a torch bearer for humanity.

Unlike the other teachers of his day, such as Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, the founder of Jainism who claimed omniscience, the Buddha did not make such claims at all. In the *Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta*, the ascetic Vacchagotta approached the Buddha and wished to clarify the report of his omniscience. The Buddha categorically said, “Vaccha, those who say thus do not say what has been said by me, but misrepresent me with what is untrue

and contrary to fact.”<sup>17</sup> His teaching, in fact, is based on his own experience. We will come back to this point later.

## **1.2 The Buddha Fostered No Personality Cult**

The Buddha was considered a leader by the Saṅgha, the community of monks, and all his disciples came to him for solutions whenever they met any kind of problem in their life and practice. However, he did not encourage them to flock to him as a kind of personal cult. Therefore, according to the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, just before his death Ananda asked the Buddha to give the final instructions, but the Buddha said:

Whosoever may think that it is he who should lead the community of bhikṣus, or that the community depends upon him, it is such a one that would have to give last instructions respecting them. But, Ananda, the Tathāgata has no such idea as that it is he who should lead the community of bhikṣus, or that the community depends upon him. So what instructions should he have to give respecting the community of bhikṣus?<sup>18</sup>

Then the Buddha advised Ananda saying, “Therefore, Ananda, be islands unto yourselves, refuges unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Dharma as your island, the Dharma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge.”<sup>19</sup> On another occasion, the Buddha gave similar advice to his monks when they thought they were going to lose their teacher. “Ananda, the Dharma and *Vinaya* that have been expounded by me will be your teacher after my death.”<sup>20</sup> The second evidence is from the *Vinaya*; the Buddha told Devadatta, who wished to become the leader of the Saṅgha, “I, Devadatta, would not hand over the order of monks (Saṅgha) even to Sāliputta and Moggallāna. How then could I to you, a wretched one to be vomited like a spittle.”<sup>21</sup> This is also reflected in the *Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta*, when the brahmin asked Ananda whether the Buddha had appointed a successor, and Ananda answered in the negative, stating that the Dharma is the teacher.<sup>22</sup> Thus, before his death, the Buddha did not appoint any successor to take his role because he never even considered himself to be the leader of the Saṅgha. He was just like any of his disciples and other śrāmaṇas, leading a simple life with only three robes, a bowl, and

nothing else while he was alive. Therefore, those who never saw the Buddha could not recognize him when they met for the first time. Pukkusati was one such person who met the Buddha for the first time and recognized him only after a long conversation.<sup>23</sup> The park keeper for Anuruddha and two other disciples of the Buddha also could not recognize him and asked him not to enter the park.<sup>24</sup> All these incidents suggest that the Buddha enjoyed no privileges in any form at all, but was merely a simple person with a simple life.<sup>25</sup>

Next, the Buddha considered neither himself as the leader of the Saṅgha, nor his teaching as the only truth. That is why Buddhist scripture has continued to grow after the Buddha died. The Buddha considered that attachment to any view is a kind of bondage, an obstacle to right understanding, so when the Buddha explained the doctrine of cause and effect to his disciples, they said they saw it and understood it clearly. Then the Buddha advised them:

O bhikṣus, purified and bright as this view is, you should not adhere to it, cherish it, treasure it, and treat it as a possession, then you understand Dharma that has been taught (by me) as similar to a raft, being for purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping.<sup>26</sup>

The same idea concerning his teaching is also expressed in another sūtra:

You, bhikṣus, who understand that the teaching is similar to a raft, should give up even the good things (dharma); how much more then should you give up evil things (adharmā).<sup>27</sup>

This very idea is taken up by the Mahāyānaists as the emptiness of Dharma, one of the important teachings taught in the Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Diamond Sutra* and *Lotus Sutra*.

This attitude towards the teaching of the Buddha is also reflected in Vasumitrā's treatise on the origin and doctrine of early Indian Buddhist schools. The Sarvāstivāda school said,

Not all the speeches of the Tathāgata can be regarded as the preaching of the righteous law." "The World-Honored One also

utters words which are not in conformity with the truth.” “The sūtras delivered by the Buddha are not all perfect in themselves. The Buddha himself said that there were certain imperfect sūtras.<sup>28</sup>

Although here the ideas are not exactly the same as above, the analytical attitude is the same. In a word, the Buddha did not give any room for his disciples and followers to think that he was either a god or some kind of supreme leader to be worshipped. This is because the Buddha foresaw the danger of the transmission of leadership from teacher to pupil. Therefore, the Buddha established a democratic institution so that the Buddhist community could choose their head by means of a vote as described in the *Vinaya*.

### **1.3 The Buddha Had No Dogma, But an Open-Minded Attitude**

Most religions have some kind of rigid rules and regulations. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Ten Commandments are claimed to be of divine origin, as God gave them to Moses on Mount Sinai.<sup>29</sup> Thus, violation of these commandments results in punishment from the Godhead. Similarly, the rules of the ancient law-codes of the Hindus, such as those of Vasista and those in the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* of the Jains, were imposed one after another in conjunction with religious discourses. These religious laws are designed to express the divine will. However, the Buddhist *Vinaya* rules reveal no divine origin at all as the lawmaker, the Buddha himself, was not a god as discussed above. The following example of the rule concerning one meal a day shows how Buddhist *Vinaya* rules were laid down.

Bhikṣus, I eat at a single session. By so doing, I am free from illness and affliction, and I enjoy health, strength, and comfortable abiding. Come, Bhikṣus, eat at a single session. By so doing, you too will be free from illness and affliction and you will enjoy health, strength, and a comfortable abiding.<sup>30</sup>

All the *Vinaya* rules were laid down gradually in such a way as occasions demanded. But the Buddha was open for suggestions and always considered any request regarding rules from members of the Saṅgha, and never hesitated to revise or amend the existing rules to comply with the needs, changes in time, circumstances, and environment. The

liberal and practical attitude of the Buddha towards the *Vinaya* rules, as well as other matters, can be seen from the following examples.

First, and probably most importantly, is the Buddha's advice to Ananda just before he died. He told Ananda, "If it is desired, Ananda, the Saṅgha may, when I am gone, abolish the lesser and minor rules." This advice is quite important as it is found in the Theravāda *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* and *Vinaya*, the Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* of the *Dirghāgama*, and the *Vinayas* of different schools such as the *Mahīśāsaka*, the *Mahāsaṅghika*, the *Dharmagupta*, the *Sarvāstivāda*, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Saṃyuktāvastu*, and even the *Vinaya Matrika Sūtra*.<sup>31</sup> It shows the Buddha's liberal attitude towards *Vinaya* and other matters, which is one of the crucial reasons that Buddhism could successfully spread from India to other parts of Asia, and to the rest of the world today. Jainism also rose in India during the sixth century BCE, together with Buddhism, but the former still virtually confines itself in India. One of the main reasons is that the Jains went to extremes in their practice of nonviolence. The Buddha not only gave this advice on his deathbed, but he was liberal on the minor rules even during his lifetime. He said to the monks:

A monk keeps the laws of morality in full, he is moderately given to mental concentration, moderately given to striving for insight. Whatever minor, trifling observances he may transgress, he is cleared of them. Why so? I do not declare him to be rendered unfit because of them, for he strictly observes the rudiments of the awakened life, the constituents of the awakened life: he is established in morality, he is trained himself in the rules of training by undertaking them. Such as one, by destroying three fetters is a stream-winner, one not doomed to the Downfall, one assured, one bound for awakening.<sup>32</sup>

However, Devadatta, one of the Buddha's disciples, was not happy about his liberal attitude and asked him to make the following five propositions obligatory for all his monks. The Buddha did not do so, but allowed those who felt so inclined to follow these rules, other than sleeping under a tree during the rainy season. Devadatta's five propositions are that monks, for as long as life lasts, should be (1) forest dwellers, (2) beg for alms, (3) wear

ragged robes, (4) reside at the foot of a tree, and (5) refrain from eating fish or meat.<sup>33</sup> Just as S. Dutt points out, Devadatta was an advocate of a more austere discipline and these five propositions are rigid ascetic practices, just like that of the Jains.<sup>34</sup> The Buddha was not against the five propositions as optional practices for all his disciples, as they were common practices among recluses at that time, but he would not make them obligatory for all monks, and certainly not for life.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the Buddha rejected Devadatta's inflexible attitude to these practices, as it may impose limits to the development of the Dharma and Saṅgha. The Buddha also knew through his own experience that these ascetic practices do not lead one to liberation as he criticized austerities for paying too much attention to the body rather than the mind, which really mattered. Indeed, such asceticism was not largely associated with the quest for understanding or insight as the solution to life's problems. It has been associated more with another strand in Indian thought: the tradition that the root of all evil is passion, so salvation lies in eradicating all passion and no longer having any likes or dislikes, as pointed out by Gombrich.<sup>36</sup>

Devadatta's followers survived at least until the late seventh century CE, as the Chinese traveler Yijing recorded their life thus:

[The followers of Devadatta] do not have large monasteries, but dwell in villages solitarily, beg alms food and practice pure conduct. [They] use bottle gourds as bowls, have only two robes, the color of which is similar to the dried mulberry tree leaves [brown yellow] and they do not eat curd.<sup>37</sup>

But there is no mention of them in any literature after Yijing. This suggests that the love of ascetic practices by Indian people provided the soil for them, and hence the Buddha allowed such practices to be options for his disciples, but not compulsory. However, Devadatta's followers did not survive to the present day and this can likely be attributed to their dogmatic attitude toward *Vinaya* practices.

The Buddha's liberal and open attitude to *Vinaya* practices can also be seen from the following example. A certain monk from the *Vajjiputtas* came to the Buddha and told him that he could not stand the two hundred and fifty rules recited fortnightly. Then the Buddha said to him, "Well monk, can you stand the training in three particulars: That in the higher values, in the higher thought, in the higher insight?"<sup>38</sup> The monk then answered

affirmatively and the Buddha told him, “Then monk when you are proficient in the higher morality, thought, and insight, then lust, malice and delusion will be abandoned by you. When you have abandoned these, you will not perform any wrong deed, you will not follow any wicked way.”

Second, the *Uttaravipatti Sutta* of the *Aṅguttanikāya* states, “Whatever is well spoken is all the word of the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One. I myself and others derive our good words from him.”<sup>39</sup> So Buddhism is open and takes whatever is good into its system. The conversation took place between Indra and some bhikṣus where the latter also affirmed that everything that is well said has been said by the Buddha. Indra congratulated the monks on their speech: “That is a fine doctrine. Do you know it from your own enlightenment or do you hold it from the Buddha?” The monks replied: “When, at a distance from a large granary, one sees some people who are carrying grain in a basket, in their robes, in their hands, one can easily deduce where that grain came from; in the same way, all that is well said, every good word, is the word of the Blessed One.”

This is also found in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* (大智度論), attributed to Nāgarjuna. The text says, “Furthermore, in the *Shitihuanying dedao jing* (釋提桓因得道經 *Śakradevendrābhisambodhisūtra*), the Buddha said to Jiaoshija (橋尸迦 Kauśika): ‘The truths (*satya*), good words (*subhāṣita*), words that are skillful and well spoken, spread throughout the world, all constitute my doctrine.’” Finally, it is said in the *Zhanfoji* (讚佛偈 *Buddhastotragātha*):

The good words in the world are all derived from the  
*Buddhadharma*.

These good words are faultless and are not different from the  
words of the Buddha.

Although they are found elsewhere, these are good words,  
faultless.

They are all, fragments of the *Buddhadharma*.

Even among heretics there can be good words.

...

Then we would believe that the works of heretics themselves  
contain good words.

Good and true words all come from the Buddha, like the perfume of the sandalwood (*candana*) comes from Mo li chan. Withhold Mo li chan and there would be no more sandalwood. Similarly, withhold the Buddha and there would be no further good words.

This means that whatever is well spoken can be considered good. Therefore, when Buddhism is introduced into a country, Buddhism does not cause any conflict with the local culture, but absorbs the local culture and exists harmoniously side by side. For instance, when Buddhism was introduced into China, Buddhism accepted all that was good from both Confucianism and Daoism and become Chinese Buddhism. The same thing happened when Buddhism was introduced into other countries.

The same idea is again expressed in the *Gotami Sutta* (A. 8.53; Bodhi 1193) of the *Aṅguttarnikāya*. When Mahapajapati Gotami asked the Buddha to teach her Dharma, the Buddha taught her how to recognize authentic teachings of Dharma from the Buddha.

Gotami, those things of which you might know: ‘These things lead (1) to passion, not to dispassion; (2) to bondage, not to detachment; (3) to building up, not to dismantling; (4) to strong desires, not to fewness of desires; (5) to non-contentment, not to contentment; (6) to company, not to solitude; (7) to laziness, not to the arousing of energy; (8) to being difficult to support, not to being easy to support,’ you should definitely recognize: ‘This is not the Dharma; this is not the discipline; this is not the teaching of the Teacher.’ But, Gotami, those things of which you might know: ‘These things lead (1) to dispassion, not to passion; (2) to detachment, not to bondage; (3) to dismantling, not to building up; (4) to fewness of desires, not to strong desires; (5) to contentment, not to non-contentment; (6) to solitude, not [281] to company; (7) to the arousing of energy, not to laziness; (8) to being easy to support, not to being difficult to support,’ you should definitely recognize: ‘This is the Dharma; this is the discipline; this is the teaching of the Teacher.’<sup>40</sup>

The *Satthūsāsana Sutta* of the *Anguttaranikāya* also mentions how to recognize the authentic teachings of Dharma when Upāli asked the Buddha to teach the Dharma in brief. The Buddha said:

Upali, those things which you might know thus: ‘These things do not lead exclusively (1) to disenchantment, (2) to dispassion, (3) to cessation, (4) to peace, (5) to direct knowledge, (6) to enlightenment, (7) to nirvāṇa,’ you should definitely recognize: ‘This is not the Dharma; this is not the discipline; this is not the teaching of the Teacher.’ But those things which you might know thus: ‘These things lead exclusively (1) to disenchantment, (2) to dispassion, (3) to cessation, (4) to peace, (5) to direct knowledge, (6) to enlightenment, (7) to nirvāṇa,’ you should definitely recognize: ‘This is the Dharma; this is the discipline; this is the teaching of the Teacher.’<sup>41</sup>

Here the text lists seven items instead of eight and some items are different from the *Gotami Sutta*. However, the idea is the same as how to recognize authentic teaching of Dharma.

Third, the Buddha’s language policy also reflects his liberal and open attitude as there is no official language in Buddhism. According to the *Cullavagga*, there were two Brahmin brothers who became the Buddha’s disciples, who had good voices and were experts in conversation. They told the Buddha that monks of various names, clans, and social strata have gone forth from various families and corrupted the speeches of the Buddha in using their own vernacular. They wished to translate the words of the Buddha into Sanskrit.<sup>42</sup> Then the Buddha rebuked them and said, “I allow you, monks, to learn the speech of the Awakened One according to his own dialect.”<sup>43</sup> Here “his own language” can be interpreted in two ways: in the Buddha’s language or in his disciple’s own language. But when we look at the Chinese translation of the *Vinaya* from different schools, it is clear that the disciples learn the word of the Buddha in their own dialects and languages, not in that of the latter.<sup>44</sup>

Here it is quite clear that the Buddha did not want to make any language the only sacred one and ask all his disciples to learn it. Otherwise, it would prevent the teaching of

the Buddha from spreading. Just as the *Vinaya Matrika Sūtra* says,

The Buddha told the monks saying, ‘In my teachings emphasis is not laid on rhetoric. What I mean is that the doctrines should not be misunderstood. They should be taught in any language which is understood by the people, according to their suitability.’<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the emphasis is not on the language but the understanding of the Buddha’s teachings. This also reflects the practical attitude of the Buddha.

Instead of a dogmatic attitude, the Buddha was quite open and accepted all good suggestions. For instance, some lay devotees suggested that monks should also settle down for a rain retreat without travelling in order to avoid treading on insects and accidentally killing them. So, the Buddha laid down a rule that monks should settle down for retreat during the rainy season. Many *Vinaya* rules had been laid down in this way, and had even been modified several times, either due to a change of circumstance or recommendation from monks or lay people.

For instance, the Buddha prohibited bhikṣus from accepting alms with their hands, departing their quarters without wearing their robes properly, spending the rain retreat in the hollow of trees, storing unnecessary goods in their *viharas*, enjoying secular pleasures, and eating the flesh of elephants.<sup>46</sup> For a similar reason, the Buddha prohibited the ordination of criminals, debtors, and slaves. Other amendments were made on the acceptance of silk robes; the prohibition of admitting anyone to the Saṅgha who suffered from one of five diseases, as requested by Jīvaka Komārabhacca;<sup>47</sup> and the acceptance of invitations to meals as requested by Mendaka. Further inclusions are the forbidding of nuns bathing naked, or bathing in the same place as courtesans as requested by Visākhā Migāramātā, along with the sanction of accepting a personal benefactor at the request of Anāthapiṇḍaka. The Buddha also made rules to comply with some of the requirements of the state at the request of King Bimbisāra: warriors were not allowed to be ordained. Many rules were an outcome of suggestions made by bhikṣus or bhikṣuṇīs, such as the admission of women resulting from Ananda’s intervention, and the formation of most of the rules concerning bathing at the request of Gotami.

The open-mindedness of the Buddha is also reflected from the way he taught his disciples without any reservation.<sup>48</sup> There is no closed fist in the Buddha’s teaching and he

taught all what is necessary for liberation. Therefore, whenever his disciples, great ones like Sariputta and Moggallāna, but also nuns, delivered a good sermon he would approve it with a loving heart. Thus, when the nun Khema gave a talk to the King of Kosala, Pasenadi, who later informed the Buddha of it, the Buddha said, “Even if you asked me, I would give you the same answer.”<sup>49</sup>

#### **1.4 The Buddha did not like to use magic, but educational instruction**

Just as W. Rahula said, many miraculous powers were attributed to the Buddha, and according to the *sūtras* he performed a number of miracles during his ministry.<sup>50</sup> However, most of the miracles performed by the Buddha in the *sūtras* and *Vinaya* took place in his early life after awakening, such as the miracle of hiding Yasa so that his father could not see him, and the series of miracles to convert the three Kāśyapa brothers.<sup>51</sup> But the Buddha changed his attitude toward miracles later and did not consider magical powers to be of primary importance. His attitude toward miracles and magic can be seen from the following *sūtras*.

First, in the *Kevaddha Sutta*, a lay disciple of the Buddha named Kevaddha asked him to perform miracles in order to attract people, but he refused to do so. Instead, the Buddha said that there are three kinds of miracles: (1) the mystic wonder, (2) the wonder of mind reading, and (3) the wonder of education. Among the three, the Buddha liked the wonder of education most, because without resorting to any other means it directly appealed to the listeners’ minds and converted them through understanding rather than faith. Concerning the first two kinds of wonders, the Buddha said that he did not like them, “because I perceive danger in the practice of mystic wonders and the wonder of mind reading, so I loathe, and abhor, and am ashamed thereof.”<sup>52</sup>

In order to illustrate the uselessness of mystic wonder, the Buddha told a story of his disciple who had the physical power to perform miracles. The monk, in order to find the answer to a question, used his magic powers by flying to different heavens and ask the heavenly beings, but they could not answer his question. At last, he flew to the highest heaven and asked the Mahābrahma, who took him to a corner by his hand and said that the Buddha was the best person to answer such a question. So, what the Buddha wanted to convey is that magic power cannot solve any problem.<sup>53</sup> The *Kevaddha Sutta* is also found in the Chinese translation of *Āṅgama* with the same description of the three

miracles.<sup>54</sup>

This attitude is also reflected in the *Saṅgārava Sutta* in which the Buddha explained the three wonders to Saṅgārava, a Brahmin, who said that for him, the first two kinds of miracle were of an illusory nature and the last one was more wonderful and excellent after listening to the teacher.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the Buddha did not allow his disciples to perform physical miracles in order to win over followers and he laid down a monastic rule concerning this. “Monks, a condition of further-men, a wonder of psychic power is not to be exhibited to householders. Whoever should exhibit them, there is an offence of wrongdoing.”<sup>56</sup> The Buddha compared the display of miracles in front of the laity to a respectable woman showing her loincloth in public.<sup>57</sup>

The *Pāṭika Sutta* is another text in which miracles are discussed. It is said that Sunakkhatta, a disciple of the Buddha, left the Order because the latter did not perform miracles for him.<sup>58</sup> The Buddha told him that whether miracles were performed or not, the purpose of teaching Dharma is to lead whoever practices it to the total destruction of suffering. In other words, the performance of miracles is not relevant to the destruction of suffering. So, the Buddha did not like to do it. The *Pāṭika Sutta* is also found in the Chinese translation of the *Dīrghāgama* with the same description of Sunakkhatta’s talk with the Buddha.<sup>59</sup>

In fact, according to the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, there are six modes of higher knowledge.<sup>60</sup> They are (1) supernatural power, (2) the divine ear, (3) penetration of the minds of others, (4) memory of former existences, (5) the divine eye, and (6) extinction of all cankers. These six modes of knowledge are in an ascending order and the highest one, the knowledge of the extinction of all cankers, can be attained only by three persons: a Buddha, a *pratyekabuddha*, and an arhat. The first five are mundane and the last is supramundane, thus it is only through acquiring the sixth knowledge that one becomes emancipated. The first two kinds of miracles, that of mystic wonders and the wonder of mind reading mentioned in the *Kevaddha Sutta* and others, belong to the first and third kinds of higher knowledge. So, in other words, they are the lower kinds of knowledge and can be achieved by anyone who has some kind of concentration, but one obtains liberation only by attaining the sixth knowledge. Thus, the Buddha did not like to perform miracles because first, they are of an illusory nature and irrelevant to liberation, and second, they are considered mundane matters. Therefore, the Buddha used the wonder of education

throughout his life and travelled among towns to tell of the Dharma.

### **1.5 The Buddha Emphasized Understanding and Freedom of Thought, Not Faith.**

Rahula discussed this point so well in the first chapter of his book, *What the Buddha Taught*, that I will just summarize it here for the purpose of discussion. Like psychology, but unlike most religions, including some Mahāyāna schools, the Dharma is not built on faith. According to early Buddhist literature, the Buddha's emphasis is laid on "seeing," knowing, and understanding, not on faith or belief. Although in Buddhist texts there is a word *shraddha*, which is usually translated as "faith" or "belief," it is not "faith" as such, but rather "confidence" born out of conviction. Therefore, in the *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta*, the Buddha even asked his disciples to investigate himself so that the disciples might be fully convinced of the true value of the teacher and his teaching, which they followed.<sup>61</sup> So faith or belief as understood by most religions has little to do with the *Buddhadharma*.

According to the Buddha's teaching, faith, particularly blind faith, does not help one to get release from suffering and attain the highest goal, *nirvāṇa*. As the Buddha says: "Monks, I say that the destruction of defilement and impurities is (meant) for a person who knows and who sees, and not for a person who does not know and does not see."<sup>62</sup>

In fact, in Buddhism, ignorance together with craving and hatred are considered the very roots of suffering. So, when a disciple of the Buddha named Musila attained arhatship he told another monk, "Friend Savittha, without devotion, faith or belief, without liking or inclination, without hearsay or tradition, without considering apparent reasons, without delight in the speculations of opinions, I know and see that the cessation of becoming is *nirvāṇa*."<sup>63</sup> So the Venerable Rahula said, "It is always a question of knowing and seeing, and not that of believing. The teaching of the Buddha is qualified as *ehi-passika*, inviting you to 'come and see,' but not to come and believe." The expressions used everywhere in Buddhist texts referring to persons who realized the Dharma, the Truth, are: "The dustless and stainless Eye of Truth has arisen." "He has seen Truth, has attained Truth, has known Truth, has penetrated into Truth, has crossed over doubt, is without wavering." "Thus, with right wisdom he sees it as it is."<sup>64</sup>

Buddhism always stresses that knowledge is better than faith. The *Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta Sutta* of the *Samyuttanikāya* states this explicitly. Here I will reproduce the dialogues between Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta and Citta, the Buddha's lay disciple, according to

Jayatileke who has beautifully summarized it.<sup>65</sup>

*Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta*: Do you believe in the statement of the recluse Gotama that there is a *jhānic* state in which there is no discursive or reflective thought and there is a cessation of discursive thought and reflection?

*Citta*: I do not accept this as a belief.

*Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta*: See what an honest, straightforward and upright person the householder Citta is .....

*Citta*: What do you think? Which is better—knowledge or belief?

*Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta*: Surely, knowledge is better than belief.

*Citta*: (I can attain up to the fourth *jhāna*) ... Knowing and seeing thus, why should I accept this on the grounds of faith in any recluse or Brahmin, that there is a trance in which there is no discursive or reflective thought...

The Buddha used to criticize blind faith and superstitions as they do not lead one to liberation nor end of suffering. A group of Brahmins came to the Buddha and discussed the ways leading to the union with Brahmā, as it was told in the *Vedas*. The Buddha asked them whether their teacher or teacher's teacher, back to the seventh generation, versed in the *Three Vedas* had seen the Brahmā, they replied negatively. So, the Buddha said that it is "just like a string of blind men clinging one to the other, the first does not see, the middle does not see and the last also does not see."<sup>66</sup> This suggests that blind faith leads one nowhere.

Thus, with reference to his own awakening when he told his five disciples at the Deer Park, the Buddha said: "The eye was born, knowledge was born, wisdom was born, science was born, and light was born."<sup>67</sup> Even the Dharma taught by the Buddha is based on his experience and intuitive wisdom, as discussed in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, in reference to other teachers and their philosophies, which were based on either faith or tradition or logical inference, etc.

These, monks, are those other things, profound, difficult to realize, hard to understand, tranquilizing, sweet, not to be grasped by mere logic, subtle, comprehensible only by the wise, which

the Tathāgata, having himself realized and seen face to face, has set forth; and it is concerning these that they who would rightly praise the Tathāgata in accordance with the truth, should speak.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, when Sunakkhata, a disciple who left the Buddha, was reported to have said that the Buddha taught a doctrine based on his power of reasoning rather than supernatural power, the Buddha seemed quite uneasy, for he would insist his teachings were based on his own experience.<sup>69</sup>

From the perspective of Buddhist training, it is three steps: training in morality, training in concentration, and training in wisdom. Here also faith is not included.

As Rahula pointed out, according to the Buddha, man's emancipation depends on his own realization of the Dharma, and not on the benevolent grace of a god or any external power as a reward for his obedient good behavior, so the freedom of thought and enquiry is essential.<sup>70</sup> Thus, the freedom of enquiry allowed by the Buddha, as explained in the well-known *Kalama Sutta*, is unheard elsewhere in the history of meaning and values, including religions.

Yes, Kalamas, it is proper that you have doubt, that you have perplexity, for a doubt has arisen in a matter which is doubtful. Now, look you Kalamas, (1) do not be led by reports, or (2) tradition, or (3) hearsay. (4) Be not led by the authority of religious texts, (5) nor by mere logic or (6) inference, (7) nor by considering appearances, (8) nor by the delight in speculative opinions, (9) nor by seeming possibilities, (10) nor by the idea: "this is our teacher." But, O Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome, and wrong, and bad, then give them up... And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good, then accept them and follow them.<sup>71</sup>

The Buddha advocated this principle of free enquiry throughout his life and encouraged his disciples to search for the truth. In the *Caṅkī Sutta*, the Buddha told the Brahmins how to find out the truth. "Here, Bharadvāja, a bhikṣu may be living in dependence on some village or town. A householder or a householder's son goes to him and investigates him in regard to three kinds of states: in regard to states based on greed,

in regard to states based on hate, and in regard to states based on delusion.”<sup>72</sup> Even just a few minutes before his death, he requested several times that his disciples ask him if they had any doubts about his teaching, and not to feel sorry later that they could not clear those doubts.

## **2. The Buddha’s Personality**

### **2.1 The Buddha was a Practical Teacher**

The most prominent characteristic of the Buddha is his pragmatism; because of this, he only taught things useful for the elimination of human suffering, avoiding metaphysical issues. Therefore, he did not like to discuss metaphysical questions or speculative views, which are purely for the purpose of debate or intellectual curiosity. In fact, he disregarded all forms of dogma and did not hold any views in this area, as reported in the *Sallekha Sutta* when the Buddha says, “we shall not adhere to our views or hold on to them tenuously, but shall relinquish them easily. Effacement should be practiced thus.”<sup>73</sup>

During his lifetime, India experienced political stability for the first time; freedom of thought and expression were unheard before this. Therefore, various philosophers and teachers appeared and disseminated their thoughts and theories regarding life and the world around them. The kings supported them by various means, such as giving food, arranging debates, and putting up convocation halls, and sometimes also sought advice from them. The ten well-known classical unanswered questions, such as whether the universe is finite or infinite, is a typical example of their debate and discussion.<sup>74</sup>

Namely, (1) is the universe eternal (2) is it not eternal, (3) is the universe finite, or (4) is it infinite, (5) is soul the same as body, or (6) is soul one thing and body another thing, (7) does the Tathāgata exist after death, or (8) does he not exist after death, or (9) does he simultaneously exist and not exist after death, or (10) does he simultaneously not exist and not non-exist.

These debates usually came up in disputes. In the *Suttanipata*, one of the oldest collections of discourses regarded by almost all scholars, we come across many passages such as:

The doctrine which some people call the highest, others call the lowest. Which of these is the true statement? For all these

(people) indeed call themselves experts. They say that their own doctrine indeed is superior, but they say another's doctrine is inferior. Thus contending they dispute. They each say their own opinion is true.<sup>75</sup>

These metaphysical questions cannot be solved by speculation and each teacher was attached to his own opinion and view. "So, having thus got into arguments, they dispute (among themselves). They say 'the other person is a fool not an expert.'"<sup>76</sup>

Gautama Buddha, realizing the danger and vanity of such debate, did not join their discussion, because in his regard, such discussions do not lead one to freedom and liberation from life's problem. Therefore, the Buddha did not give any definite answer and just kept silent when the wanderer Māluñkyāputta put these ten classical questions to him. Instead, he said that these questions have nothing to do with the awakened life. Whatever opinion one may have regarding these questions, there is still suffering. Then the Buddha said, "the cessation of suffering (nirvāṇa) I declare is in this very life."<sup>77</sup> The Buddha expressed the same view when the ascetic Vacchagotta asked whether he held any speculative views.<sup>78</sup> The Buddha said that speculative view was something that he had put away for he had seen this, the five aggregates, and their origin and disappearance. Thus he was liberated through not clinging to any of it, because the goal of the Dharma is not achieved by universalizing oneself, but by completely giving up the notion of self. Just as Lamotte said, it is not because the Buddha did not know the solution, but because he considered any discussion regarding them to be useless for deliverance, dangerous to good understanding, and likely to perturb minds.<sup>79</sup>

The Buddha was equally pragmatic about presenting his own teachings, confining himself to the teachings of those that were relevant to the goal only. He declared, "just like the ocean has one taste, the taste of salt, his teaching also has one flavor, the flavor of deliverance."<sup>80</sup>

During the forty-five years of his career as a teacher, the Buddha taught only the teaching that is concerned with liberation, leading to nirvāṇa, and he often spoke with concrete examples from life around him to elucidate his teachings. Once, when the Buddha was residing in the Simsapa forest in Kosambi, he told his disciples that what he had taught is like the leaves in his hand and what he had not taught is like the leaves in the forest. He explained: "And why have I not told you (all I know)? Because that is not

useful... not leading to nirvāṇa. That is why I have not told you those things.”<sup>81</sup>

When the Buddha was falsely accused of teaching the annihilation, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being, he explicitly stated: “Bhikṣus, both formerly and now, what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering.”<sup>82</sup> So the Buddha was concerned with human suffering and its elimination, nothing more. Again, when Subhadda, the last disciple of the Buddha, came and asked him who among the six śrāmaṇa teachers understood things as they claimed, the Buddha said, “Enough, Subhadda! Let this matter rest whether they, according to their own assertion, have thoroughly understood things, or whether they have not, ... The Dharma, Subhadda, will I teach you. Listen well.”<sup>83</sup> Then the Buddha went on to explain the noble eightfold path and its fruit, he did not waste time on explaining who among the six teachers were true to their assertion and who were not. The same spirit was again shown in the *Cūlasakuludāyī Sutta* when the wanderer Udāyin asked the Buddha about the claim of omniscience made by other teachers. The Buddha told him: “Let us put aside questions of the Beginning and the End. I will teach you the Dharma: That being thus, this comes to be. From the coming to be of that, this arises. That being absent, this does not happen. From the cessation of that, this ceases.”<sup>84</sup> So here the Buddha was interested only in how things operate, how they work, not how things begin, or the ultimate beginning of things, which is obvious impossible to know.

The fundamental teaching of the Buddha is the four noble truths, which are concerned with the existence of human suffering, and even the third noble truth, which is technically called nirvāṇa, is in the early sūtras referred to as the elimination of craving, hatred, and illusion. In other words, from the experiential point of view, nirvāṇa is the highest happiness and thus it can be attained in this life itself. So even if there were no rebirth, nirvāṇa is still meaningful.

However, starting with suffering does not mean that Buddhism is pessimistic, but realistic. Because Buddhism starts with suffering and life’s problems, the idea is to eliminate suffering. In order to eliminate suffering, we have to face it and analyze it, not escape from it. Buddhism teaches us to face our problems and solve it there and then. If you try to escape your life’s problems, you will never solve it and it will become worse and worse until you cannot control it. The last resort to the problems in life many people try is suicide, which is still an escape.

During the lifetime of the Buddha, many of his disciples attained nirvāṇa, arahathood.

Since the Buddha mainly concerned himself with the elimination of human suffering, he did not like people talking nonsense to waste their valuable time and he always advised his disciples to either discuss the Dharma, the truth, or to work diligently day and night. In early scripture, we often come across the description that the ascetics and wanderers gathered together discussing various worldly topics.<sup>85</sup> But Gautama Buddha advised his disciples to do two things when they gathered together: either hold discussions on Dharma or maintain “noble silence.”<sup>86</sup> On a certain occasions when a number of monks staying at the house of Migāra’s mother were talking frivolously and behaved empty headed, the Buddha asked Moggallāna to perform magic to calm them down.<sup>87</sup> In fact, to avoid the four kinds of speech—falsehood, malicious talk, harsh words, and frivolous talk—right speech of the noble eightfold path is to be followed and practised.<sup>88</sup> Gautama Buddha especially did not like people speaking ill of others, even regarding Devadatta. He was once informed by his attendant Moggallāna that Devadatta had an evil wish to take over the Saṅgha, and the Buddha said, “Ward your words, Moggallāna, ward your words, for even now the foolish fellow will betray himself.”<sup>89</sup> The Buddha did not even like people to praise him without good reason. In the scripture, Śāriputra is reported to have praised him for being wonderful and marvelous, surpassing past and future Buddhas. The Buddha reproached him saying, “how dear you are, you even do not understand the present Buddha fully while the Tathāgata is still living, how can you talk about Tathāgata in the past and future?”<sup>90</sup>

So, Gautama Buddha, transcending all speculative views and theories, did not enter into useless dispute, and as a result he did not purposefully formulate any philosophy in order to crash all the existing views. Buddhist philosophy is an “unexpected consequence” of Gautama Buddha. He said, “Seeing all these views, but not grasping them and searching for the truth, I found inward peace.”<sup>91</sup>

## **2.2 The Buddha was Confident and Tolerant**

As shown in early Buddhist literature, the Buddha was a man of great confidence and tolerance and always endured difficult situations with calmness and self-control. The Buddha was confident because he acted in accordance with his own teachings and taught his experience as discussed above. Therefore, the Buddha asked his disciples to examine themselves so that they could establish a firm conviction. The *Lokasutta* of the

*Aṅguttaranikāya* says, “As he speaks, monks, so he does; as he does, so he speaks. Since he does as he speaks and speaks as he does, therefore he is called Tathāgata.” (A. ii. 23. PTS: II. 25)

Therefore, when many distinguished young Magadha noblemen led an awakened life under the direction of the Blessed One, a rumor spread in Magadha that the Buddha made fathers childless, women widows, and divided families, whom he was going to convert the next time. The Buddha taught his disciples that they should reply to the revilers in the following stanza: “Verily, great heroes, Truthfinders, lead by what is true Dharma. Who would be jealous of the wise, leading by Dharma?”<sup>92</sup> Thus what the Buddha taught, the Dharma, is the psychological reality that he experienced and followed. Some of his disciples asked him to leave Magadha, but the Buddha told them that the rumor would be over within seven days and it died out as he predicted.

The confidence of the Buddha is explicitly shown in the sūtras. For instance, the Buddha practiced austerities for six long years with the hope of finding the solution to life’s problems, but found it futile so at last he gave it up. At this time, his five companions deserted and left him alone, but he was not disappointed. In such a desperate situation, the Buddha persisted with strong will and determination and achieved his goal at last. When Devadatta meditated on his assassination, the Buddha was represented as telling his disciples, who were worried and tried to protect him, that they should not feel uneasy because it is physically impossible to kill a Buddha. Devadatta tried to kill him three times, but the Buddha faced it calmly and turned every situation from tragedy into peace.

The Buddha faced challenges from his opponents in debates and conversations with confidence. His answers to their planned and thoughtful questions were tactful. He rarely fell into the pit of his opponents and defeated them, as showed in the scripture. He gradually convinced his opponents of his own reasoning, leading them not just to conversion but also homelessness. However, the Buddha never instigated a debate. It was only when they came and challenged him that he then began to talk to them with confidence and good intention. The Buddha was pragmatic and regarded these debates as pointless, but when they challenged him, he never ran away from such discussions. He would often gradually divert the debate into a discourse on his own teaching with patience, effort, and sincerity. Sometimes he even told the opposing party about his own life and experience. Such was the case with Saccaka, the wanderer who was “a debater and

a clever speaker regarded by many as a saint.”<sup>93</sup> He challenged the Buddha, boasting that he could shake the Buddha up and down and thump him about. But when he finally met the Buddha and their discussion took some unexpected turns, Saccaka was defeated. At the end, he admitted that the Buddha remained calm without showing any anger, hate, or bitterness, even when he was spoken to offensively and assailed by discourteous speech. Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, the Jain leader, sent his disciples several times to debate with the Buddha with different dilemmas in order to defeat the latter, such as Upāli, Prince Abhaya and Asibandhakaputta, but they were all defeated and became students of the Buddha’s teachings at the end of their discussion.<sup>94</sup>

The Buddha was tolerant, because he did not regard the world as evil, but rather believed that people do bad things due to ignorance. He, therefore, never scolded people as sinners but as fools, and always conversed with his opponents or persecutors with the good intention of trying and help them. He rarely showed any anger or was displeased when people abused him, but was always in a state of calm and tranquility. Among the lay followers of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, Upāli, as mentioned above, was a wealthy householder. After his defeat, he asked the Buddha to accept him as his lay disciple; the latter advised him to think twice before making that decision for he was a well-known person. This made Upali more convinced of the Buddha’s tolerance so he asked for the third time and was accepted. The Buddha then asked him to continue to support and honor his former teacher as before.<sup>95</sup> The same spirit of tolerance is also expressed in the *Āṅguttaranikāya* when Siha, the general and lay disciple of the Jain Order, became a student of the Buddha.<sup>96</sup>

In the early sūtras, there are many instances of the Buddha facing abuse and persecution with confidence and tolerance, even converting his persecutors to become his students in the end. When the Bharadvāja brothers abused him with all kinds of rude and harsh words, the Buddha remained silent and undisturbed.<sup>97</sup> After they had finished their curse, the Buddha calmly talked to them and turned them into his students. When a Brahmin shouted at the Buddha as he approached, “Stop there, shaveling, stop there, ascetic, stop there, outcaste,” he quietly conversed with him and told him what constituted an outcaste.<sup>98</sup> The Brahmin was pleased with their discussion and the new interpretation of outcaste, giving him an abundant choice of food. The Buddha was a tolerant teacher, so tolerant that it is unheard of in the history of thought. His unconditional patience appeared clearly in three stanzas of the *Dhammapāda*, numbers three, four, and five, in which he

described non-resistance as the means to bring enmity and hatred to cessation. He taught his disciples that even in the mind, one should not harbor evil thoughts and bad intentions. He not only taught tolerance but practiced it himself.<sup>99</sup>

There are two incidents in which the Buddha was slandered by his opponents in early Buddhist literature; they are referred to in the *Pubbakammapiḷoti* of the *Apadāna* as the remaining effects of the Buddha's past bad karma.<sup>100</sup> First, Cincamanavika, a beautiful female ascetic (*parivrājaka*) from another order, was persuaded by her fellow ascetics to discredit the Buddha because they found that their gains diminished due to the popularity of the Buddha. She pretended to have become pregnant by the Buddha by tying a wooden disc around her body and showed up where the latter was addressing a large congregation. Her accusation was soon found to be false and she was chased out by the audience.<sup>101</sup> The second story is recorded in the *Udāna* about Sundari, also a female ascetic from another order, who was persuaded by her fellow ascetics to insult the Buddha and his disciples. She visited Jetavana where the Buddha was residing and pretended to have stayed in the evenings and left in the mornings. After some days, the heretic ascetics hired some villains to kill Sundari and hide her body under a heap of rubbish near Jetavana. When this was reported to the king, a search was carried out and her body was found. Her fellow ascetics then went about the streets of the city crying, "Behold the deeds of the Sakya monks."<sup>102</sup> In these two incidents, the Buddha also remained calm and self-controlled without anger as reported in the sūtras.

Even at his deathbed, the Buddha was not worried or discouraged but faced it bravely. He even consoled Ananda, who was weeping and much troubled by the fact that his teacher was going to die. The Buddha said to him:

How, then, Ananda, can this [that I should not die] be possible—  
whereas anything whatever born, brought into being, and  
organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of  
dissolution—how then can this be possible, that such a being  
should not be dissolved? No such condition can exist!<sup>103</sup>

At this moment the Buddha was about to die, but he was not troubled by his own death, on the contrary he still consoled others. This takes courage and compassion. An ordinary sentient being would not be able to do that at his deathbed.

### **2.3 The Emotions and Indignations of the Buddha**

The Buddha would not tolerate misunderstandings and misrepresentations on issues concerning his principles and major teachings, although he was quite patient with his opponents and even persecutors. A few cases in the “canon” suggest that the Buddha felt uneasy and even reproached his disciples when they misunderstood and wrongly interpreted his teachings. As the Dharma was his great discovery, his life’s work, and his message to the suffering world, he would not tolerate his own monks misrepresenting it through carelessness or ill-will. This was particularly the case when their task was to pass this message down to future generations. Sati, a fisherman’s son, is a good example. He wrongly understood the master’s teaching that consciousness survived the body and took another form in the new life. Upon hearing this, the Buddha cried out:

Foolish man, to whom have you ever known me to teach the Dharma in that way? Foolish man, in many discourses have I not stated consciousness to be dependently arisen, since without a condition there is no origination of consciousness? But you, foolish man, have misrepresented us by your wrong grasp and injured yourself and stored up much demerit.<sup>104</sup>

Ariṭṭha, a former vulture-trainer, was another monk who was reproached by the Buddha in a similar manner for his misunderstanding of the Dharma. The Buddha blamed him for being a foolish and misguided man.<sup>105</sup> The commentary explains that while reflecting in seclusion, Ariṭṭha came to the conclusion that there would be no harm for bhikṣus to engage in sexual relations with women, and he therefore maintained that this should not be prohibited by the monastic rules.<sup>106</sup> In both cases, the monks were of humble origins and probably did not have any education at all, so they had difficulty in understanding the Buddha’s teaching in its philosophical dimensions. But the two topics concerning a fundamental doctrine and a fundamental practice are crucial in the understanding of the Buddha’s teachings. It therefore appears that the Buddha reproached them with personal feeling.

In these two cases, it may perhaps be argued that the Buddha was not angry, but what he said concerning Devadatta suggests that he felt strongly, emotionally at least, in the literal sense of the word. Devadatta was intrigued by the leadership of the Saṅgha and

asked the Buddha to hand over it to him. The Buddha said: “Not even to Sāriputta and Moggallāna would I hand over the order, and would I to thee, vile one, to be vomited like spittle?”<sup>107</sup>

In the *Āṅguttaranikāya*, we find the following saying of the Buddha when Ananda made enquiries on Devadatta, “And so long as, Ananda, I saw a bright spot in Devadatta, even the prick-end of a horse-hair in size, I declared not, ‘Devadatta is wayward gone, hell-bound for a kalpa, unpardonable’—but it was when I saw none, that I declared thus...”<sup>108</sup> The same comment is also found in the Chinese counterpart, the *Ekottarāgama*.<sup>109</sup> This statement shows the Buddha’s indignation toward those who have done wrong to the community of monks. The Devadatta incident was a bitter experience in the life of the Buddha because, as a monk and disciple in his own community, Devadatta had tried, with some success, to split the order he had established with much effort. Therefore, whenever Devadatta was mentioned, the Buddha would speak of him as a foolish person with bad intentions.

The Saṅgha was the disseminator of the Buddha’s message to the world. Gautama Buddha was very concerned about the split of the Saṅgha, for he had seen what had happened to Jain monks in the last few years of his life.<sup>110</sup> The *Mahāvibhāṣaśāstra*, with reference to Devadatta, mentions that the bad karma entailed by the destruction of the Saṅgha is graver or heavier than that of shedding the blood of the Buddha. The split of the Saṅgha was explained as the destruction of the *dharmakāya*, while shedding the blood of the Buddha harms the *rūpakāya*.<sup>111</sup>

Apart from these, there are at least two cases in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* that illustrate the Buddha displaying emotions. These consist of feeling appreciation towards beautiful things. The first incident was when the Licchavis of Vaiśālī, wearing clothes of different colors and adorned with various kinds of ornaments, approached the Buddha in carriages. Gautama said to his disciples, “O brethren, let those of the brethren who have never seen the Tavatīṃsa gods, gaze upon this company of the Licchavis, behold this company of the Licchavis, compare this company of the Licchavis, for they are even as a company of Tavatīṃsa gods.”<sup>112</sup> The second incident occurred after the Buddha and Ananda had returned from a begging tour in Vaiśālī. The Buddha addressed Ananda: “How delightful a spot, Ananda, is Vaiśālī, and how charming the Udena Shrine, and the Gotamaka Shrine...”<sup>113</sup> These two incidents are also mentioned in the Chinese translations

of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*.<sup>114</sup> These pieces of literature suggest that the Buddha had emotions, which he manifested in different ways. If a sense of appreciation shows the compassion of Gautama Buddha, then anger definitely shows the human side of him because a Buddha, at least by definition, is a person who has eliminated the three evils: greed, hatred, and ignorance. These incidents reveal the human aspect of the Buddha.

## **2.4 The Buddha was humorous**

The Buddha was quite humorous when he talked to people either in debates or conversations. Thus, in the *Tevijja Sutta*, as discussed above, a Brahman named Vāseṭṭha spoke with the Buddha about the teachings in the *Vedas* concerning the union with Brahmā, the creator God. The Buddha asked him whether he, his teacher, or his teacher's teacher, even back to the seventh generation, saw Brahmā. Vāseṭṭha answered negatively. Then the Buddha humorously said that it is just like a person who loves a lady but knows neither her name, nor where she dwells, nor her complexion, nor whether she is tall or short, nor whether she is of Brahman or *śūdra* descent.<sup>115</sup>

The *Kevaddha Sutta* tells us another humorous story narrated by the Buddha. A disciple of the Buddha, who had psychic powers, wished to find out the answer to a question so he flew to different heavens in order to find out the answer. But all the gods there said to him that they did not know the answer to his question. So, at last he decided to go to the Great Brahmā since he was the creator God, the All-seeing. But the first two times the monk asked the Great Brahmā the same question, he said:

I, brother, am the Great Brahmā, the Supreme, the Mighty, the All-seeing, the Ruler, the Lord of all, the Controller, the Creator, the Chief of all, appointing to each his place, the Ancient of days, the Father of all that are and are to be!<sup>116</sup>

When the monk asked him for the third time, the Great Brahmā took that monk by his arm and led him aside, and said,

These gods, the retinue of Brahmā, hold me, brother, to be such that there is nothing I cannot see, nothing I have not understood, nothing I have not realized. Therefore I gave no answer in

their presence. I do not know, brother, where those four great elements—earth, water, fire, and wind—cease, leaving no trace behind. Therefore you, brother, have done wrong, have acted ill, in that, ignoring the Exalted One. You have undertaken this long search, among others, for an answer to this question. Go you now, return to the Exalted One, ask him the question, and accept the answer according as he shall make reply.<sup>117</sup>

In this story, the Buddha used a pun to illustrate two things. First, that psychic power is useless in solving problems so the Buddha did not like to use it, as discussed above. Second, according to the *Vedas*, the Great Brahmā is “the Supreme, the Mighty, the All-seeing, the Ruler, the Lord of all, the Controller, the Creator, the Chief of all, the Father of all that are and are to be.” But he did not know the question asked by the monk and therefore he took him away and told the truth. The *Anumāna Sutta* teaches that a monk should always review himself, whether he has evil thoughts, bad ideas, or unwholesome states of mind. If he has, he should make an effort to abandon them all and then he can abide happy and glad. The Buddha then compared it to when a woman looks at herself in a clear and bright mirror. If she finds a smudge or a blemish on her face, she makes an effort to remove it and then becomes happy when she sees no smudge on her face.<sup>118</sup> In the *Āṅguttaranikāya*, the Buddha told the monks that mothers and fathers should be worshipped and venerated as Brahmā.<sup>119</sup> This is quite humorous when we look at it against its background, the creation of Brahmanism, that the world with its sentient beings is created by Mahā Brahmā. What the Buddha really wanted to say was that if you worship and venerate Brahmā then it is better for you to worship your parents because it is not Brahmā, but your parents, who have created you.

From the above discussion, we may come to the following provisional conclusion. Unlike the other Indian religious teachers of his time, the Buddha did not claim any association with divinity whatsoever but only presented himself as an enlightened teacher who taught, guided, and advised his followers to practice for the attainment of the same enlightenment. As a teacher, the Buddha loathed and abhorred magic and tricks in attracting and converting people, instead he used only educational instructions for the purpose of helping people be released from suffering, which is his sole aim. Hence, the Buddha always emphasized understanding, but not faith, because the ultimate cause for

human suffering is ignorance, which can only be eradicated by the power of wisdom. Even his teachings are only instructions for solving human life's problems but are not revelations that should be upheld as dogma. Therefore the Buddha said to his monks:

Go forth, monks, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit, and happiness of gods and men. Let not two go by one way: Preach, monks, the Dharma, excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, excellent in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter.<sup>120</sup>

This practical, rational and open attitude of the Buddha influenced his disciples and later generations of monks, greatly contributing to the success of spreading his message to the world. Thus, Buddhism has assimilated into local culture, customs, and thought wherever it has been transmitted without any kind of conflict, as it does not regard the host culture as superstition. Instead, Buddhism helps local people to preserve, maintain and transmit their culture to future generations.

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## Notes

- 1 S iii 119 / CDB: 938. The same is also found in the *Alagaddūpamasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*: "Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering." (M i 140 / MLDB: 234).
- 2 Smith (1919) 47.
- 3 Foucher (1964) 243.
- 4 Rhys Davids (1881) 150.
- 5 Gombrich (1996) 65.
- 6 Rahula (1990) 1.
- 7 *Dhammapāda*, verse no. 165.
- 8 No. 26, *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta* and No.36, *Mahāsācaka Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. The counterpart of the *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta* is also found in the Chinese translation of the *Madhyamāgama*, no. 204 sūtra, CBETA, T01, no. 26, 775c4-778c8.
- 9 Norman (2001) 51-53.
- 10 A ii, 36-38. A Brahmin asked the Buddha whether he was a deva, a *gandhabba* (a kind of god), a *yakkha* (demon) or a human being, the Buddha denied all and said because he destroyed, uprooted the *asavas* which is the cause for the birth as those beings, therefore he said, "As a lotus, fair and lovely, by the water is not soiled, by the world am I not soiled; therefore, Brahmin, I am Buddha."
- 11 *Jātaka*, V. 238. No. 528, the *Mahābobhi Jātaka*.
- 12 *Jātaka*, VI. 208. No.543, *Bhuridatta Jātaka*.
- 13 M ii, 260. *Samyuktāgama*, Sūtra No.389, (《雜阿含389經》T2, 105a-b). Here Gautama Buddha compared himself to a physician and the first noble truth of suffering as sickness, second noble truth as the cause of the sickness, the third noble truth as the release from suffering and the fourth noble truth as the prescription.
- 14 M iii, 6 (No.107, *Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta*): "The Tathāgata is one who shows the way." The Chinese counterpart is found in the *Madhyamāgama Sūtra* No.144, 《中阿含144經》〈算數目鍵連經〉(T1, 652c). Dh. verse no. 276, "You yourself should make the effort; the Awaken Ones are only teachers. Those who enter this Path and who are meditative, are delivered from the bonds of Māra."
- 15 D ii, 100-101.
- 16 Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, part I, 145.
- 17 Bhikkhu Nānamoli, 587-8.
- 18 MLDB 1995: 880-2.
- 19 M iii, 238-247.
- 20 D ii, 100. This passage is also found in the three Chinese translations of the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*: T1, no.1, 15a; no.5, 164c9-13; no.6, 180a18-b2. So it must come down from a common tradition shared all early Buddhist schools in India. It is also found in the *Satipaṭṭhanasamyutta* (S 47.9, 13), Bodhi: 1637, 1644.
- 21 *ibid*. This is also found in the *Satipaṭṭhanasamyutta* (S 47.9, 13), Bodhi: 1637, 1644.
- 22 D ii, 154. This passage is found in four Chinese translations of the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*: T1, no.1, 26a; no.5, 172b; no.6, 188a; no.7, 204b-c. So it also must come down from a common tradition shared all schools.
- 23 *Vinaya Cullavagga* VII. Horner 2000: Vol. V, 264. *Vinaya* Text, Vol. III, translated by Rhys David and Hermann Oldenberg, 238-9. The same story is also found in the Chinese translation of the *Madhyamāgama* 《中阿含145瞿默目鍵連經》.
- 24 M i, 205-6.
- 25 Although sometimes some sūtras say that the Buddha travelled with a large multitude, but it is rare because it was

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- quite difficult to get alms food for all. Therefore, the Buddha usually travelled with only a few disciples.
- 26 M i, 260. The translation with a few changes is adapted from Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (1995) 352-3.
- 27 M i, 134-5.
- 28 Vasumitra, 52.
- 29 The *Holy Bible*: Ex 20.
- 30 Mi, 437-440. The translation is adapted from Ñānamoli's translation: *The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*.
- 31 D ii, 154; Rhys Davids (trans.) 2000: 171. Pāli *Vinaya Cullavagga*, xi, 286. Book of Discipline, v. 398. The Chinese translations of the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, T1, 26a28-9 and *Mahīśāsaka Vinaya*, T22, 191b3-4; *Mahāsaṅghika Vinaya*, T22, 492b4-5, c7; *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, T22, 967b11-13; *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya*, T23, 449b13-4; *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Saṃyuktāvastu*, T24, 405b3-5 and *Vinaya Matrīka Sūtra*, T24, 818b3-4.
- 32 A i 231. The translation is adapted from Woodward: *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, Vol. I, 211.
- 33 Pali *Vinaya*, iii, 171; ii, 196-197; *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya*, T23, 265a13-4.
- 34 S. Dutt, 1945, 6-7.
- 35 What Devadatta proposed were common practices amongst the *śramaṇa* groups as reported in the *Mahāsācāka Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. M I, 238.
- 36 R.F. Gombrich, (1994) 44.
- 37 T24, 495c. *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya*.
- 38 A I, 230.
- 39 *Utaravipatti Sutta* A.8.8; “*Yaṃ kiñci subhāsitaṃ, sabbam taṃ tassa bhagavato vacanaṃ arahato sammāsaṃbuddhassa. Tato upādāy' upādāya mayaṃ c' aññe ca bhaṇāma.*” PTS: A. iv 164; “*whatsoever be well spoken, all that is the word of the Exalted One, the arahant, the fully awakened One, wholly based thereon is both what we and others say.*” (GS. IV. 112; Bodhi NDB: 1120)
- 40 The translation is adopted from Bhikkhu Bodhi (NDB: 1193) PTS: A. IV. 281 (A. 8.53), PTS. Translation IV. 181, and also the Pali *Vinaya*, II, 257-258. I. B. Horner's translation, *The Book of Discipline*, Vol. V, (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1997) 359.
- 41 The translation is adopted from Bhikkhu Bodhi (NDB: 1100) PTS: A. IV. 143 (A. 7.83) PTS translation IV. 96-97.
- 42 Some scholars think that they wished to translate the words of the Buddha into Sanskrit while others think metrical form only. This story is found in the *Vinaya* texts of different schools: the *Vinaya-matrka-sūtra*, T24, p.822; the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, T24, p.955; the *Mahisasaka-vinaya*, T22, p.174; the *Sarvastivada-vinaya*, T23, p.274; the *Mulasarvastivada-nikaya-vinaya-samyuktavastu*, T24, p. 232.
- 43 *Cullavagga*, V. 33.1. *The Book of Discipline*, V. 194.
- 44 The *Vinaya Matrīka Sūtra*, T24, 822a; the *Dharmagupta Vinaya*, T22, 955c; the *Mahisasaka Vinaya*, T22, 174b; the *Sarvastivada Vinaya*, T23, 274a; the *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya Samyutavastu*, T24, 232b-c
- 45 The *Vinaya Matrīka Sūtra*, T24, 822a15-23.
- 46 Cited from Jing Yin's unpublished PhD dissertation “*The Vinaya in India and China — Spirit and Transformation*”, 2002, p.84. For a detailed discussion, please read “*The Buddha and the Vinaya*” in section two: The ethos of the *Vinaya* in Chapter two: the Spirit of the *Vinaya*.
- 47 The five diseases are leprosy, boils, eczema, consumption and epilepsy. The *Dharmagupta Vinaya*, T22, 808c2-809a8; the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya*, T23, 152b9-c12; the *Theravāda Vinaya*, I:72-73.
- 48 A i, 283. D ii, 100.
- 49 S iv, 374.
- 50 *Encyclopedia of Britannica*, Gotama Buddha.
- 51 *Vinaya*, Mahavagga, i, 15-34. *The Book of Discipline*, iv, 24-46.
- 52 D i, 213-4. The translation with a few changes is adapted from Rhys David, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, I, 278-9. Italic is mine.
- 53 D i, 221-2. The translation is adopted from the *Dialogues of the Buddha*, I, 282.
- 54 *Sūtra* No. 24 of the *Āṅguttara*.
- 55 A iii, 169-71.
- 56 *Cullavagga*, V. 8. The translation is adopted from *The Book of Discipline*, V. 152.
- 57 *Cullavagga*, V. 8; *Book of Discipline*, V. 151.
- 58 D iii, 2-4.
- 59 *Sūtra* No. 15 of the *Āṅguttara*.
- 60 *Sutta* No. 2 of the *Āṅguttara* and the *Sūtra* No. 27 of the *Āṅguttara*.
- 61 M i, 319-20. There is a Chinese translation of this *sutta* in the *Madhyamāgama* with the same contents, but the wording is slightly different.
- 62 S iii, 152.
- 63 S ii, 117.

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- 64 S v, 423; iii, 103; M iii, 19.
- 65 Jayatilke (2004), 398.
- 66 D i, No.13 *Tevijja Sutta*.
- 67 S v, 422.
- 68 D i, 12ff. The same paragraph is repeated eight times in the *sutta* after the discussion of the teachings and philosophies of each group. The translation is adopted from Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, i, 26.
- 69 M i, 68. *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta*.
- 70 W. Rahula, 1990, 2.
- 71 Cited from W. Rahula, 1990, 2.
- 72 M ii, 171-2.
- 73 M i, 43.
- 74 The ten classical questions which the Buddha never gave any answers are (1) is the universe eternal or (2) is it not eternal, (3) is the universe finite or (4) is it infinite, (5) is soul the same as body or (6) is soul one thing and body another thing, (7) does the Tathāgata exist after death, or (8) does he not exist after death, or (9) does he both (at the same time) exist and not exist, or (10) does he both (at the same time) not exist and not not-exist. D i, 187-8; M i, 157, 426, 282; S iii, 213 sq., 258; iv, 286, 391; v, 418. But in *Madhyamakakārikā*, 22, 2., Nāgārjuna gave the number as fourteen. They are as follows: (1) Whether the world is (a) eternal, (b) or not, (c) or both, (d) or neither. (2) Whether the world is (a) finite, (b) or infinite, (c) or both, (d) or neither. (3) Whether the Tathāgata (a) exists after death, (b) or does not, (c) or both, (d) or neither. (4) Whether the soul is identical with the body or different from it.
- 75 Sn. Verse Nos. 903, 904. The translation is adopted from Norman, *The Group of Discourses*, 118.
- 76 Sn. Verse No. 879.
- 77 *Culamālūkyāputta Sutta* in M i, 426-430; T1, 804a; 917b.
- 78 *Aggivacchagotta Sutta*, M i, 485.
- 79 Lamotte, 1988, 48.
- 80 A iv, 201; tr. F.L. Woodward, vol. IV. 139.
- 81 S v, 437.
- 82 M i, 140. *Sutta* No.22, the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*.
- 83 D ii, 150-1.
- 84 M ii, 32. Also at A iv, 428, when a Brahmin asked the Buddha regarding omniscience, the Buddha said, “Enough, Brahmins! ... which speaks the truth, which lies? Let it be! I will teach you Dhamma, Brahman; listen, pay heed, I will speak.”
- 85 M i, 513-514. The stock passage is “talk of kings, robbers, ministers, armies, dangers, battles, food, drinks, clothing, beds, garlands, perfumes, relatives, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, countries, women, heroes, streets, well, the dead, trifles, the origin of the world, the origin of the sea etc.” also M ii, 1-2; 23; 29-30; iii, 113; D iii, 36.
- 86 M i, 161. T1, 775c-776a. MA points out that the second *jhāna* and one’s basic meditation subject are both called “noble silence”. Those who cannot attain the second *jhāna* are advised to maintain noble silence by attending to their basic meditation subject.
- 87 S v, 270.
- 88 M i, 288; 179-180; 345; iii, 49.
- 89 A iii, 122.
- 90 S v, 159-160.
- 91 Sn. verse no. 837.
- 92 Mahāvagga, I. 24. Horner (2000) *The Book of Discipline*, part 4, 56-7.
- 93 M i. 372-387.
- 94 A iv, 179-188. The same *sūtra* is also found in Mahāvagga, IV. 31.
- 95 M i, 237. There are two *suttas* in the *Majjhimanikāya*, No. 35 and 36 about the debates and discussions between the Buddha and Sāccaka, the wanderer. Sāccaka was defeated but not became a member of the Saṅgha. He still regarded himself to be a saint.
- 96 Upāli’s debate is found in the *Upāli Sutta*, No. 56 of the *Majjhimanikāya*. Prince Abhaya’s debate is found in M i, 392-396 (M.58). While Asibandhakaputta’s debate is found in S iv, 322ff (S 42.9 Kula). According to the Chinese translations, Nātaputta, the Jaina teacher sent Asibandhakaputta twice to debate with Gautama Buddha when the latter came to Nalanda. *Saṃyuktāgama* 914 (T2, 230b-232b).
- 97 S i, 161-3.
- 98 Sn. *Vasala Sutta*, 1. 7.
- 99 Dh. No. 3. “*He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me*”, in those who harbour such thoughts hatred is not appeased. No.4. “*He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me*”, in those who do not

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- harbour such thoughts hatred is appeased. No.5. Hatred never cease through hatred in this world; through love alone they cease. This is an eternal law.*
- 100 *Apadāna*, i, 299-301.
- 101 *Apadāna*, i, 299-301, verse: 7-9; *Jātaka*, iv, 187f.; *Dhammapāda* commentary, iii, 178f.; *Itivuttaka* commentary, 69.
- 102 The *Udāna*, iv, 8; the *Udāna* commentary, 256ff.; the *Dhammapāda* commentary, iii, 474f.; the *Samyutta* commentary, ii, 528f.; the *Jātaka*, ii, 415f.; and the *Apadāna*, i, 299-301, verse: 4-6. According to the commentary of the *Majjhimanikāya*, this is also referred to in the *Bāhītikasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* that King Pasenadi inquired Ananda about it.
- 103 D ii, 144. The English translation is adopted from the *Dialogues of the Buddha*, ii, 159.
- 104 M i, 258.
- 105 M i, 132.
- 106 This is referred to in *The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha*, endnote 249.
- 107 *Vinaya*, ii, 188. It is also found in T22, 592b; the *Daśabhānavāraṇinaya* (T23, 258b), the *Mūlasarvāstivādaṇinaya* (T23, 701c), the *Mūlasarvāstivādaṇinaya Saṃghabhedavastu* (T24, 169b). This incident is also referred to in the *Abhayarājakumārasutta* (M i, 393). The sense and meaning of the quotation are basically the same in the *Vinaya* of all these schools and traditions although the wording and expression are slightly different. This suggests that it is probably historical in nature.
- 108 A iii, 401. The translation is adapted from *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, III, 287.
- 109 T2, 567a-c.
- 110 According to the *Sāmagāmasutta* (M ii, 243-244), in his last few years, the Buddha observed that Jain monks split after the death of their Master because of different views and understandings on the teachings of their Master.
- 111 T27, 601c-602a.
- 112 D ii, 96. The translation is adapted from *The Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, 103.
- 113 D ii, 102. The translation is adapted from *The Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, 110. It is also mentioned in the *Samyuttanikāya*, v, 258.
- 114 The praise of the Licchavis is mentioned in all the four Chinese versions: T1, 13c, 164a, 179b, 194b, but the praise of the city of Vaiśālī is only found in two: T1, 165a, 180b.
- 115 D i, No.13 *Tevijja Sutta*. This sūtra is also found in the Chinese translation of the *Dīrghāgama*, no.26. The same story is found at T1, 105c04. This simile of a man in love with a young girl is also found in the *Cūlasakuludāyī Sutta*, No.79 of the *Majjhimanikāya*, ii, 33. Bodhi (1995) 656. But the simile is said to Udāyin. The counterpart sūtra is found in the Chinese *Madhyamāgama*, sūtra No.208. T1, no. 26, p.784, c29-p.785, a12.
- 116 D i, 221-2. The translation is adopted from the *Dialogues of the Buddha*, I, 282.
- 117 *Ibid*.
- 118 M i, 99.
- 119 A. I. 131. This passage is also found in the *Itivuttaka*, No. 106; *Samyuktāgama*, T2, 404a.
- 120 *Mahāvagga* 19-20.