

DN 11

Dīgha Nikāya The Long Discourses

Sīlakkhandha Vagga The Section on The Training in Virtue

Kevaḍḍha (Kevaṭṭa) Sutta “Discourse to the Householder Kevaḍḍha”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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This is what I have personally heard.

While The Blessed One was staying in Nālandā, at Pāvārika’s mango grove, Kevaḍḍha, the young householder, approached The Blessed One, and once having paid homage to Him, sat down to one side.

Then, having exchanged friendly greetings, Kevaḍḍha addressed The Blessed One and said:

“Here, this Nālandā of ours is a bustling and influential city, being quite affluent and prosperous, well-populated with crowds of people from different classes of society, all devoted to The Blessed One.

“Now, if only The Blessed One were to agree to have one of his Bhikkhus perform some kind of a miracle with his psychic powers! Something that is great and out of the ordinary! A supernatural feat, that surpasses any and all abilities of ordinary people! For, having done such a miraculous feat, this Nālandā of ours would then become truly established in faith in The Blessed One and completely dedicated to Him!”

Then, The Blessed One responded by informing Kevaḍḍha:

“But Kevaḍḍha, I do not instruct the Bhikkhus in such a way, nor direct them by saying:

‘Go now, Bhikkhu, and perform some kind of a miracle with your psychic powers! Something that is great and out of the ordinary! A supernatural feat, that surpasses any and all abilities of ordinary people!’

But, for a second time, Kevaḍḍha made the same request from The Blessed One, while adding:

“Bhante, I am not advising The Blessed One on what to do, of course!

“But you have to admit, Bhante, that it would be great if The Blessed One would only agree to have one of his Bhikkhus perform some kind of a miracle with his psychic powers! Something that is great and out of the ordinary! A supernatural feat that surpasses any and all abilities of ordinary people! For, having done such a miraculous feat, this Nālandā of ours would then become truly established in faith in The Blessed One and completely dedicated to Him!”

Then, The Blessed One repeated His response to Kevaḍḍha, by saying:

“But Kevaḍḍha, I do not instruct the Bhikkhus in such a way, nor direct them by saying:

‘Go now, Bhikkhu, and perform some kind of a miracle with your psychic powers! Something that is great and out of the ordinary! A supernatural feat, that surpasses any and all abilities of ordinary people!’

And for a third time, Kevaḍḍha, the young householder, repeated his statement while addressing The Blessed One:

“Bhante, I do not want to be telling The Blessed One what to do, of course!

“But really, Bhante, it would be great if The Blessed One would only agree to have one of his Bhikkhus perform some kind of a miracle with his psychic powers! Something that is great and out of the ordinary! A supernatural feat, that surpasses any and all abilities of ordinary people! For, having done such a miraculous feat, this Nālandā of ours would then become truly established in faith in The Blessed One, and thereby be completely dedicated to Him and The Dispensation!”

Then, The Blessed One began instructing Kevaḍḍha in the following manner:

MIRACULOUS FEATS

“Kevaḍḍha, I have declared and explained three types of miraculous feats, that I have personally realized and experienced myself, while also teaching them to my students.

“Now, what are these three?

“The miraculous feat involving psychic power; the miraculous feat of reading the hearts and minds of others; and the miraculous feat of instructing others.

1. MIRACLE OF PSYCHIC POWERS (IDDHIPĀṬIHĀRIYA)

“And what, Kevaddha, is the miraculous feat involving psychic power?

“Here, Kevaddha, having the ability to wield the various psychic powers, a Bhikkhu determines:

‘While being one, may I become many, and then revert back to being one again; May I move without any obstructions through rocks and walls and other fortifications as if walking through space; May I dive into the earth and come out of it as though it were water; May I walk on water without disturbing it, as though walking on solid ground; May I sit comfortably and fly through the air like birds of all sizes do, without any difficulty; May I reach and touch the moon and the sun, despite their mighty size and magnitude.’

“In this way, with the psychic powers he wields, he is able to carry his body even as far as the Brahma realms, without any difficulty.

“Then, someone witnesses that Bhikkhu performing one or more such miraculous feats, directly and personally observing it himself, and thus develops a strong faith and confidence in that Bhikkhu with those superhuman psychic powers.

“Then, this witness, who is now fully confident in the superhuman psychic abilities of that Bhikkhu, goes and tells others who have little faith in such matters and are full of doubt.

“That witness, however, continues to insist as he shares with those people lacking faith details of the miraculous feats he himself had observed and witnessed, performed by that Bhikkhu. In this way, he reports:

‘Oh, how truly amazing! You must have been there to see it too, with your own eyes!

‘The psychic power and superhuman abilities of that recluse are truly incredible! You should’ve been there too, to see it with your own eyes!

‘For, with my own eyes, I was able to see that recluse doing some incredible things!

‘Even though he is just one person, he multiplied himself many times over! Then, although he had made so many copies of himself, he went back to being one person again! I saw him walk and move through solid rock, through walls and other fortifications as if he was walking through space! I saw him diving and sinking into the ground and then come out of it, as though it was water! I saw him walking on water without falling into it, as if he was walking on solid ground! I saw him sitting comfortably and flying through the sky, just like birds of all sizes do, without any difficulty! I saw him reach out and touch the moon and the sun, despite their mighty size and magnitude! Then, with his strength of psychic powers, he carried his body even as far as the Brahma realms, without any difficulty!

“In hearing these words from the witness, the other distrusting man lacking faith in the Bhikkhu’s psychic powers, would turn and say this to the former:

‘Well, most probably what you saw and witnessed was nothing more than the result of a spell or a charm!’

‘In fact, most probably that recluse has been using a particular kind of an incantation called the Gandhārī Spell, whereby the one using it can perform such superhuman feats, like the ones you described.’

“Now, what do you think, Kevaḍḍha? Would you say that such a doubting person could make a claim like that, to discredit what the other man who observed the miraculous feat, had personally witnessed?”

“Yes, Bhante, there is a big possibility that he would make such a claim.”

“So, here you have, Kevaḍḍha, a valid reason why it is dangerous to perform such miraculous feats. After all, it is to simply avoid the unnecessary complications, disappointments and the disadvantages of demonstrating such miracles, which is why I feel quite disgusted and ashamed, finding Myself utterly perturbed by the very prospect, wherein psychic powers are to be displayed!

Therefore, I utterly and completely discourage it in my students, hence I am quite against the idea of teaching or encouraging any of my Bhikkhus to go and perform such miraculous feats.

2. MIRACLE OF READING THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF OTHERS (ĀDESANĀPĀṬIHĀRIYA)

“And what, Kevaḍḍha, is the miraculous feat of reading the hearts and minds of others?”

“Here, Kevaḍḍha, having the ability to read the hearts and minds of humans and of other beings, a Bhikkhu comes to know their inner thoughts, mental states, their hidden objectives and ponderings, whereby he directly knows, intuitively:

‘This is what you are thinking and pondering! This is what you’re really planning! This is what is going on in your heart!’

“Then, someone witnesses that Bhikkhu read the hearts and minds of humans and of other beings, knowing their inner thoughts, mental states, their hidden objectives and ponderings, whereby he comes to directly know, intuitively:

‘This is what you are thinking and pondering! This is what you’re really planning! This is what is going on in your heart!’

“Now, having directly and personally observed this himself, that witness develops a strong faith and confidence in that Bhikkhu with those special abilities.

“Then, this person, who is now fully confident in the special mind-reading abilities of that Bhikkhu, goes and tells others who have little faith in such matters and are full of doubt.

“So, that witness continues to report what he saw, insisting, as he shares with those people lacking faith, details of the miraculous feats he himself had observed and witnessed, performed by that Bhikkhu. In this way, he reports:

‘Oh, how truly amazing! You must have been there to see it too, with your own eyes!’

‘The special and superhuman abilities of that recluse are truly incredible! You should’ve been there too, to see it with your own eyes!’

‘For, with my own eyes, I was able to see that recluse knowing what the others were thinking, as he came to directly and intuitively know:

‘This is what you are thinking and pondering! This is what you’re really planning! This is what is going on in your heart!’

“But, in hearing these words from the witness, the other distrusting man lacking faith in the Bhikkhu’s superhuman abilities, would turn and say this to the former:

‘Well, most probably what you saw and witnessed was nothing more than the result of some spell or a magical charm!’

‘In fact, most probably that recluse has been using a particular kind of an incantation called the Māṇikā Water-Jewel Spell, whereby the one using it can perform such superhuman feats like the one you describe, where the recluse is able to read the hearts and minds of humans and of other beings, and is able to know their inner thoughts, mental states, their hidden objectives and ponderings, whereby he comes to directly know, intuitively:

‘This is what you are thinking and pondering! This is what you’re really planning! This is what is going on in your heart!’

“Now, what do you think, Kevaḍḍha? Would you say that such a doubting person could make a claim like that, to discredit what the other man observing the miraculous feat had personally witnessed?”

“Yes, Bhante, there is a big possibility that he would make such a claim.”

“So, here again, Kevaḍḍha, you have yet another valid reason why it is dangerous to perform such miraculous feats. After all, it is to simply avoid the unnecessary complications, disappointments and the disadvantages of demonstrating such miracles, which is why I feel quite disgusted and ashamed, finding Myself utterly perturbed by the very prospect, wherein psychic powers are to be displayed!

Therefore, I utterly and completely discourage it in my students, hence I am quite against the idea of teaching or encouraging any of my Bhikkhus to go and perform such miraculous feats.

3. MIRACLE OF INSTRUCTING OTHERS (ANUSĀSANĪPĀṬIHĀRIYA)

“And what, Kevaḍḍha, is the miraculous feat of instructing others?

“Here, Kevaḍḍha, having the ability to teach, a Bhikkhu instructs others in this manner:

‘That is not the right way of thinking. Instead, you should think in this manner.

‘Do not focus on those things, instead guide your attention in this proper way and focus it on this!

‘Give up that tendency or relinquish fully such habits of doing and behaving. Instead, practice this, and having attained it, comfortably dwell in it.’

“Therefore, Kevaḍḍha, this is what is meant by the miracle of instructing others.

THE FRUITS TO BE GAINED FROM SECLUSION (SĀMAÑÑAPHALA)

“Now, Kevaḍḍha, The Tathāgata appears in the world, The Arahant, The Perfectly Self-Awakened Buddha, endowed with Sublime Knowledge and Supremely Pure Conduct, The Well-Gone, The Knower of worlds, The Incomparable Tamer of those to be tamed, The Teacher of gods and humans, Enlightened and Blessed.

“The Tathāgata then teaches The Dhamma that is beautiful in its beginning, beautiful at its middle, and beautiful in its end, The Dhamma that is full of meaning, balanced in Its expression and phrasing, which He realizes Himself with His direct higher understanding of the true nature of existence, just as it really is in this world full of Devas, Māras, Brahmas, along with its recluses, brahmins, and religious practitioners. Thus, He declares and reveals to all beings the completeness and purity of the Holy Life.

“Now, a householder or his son, on hearing and listening to That Dhamma being taught by The Blessed One or one of His Disciples, gains much faith in It.

“Having become thus deeply inspired by It, and gladdened in his heart by That Dhamma, that householder or his son starts considering:

‘Household life is troublesome and problematic; it is full of impurities, whereas going forth into homelessness is wide open with many possibilities.

‘It is not easy to lead the Holy Life that is complete and pure to its fullness, while living the household life.

‘What if I shave my head and beard, and put on the monastic robes and just go forth?’

“So, in due course, he gives up a small or a large amount of wealth, a small or a large circle of friends and relatives, as he shaves his head and beard, puts on the monastic robes, and goes forth in The Tathāgata’s Dispensation, by leaving behind his household life and thus going into homelessness, that is, with the freedom of his choice, and the very strong faith he feels in his heart for The Dhamma that The Tathāgata teaches.

“Once gone forth, that householder strives by living ethically, while restrained in accordance with the Code of Discipline of the Pātimokkha, conducting himself in right behavior, as he sees danger in the slightest fault.

“Thus, he lives virtuously by adhering to the code of discipline and becomes more and more anchored in living with sense-restraint, virtuously living with mindfulness and full awareness, while feeling a strong presence of contentment in his heart, throughout.

CULTIVATION OF VIRTUOUS LIVING (SĪLA)

1. SHORTER SECTION ON VIRTUE (SĪLA)

“And how, Kevaḍḍha, does such a Bhikkhu grow and become fully developed in virtue?

1.1 “Here, Kevaḍḍha, having already gone forth thus, he trains himself in the monastic precepts, while abandoning the destruction of living beings, as he gives up the tendency to harm; throwing away his weapons; being caring and considerate, with aroused compassion, he abides with compassion for all living beings.

“This is one aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

1.2 “By giving up taking what is not freely given to him, he only accepts what is given. By giving up the common and unholy life, he leads a celibate holy life while abstaining from the low practice of sexual intercourse.

“This too, is one aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

1.3 “By giving up telling lies, he speaks only what is truth and becomes trustworthy in the world. By giving up slandering, he does not go and tell over there what he has heard over here, to create a schism between people. Similarly, he does not tell over here what he had heard over there, in order to create a schism between people. Thus, he speaks in order to join the disjointed and the separated, while strengthening the wholesome bonds between people. Fond of unity, he talks words that lead to unity and harmony.

“Also, this is another aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

1.4 “By giving up rough words, he speaks politely and with a pleasant, sweet voice, with words that go straight to the heart. His words are accepted by all the masses. By giving up frivolous speech and idle chatter, he speaks at the right time. Speaking only what is truth and meaningful, he speaks only The Dhamma and The Discipline, and at the right time, using appropriate words, and succinctly, with such words that are worth being recorded and repeated, due to their beneficial nature.

“This too, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

1.5 “Furthermore, such a Bhikkhu refrains from destroying seeds, fruit trees, and vegetable plants. While refraining from taking food at night-time, he only takes one meal a day. He refrains from dancing, music and musical entertainments. He refrains from decorating himself with flowers, scents, or fragrant ointments. He gives up high and stately beds. He refrains from accepting gold, silver and money. He does not accept raw grains, raw meat, women, girls, slaves, whether men or women, goats and sheep, roosters and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares. He does not accept fields or lands. He abstains from carrying messages between people, from buying and selling, or dealing in matters unfairly, such as measures and weights. He does not take bribes, nor cheats or engages in any insincere act. He does not cut, kill or bind, and he does not collect even a single morsel of food violently and in voracious, barbaric ways.

“This, Kevaddha, is how a Bhikkhu grows and develops in his virtuous behavior.

2. MIDDLE SECTION ON VIRTUE (SĪLA)

2.1 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless, abuse seeds and plant life, such as those that have been started from roots, from cutting, grafting, budding, from stems and seeds,

acting in such a destructive, blind and self-serving manner, the Bhikkhu completely abstains from such a damaging lifestyle.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.2 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless, go on greedily hoarding and storing food when others struggle to survive, as they keep hoarding and storing up edible food, various types of drinks, robes, vehicles for transport, bedding, oils and fragrant incense, drying and storing up meat, all so that they could enjoy consuming them later, in the future; and so, while these individuals choose to live in such a greedy, blind and self-serving manner, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such a damaging lifestyle entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.3 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless, forget their role as religious practitioners who are supposed to be living the Holy Life, and instead spend their time entertaining themselves by watching various kinds of shows, such as dancing, singing, concerts and musical events, choruses and other oral recitations, drumming and playing on cymbals, hand-clapping, moving picture shows, circus performances, elephants performing or fighting, horses performing or fighting, buffaloes, roosters, goats, rams, quails, and also human beings performing or fighting with each other, as well as attending carnivals, wrestling and boxing matches, battle re-enactments, military demonstrations and shows, troops being in action, or doing their drills; and so, while others engage in such activities that are wasteful of precious time, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from them entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.4 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless, forget their role as religious practitioners who are supposed to be living the Holy Life, and instead become heedless while spending their time playing various kinds of games, such as 8- and 10-row chess, checkers, hopscotch, dice games, stick throwing games, drawing pictures through tracing of the palms, doing summersaults, gymnastics, acrobatics, playing with toy pipes, cars, and other vehicles, running and chasing one another, playing with toy ploughs, toy windmills, toy measures, toy chariots, building and playing with toy weapons like bows and arrows, as well as guessing games such as charades, guessing letters written in the air, riddles for amusements, guessing each other’s thoughts, mimicking and pretending to be deformed or handicapped to amuse themselves or others; and so while others engage in such activities that are wasteful of precious time, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from it entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.5 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless, abuse that trust as they go and seek a lavish and luxurious lifestyle, such as fancy and opulent furnishings and accommodations for themselves, ornate and expensive chairs, thrones, extravagant seats, over-sized couches, using animal hides as their rugs and throws, covers and drapes with long tassels and laces, multi colored pillows, pillows made of cotton, of fine embroidery, pillows and covers made of wool, coverlets and pillowcases embroidered with precious gems, gold, fine materials, or animal figures, hides from all sorts of animals, such as elephants, lions, tigers, antelope, deer; beds, couches and seats with awnings, or having stuffed quilts, or red fluffy cushions for the head and feet; and so while others engage in such a lavish lifestyle that is so wasteful, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from it entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.6 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless, abuse that trust by enjoying, seeking out or demanding that they use fine unguents, fragrances, precious oils and ghee, along with various fine rubbing powders for their body and massaging oils to treat themselves to, as well as perfumed water to bathe in, and different types of cosmetic products to beautify themselves with or look younger, such as by using mirrors, garlands, creams, mascara, bracelets, head-bands and other head gear, turbans, ornamented water containers, swords, fancy sun shades and fans, walking sticks, yak-tail whisks, robes with long fringes and tassels; and so, while others seek to live in such absurd ways, having a lavish lifestyle that is so wasteful, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from it entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.7 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless, abuse that trust by engaging in frivolous talk and idle chatter that is unbefitting to those who say they are living the Holy Life, engaging in useless talk and gossip about kings and rulers, ministers of state, their armies and military prowess, the dangers or threats they present, battles and wars, as well as talking about food and drink, clothing, types of furniture, engaging in all types of street talk, or chatting about robbers and thieves; discussing such trivial topics as chariots, vehicles, villages or towns, major cities and their populations, and differences among them; talking around the watering hole, about heroes and women, or those who have died, discussing philosophical points about the past or the future that lead nowhere; talking about the ‘creation’ of the world and the oceans, or whether they are truly existing or not, in addition to talking about winning and losing; and so while others seek to live in such absurd ways, engaging in useless and frivolous discussions that are so wasteful, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from them entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.8 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless, are adamantly passionate about

debating and winning in arguments, more than striving to live the Holy Life, as they go on claiming:

'You definitely do not understand this doctrine and discipline! I, on the other hand, thoroughly understand this doctrine and discipline! At best, your understanding of it is quite pathetic, whereas my understanding of it goes deep! Plus, you are practicing it all wrong, unlike me, who knows how to practice! You are not consistent either, whereas I am very consistent! Also, what should have been said first, you spoke at the very last, meanwhile what should have been spoken last, you said first! Anyhow, whatever you thought you were defending or claiming, has been already defeated and debunked! So, might as well just admit you're done for and are now vanquished! Go and work on your theories, and perhaps you could salvage some of it! You are caught and have no way out of this argument with me!'

“And so, while others waste living the Holy Life by such damaging, absurd, and useless activities, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from them entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.9 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless of their true position as supposed religious practitioners, start engaging in taking messages back and forth; serving as go-betweens between kings and rulers, ministers and other heads of state, warrior princes and other nobles, brahmins, merchants, and other householders and their youths, meanwhile running errands for them and doing their bidding, while being directed thus: *'Come here! Go there! Take this there! Bring that over here!'* etc.; and so, while others waste living the Holy Life in such foolish and damaging ways, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from them entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

2.10 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, being inconsiderate and careless of their true position as supposed religious practitioners, keep up pretenses as they live deceitfully, taking advantage of their position by flattering others and those from whom they anticipate some benefit or gain; insinuating and hinting at things to gain some benefit while trying to hide their evil tracks; pressuring supporters against their will to do things for them, thereby abusing their role as well as the trust such supporters or students have towards them, pushing others whether through force, intimidation and especially coercion, to make offerings, following the strategy of *'you scratch my back, and I will scratch yours'*, in addition to lying about their practice and spiritual attainments; and so while others seek to live the Holy Life through deception and false pretense, in order to gain some benefit or influence over others, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from them entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

3. LONGER SECTION ON VIRTUE (SĪLA)

3.1 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, obtain their livelihood through wrong means, such as by making predictions, divination, fortune telling, psychic readings, casting spells; by reciting, giving or providing special protective charms, amulets, and the like; and thus they engage in reading signs and omens, reading tea leaves, marks or lines on limbs as in palmistry and other bodily features; interpreting cosmic events, constellations, movements of celestial objects; interpreting dreams; reading and interpreting various scratch marks on pieces of bones; offering fire or water blessings, oblations with a ladle, whisks, with ivory or horns, or oblations and blessings through rice grains, ghee, and various types of oils; furthermore, they engage in making sacrifices by chanting mantras, doing blood sacrifices, making predictions about the person by looking at the shape of their fingertips; engaging in geomancy, so as to determine the best location and position for a new structure, such as a garden or building; predicting as to who will be the next ruler or important political figure; comforting and pushing away demons, doing exorcism; snake charming, treating poisons from various animals, insects, and rodents; interpreting the calls of animals, bird sounds, and predicting the date of a person’s death; making charms or reciting them to ward off and protect against arrows and other projectiles; and so while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood in such useless ways, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

3.2 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, obtain their livelihood through wrong means, such as by making predictions and forecasting various things, as in identifying the power of gems and crystals, in terms of which among them brings more good luck or fortune; similarly, helping in the selection of garments, staffs, swords and other weapons; helping in the selection of the best among the women one is to marry, as well as getting involved with the selection of boys and girls, male and female slaves for one’s retinue or household; helping choose the best animals for someone, as in selecting the best elephants, horses, buffaloes, cows, oxen, goats, rams, deer, chickens, quail, rabbits, tortoises, and other animals; and so while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood in such useless ways, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

3.3 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, living through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, obtain their livelihood through wrong means, such as by making predictions and forecasting future events, as in who the next ruler of the domain would be to lead the people, while predicting their future actions and strategies; how those in power will behave or which direction they would take in the event of wars, or how they would be attacking, advancing or retreating, and in which direction; how the attacking rulers would triumph or how they would be defeated, etc.; and so while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they

engage in wrong livelihood in such useless ways, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

3.4 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, living through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, obtain their livelihood through wrong means, such as by making predictions and forecasting various natural events, as in when the next solar or lunar eclipse is going to take place, or other transitions having to do with the sun or the moon, or both combined; making predictions about celestial phenomena and what those things mean; also, explaining when the next meteor showers will take place; the darkening of the sky; when or why some clouds or thunderstorms would be happening or not; when or why earthquakes would be taking place; forecasting the position of the sun or the moon; their shape, color or impact on other phenomena, etc.; and so while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood in such useless ways, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

3.5 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, obtain their livelihood through wrong means, such as by making predictions and forecasting various things, as in telling when the next abundant rainfall would take place, or whether there will be a drought; predicting whether there will be famine or drought; whether wars or dangers are on their way to be faced by the public; whether there will be disease and hardship; also, engaging in accounting work or measuring and calculating things; or composing chants or poetry, as a way of making a living or gaining profits; and so while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood in such useless ways, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

3.6 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, obtain their livelihood through wrong means, such as by making predictions and forecasting various events in people’s lives, as in calculating what date, time, or place would be most auspicious for significant activities for individuals and their families, such as designating the best time for wedding or marriage ceremonies, or divorces, or for purchasing property, or borrowing money or investing in financial endeavors; similarly, making charms or protective amulets or writing, engraving, tattooing special spells to make one attractive or desirable, or immune to dangers, as well as prosperous and successful; or helping couples be parents by helping the woman get pregnant, or for protecting pregnant women from having miscarriages, or inducing abortion; chanting or reciting or writing spells on individuals’ body parts to bring about a certain desirable effect, as in cases of paralysis, blindness, stuttering or inability to speak, or making the person lose control over their limbs, making them incapacitated, or to go blind, mute, or deaf; also, playing the role of an oracle, providing answers to questions while looking into a body of water, a mirror, a young boy’s or girl’s finger nails or inducing the

children to become mediums to give him the answers he seeks; becoming a medium himself by going into a trance, invoking spirits; or worshipping some Devas or Mahā Brahmā to get good fortune for himself or others; and so while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood in such useless ways, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

3.7 “Now, Kevaddha, while other recluses and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, obtain their livelihood through wrong means, such as by concocting various protective chants or substances, writings, potions, etc., to induce certain desired outcomes, whether to promote healing for someone or to harm them, or even to kill them; and thus they engage in showing people how to bless or protect a house from unwanted energies; how to overcome impotence or enhance virility; engaging in the consecration of sites prior to construction, showing people how to conduct ceremonial bathing, or how to ritualistically wash the mouth; conducting fire rituals; engaging in the preparation of medicinal potions, as in diuretics, laxatives, purgatives, etc., or preparing eye or ear drops, or various treatments with oils to be taken internally through the mouth, the eyes, ears, or nose, or applied topically, or the application of balms and other mixtures, topically or by rubbing them onto the joints, limbs, or the skin; and so while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood in such useless ways, the Bhikkhu utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.

“This also, is an aspect of his growth and development in virtue.

“So, you see, Kevaddha, when the Bhikkhu is well-developed and matured in his virtue, by living with responsibility as per the wholesome principles of The Dhamma Itself, then no danger could befall him, simply because he has protected himself from all sides, with his restraint through intentionally living a virtuous life.

“In this manner, just like a head-anointed Khattiya warrior king who, having defeated all his enemies from all sides of his kingdom, fears no enemies, nor finds any danger to be threatening him from any of the regions within his dominion; similarly, Kevaddha, when the Bhikkhu is well-developed and matured in his virtue, by living with responsibility as per the wholesome principles of The Dhamma Itself, then no danger could befall him, simply because he has protected himself from all sides, with his restraint through intentionally living a virtuous life.

“Now, because of possessing this aggregate of virtue, being thus endowed with this virtuous behavior of the Noble Ones, he lives happily, experiencing within him the unmistakable sense of blameless joy.

“Thus, Kevaddha, such a Bhikkhu is declared to be well-developed and matured in his virtue, for living with responsibility as per the wholesome principles of The Dhamma Itself.

MENTAL CULTIVATION (BHĀVANĀ - SAMĀDHI)

1. RESTRAINT OF THE SENSE DOORS (SAMVARA)

“And how, Kevaḍḍha, does such a Bhikkhu grow and become fully developed through his mental cultivation, by sense restraint?

“Here, Kevaḍḍha, on seeing a form with the eye, such a Bhikkhu does not allow himself to be taken by or absorbed into its features and details. For, he knows quite well that if he were to abide with an otherwise uncontrolled eye faculty, unwholesome states would start to leak in, whereby he might very well fall victim to longing, covetousness, and dejection that would dominate his thoughts. Thus, he guards and practices restraint of the eye faculty.

“Similarly, on hearing a sound with the ear, the Bhikkhu does not allow himself to be taken by or absorbed into its features and details. For, he knows quite well that if he were to abide with an otherwise uncontrolled ear faculty, unwholesome states would start to leak in, whereby he might very well fall victim to longing, covetousness, and dejection that would dominate his thoughts. Thus, he guards and practices restraint of the ear faculty.

“Similarly, on smelling an odor with the nose, the Bhikkhu does not allow himself to be taken by or absorbed into its features and details. For, he knows quite well that if he were to abide with an otherwise uncontrolled nose faculty, unwholesome states would start to leak in, whereby he might very well fall victim to longing, covetousness, and dejection that would dominate his thoughts. Thus, he guards and practices restraint of the nose faculty.

“Similarly, on tasting a flavor with the tongue, the Bhikkhu does not allow himself to be taken by or absorbed into its features and details. For, he knows quite well that if he were to abide with an otherwise uncontrolled tongue faculty, unwholesome states would start to leak in, whereby he might very well fall victim to longing, covetousness, and dejection that would dominate his thoughts. Thus, he guards and practices restraint of the tongue faculty.

“Similarly, on touching a tactile object with the body, the Bhikkhu does not allow himself to be taken by or absorbed into its features and details. For, he knows quite well that if he were to abide with an otherwise uncontrolled body faculty, unwholesome states would start to leak in, whereby he might very well fall victim to longing, covetousness, and dejection that would dominate his thoughts. Thus, he guards and practices restraint of the body faculty.

“Similarly, on knowing a thought with the mind, the Bhikkhu does not allow himself to be taken by or absorbed into its features and details. For, he knows quite well that if he were to abide with an otherwise uncontrolled mind faculty, unwholesome states would start to leak in, whereby he might very well fall victim to longing, covetousness, and dejection that would dominate his thoughts. Thus, he guards and practices restraint of the mind faculty.

“By possessing complete restraint over his mental faculties, such a Bhikkhu is not perturbed when touched by a displeasing negative experience.

“Therefore, being thus endowed with this level of restraint over his sense doors, he lives happily, experiencing within him the unmistakable sense of blameless joy.

2. MAINTAINING MINDFULNESS (SATI) & FULL AWARENESS (SAMPAJAÑÑĀ)

“Whether approaching or going away, in looking forward, backward, and about, he remains mindful, clearly comprehending the experience of it, with full awareness. Also, when bending and stretching his limbs, or in wearing his outer robes or taking the bowl with him, he remains mindful, clearly comprehending the experience of it, with full awareness. When eating his meal, drinking, and tasting, he remains mindful, moving and behaving with full awareness, clearly comprehending the whole experience. Similarly, when urinating and defecating, he remains mindful, moving and behaving with full awareness, clearly comprehending the entire experience, whether he is walking, standing, sitting, or lying down to rest, or while waking up, speaking, or while being silent.

“This, Kevaḍḍha, is how such a Bhikkhu lives by maintaining mindfulness and full awareness.

“And how, Kevaḍḍha, does such a Bhikkhu live with contentment wherever and whatever situation he may find himself in?

“Kevaḍḍha, wherever he may be, living fully contented and satisfied with the robes for his body and the morsels of food he obtains for his stomach, the Bhikkhu goes with all that he has. Thus, much like a bird that flies freely with only the feathers on its back, in the same way, contented and satisfied with the robes for the body and morsels of food for the stomach, wherever he goes, the Bhikkhu goes with all his things.

“In this manner, Kevaḍḍha, such a Bhikkhu lives with contentment wherever he goes and whatever situation he may find himself in.

“By possessing these virtues as well of the Noble Ones, the Bhikkhu experiences the internal happiness that is blameless.

3. WORKING WITH THE OBSTACLES/HINDRANCES (NĪVARAṆA)

“Now, being endowed with this virtuous behavior of the Noble Ones through complete restraint over his mental faculties, along with mindfulness and clear comprehension, with full awareness, that are distinctive of the Noble Ones, he looks for and then abides in a secluded dwelling: a forest, the root of a tree, a mountain grotto, a cemetery, a jungle, an open space or a heap of straw.

“Then, having found himself a quiet area to practice in the forest, or by the visible roots of trees, or in an empty room, by folding his legs in a comfortable position and keeping the body straight, he establishes mindfulness in front of him.

“Thus, the Bhikkhu trains and lives by actively dropping passion, lust, and greed from his heart, as he purifies it from the stains of coveting. He trains and lives by actively dropping anger from his heart, as he purifies it from the stains of hatred. He trains and lives by actively dropping delusion from his heart, as he purifies it from the stains of delusion.

“He develops compassion towards all living beings, as he purifies his heart from any hatred or ill-will. With mindfulness and clearly comprehending his experience, he actively pushes through both drowsiness and procrastination, as he abides with the perception of light, cleansing his mind from drowsiness and procrastination. He thus calmly stabilizes the agitated mind, while carefully moving beyond both restlessness and worry, as he abides with a heart that is now internally appeased and contented. Finally, by actively removing skeptical doubt, he lives while putting an end to all doubts and perplexity he once had about the wholesome behaviors that should be developed and the unwholesome behaviors that should be abandoned.

4. SIMILES FOR THE OBSTACLES/HINDRANCES (NĪVARAṆA)

a. “Now, Kevaddha, imagine there was a man who goes and takes out a loan, borrowing money with the intention to invest in his business. As a result, his business does become successful and he prospers and earns much more than he did before, whereby he pays off all his debts. With his financial status now stable and lucrative, he is able to have a wife and start a family.

“Then, this man begins reflecting:

‘Previously, I was miserable and worried ceaselessly about my financial status. But then, I went and took out a loan by borrowing money which I invested into my business. Now, seeing that I have prospered and gained so much wealth from this venture, I have already repaid all my debts and gave back whatever money I borrowed from others, to the point that I can finally get married, now that I have enough funds to maintain a wife and have a family of my own!’

“As result of this, the man becomes quite happy and relieved, experiencing much joy.

b. “Furthermore, Kevaḍḍha, let us suppose that this man becomes sick and has to face much physical pain, and he can no longer function as before, due to this illness. Then, as time passes, he gets better and fully recovers from his ailments, whereby he regains all his physical energy and is able to use his healthy body, yet again.

“Then, this man begins reflecting:

‘Previously, I fell terribly sick and had to face much physical pain, where I could no longer function as I used to. But now I have fully recovered, and I can enjoy eating my meals yet again, having regained all my strength!’

“As a result of this, the man becomes quite happy and relieved, experiencing much joy.

c. “Furthermore, Kevaḍḍha, let us suppose that this man was taken to prison, where he is kept bound up and in shackles. However, after some time, he is released, whereby he regains his freedom, yet again, feeling safe and no longer in fear or captivity.

“Then, this man begins reflecting:

‘Previously, I was taken to prison, where I was kept bound up and in shackles. But now, I have regained my freedom, and I feel safe again, no longer in fear or captivity!’

“As a result of this, the man becomes quite happy and relieved, experiencing much joy.

d. “Furthermore, Kevaḍḍha, let us suppose that this man was taken as a slave, no longer a free man, instead he lives being seen as nothing more than another’s property, completely subject to their will. But, after some time, he is released from slavery, whereby he gains back his cherished freedom and is no longer a slave, nor living or being seen as someone else’s property, no longer subject to another’s will.

“Then, this man begins reflecting:

‘Previously, I was taken as a slave, where I no longer was a free man, but instead, I lived while being seen as nothing more than another’s property, completely subject to their will. But now, I have gained back my freedom, and no longer am a slave, nor am I being seen as someone else’s property, no longer subject to others’ will!’

“As result of this, the man becomes quite happy and relieved, experiencing much joy.

e. “Also, Kevaḍḍha, let us suppose that a merchant was traveling on a journey in a caravan, carrying with him large amounts of gold coins and various other valuable goods, while having to cross a wide and desolate stretch of wilderness for some extended period of time. Then, once having crossed through it, as he emerges out from that wide and desolate stretch of wilderness area, he is finally relieved and relaxed, whereby his worries leave him, seeing that he has returned back to civilization, where he feels the comfort of safety, without having lost his wealth or his valuable goods.

“Then, this merchant begins reflecting:

‘Earlier, while I was crossing that wide and desolate stretch of wilderness with all my wealth and various other valuable goods, I was worried and in fear of danger. But now, having already crossed it, I have emerged from the wilderness! I’m finally relieved and relaxed, because I no longer have any worries, seeing that I’ve returned back to civilization, hence I feel safe again, not having lost my wealth or my valuable goods!’

“As result of this, the man becomes quite happy and relieved, experiencing much joy.

“Now, in the same manner, Kevaḍḍha, so long as these five obstacles are still not abandoned and relinquished in him, that Bhikkhu will continue to look upon them as being no less than a debt or a loan that he has to pay; a terrible sickness he must overcome; a prison sentence he has to struggle through; a slavery he must endure and break free from; and an arduously dangerous journey through a desolate stretch of wilderness that he must cross and push himself through!

“And when he does indeed let go and abandon these five obstacles or hindrances to his mental cultivation, then he regards them as successfully paying back a heavy loan; gaining of one’s health; release from prison; attaining freedom from slavery; and finally tasting the safety of security.

*“When the mind is uplifted with joy,
the body experiences happiness.
With the tranquilizing of the body,
there is delight everywhere.
With the Citta/Heart feeling such comfort,
And the mind thus composed and controlled, Dhamma arises in the mind.
With the mind thus controlled, one sees and understands how things really are.”*

5. THE JHĀNAS

a. “Here, Kevaḍḍha, while living secluded and removed from sensual desires and unwholesome thoughts, the Bhikkhu enters upon and remains in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by thinking and pondering, along with joy and pleasure that arise from such seclusion.

“Further, Kevaḍḍha, the Bhikkhu drenches and saturates his entire body with this joy and bliss that are aided by seclusion, allowing them to pervade the physical body from top to bottom and everywhere, *without* leaving any spot that is untouched by this experience of joy and bliss. It is just like a skilled bath man or his apprentice who, by putting some soap powder in a bronze bowl and while sprinkling water on it would mix it, until it is a smooth ball of moist, oily foam pervading it throughout, without the ball of soap dripping or oozing out. In the same manner, the

Bhikkhu drenches and saturates his entire body with this joy and bliss that are aided by seclusion, allowing them to pervade the physical body everywhere, *without* leaving any spot that is untouched by this experience of joy and bliss.

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

b. “Next, Kevaḍḍha, through the disappearance of both thinking and pondering, he enters upon and remains in the second *jhāna*, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind, that take place in the absence of thinking and pondering, with joy and pleasure that are the result of his deepening *samādhī*, his collectedness of mind.

“Here too, Kevaḍḍha, he drenches and saturates his entire body with this joy and bliss that are the results of his collectedness of mind, allowing them to pervade the physical body from top to bottom and everywhere, *without* leaving any spot that is untouched by this experience of joy and bliss. It is just like a deep lake that is fed by the natural spring underneath it, where, despite there being no inflow of streams from the east, west, north, and south, nor receiving any sporadic showers of rain to replenish it, yet the lake is still kept cool as it continues to be fed by the natural spring flowing underneath. In the same manner, the Bhikkhu drenches and saturates his entire body with this joy and bliss that are the results of his collectedness of mind, allowing them to pervade the physical body everywhere, *without* leaving any spot that is untouched by this experience of joy and bliss.

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

c. “Next, Kevaḍḍha, with the detachment from and the fading away of joy itself, the Bhikkhu remains in the comfort of equanimity, while being mindful and fully aware, with pristine clarity, experiencing pleasure and happiness within the body, as he enters upon and remains in the third *jhāna*, about which the Noble Ones declare:

‘It is such a one indeed, who is serenely mindful; abiding in happiness; with an ever-present sense of equanimity.’

“Here too, Kevaḍḍha, the Bhikkhu drenches and fills his entire body with soothing happiness where joy has faded away, as he saturates and pervades his physical body with it from top to bottom and everywhere, *without* leaving any spot that is untouched by this experience of soothing happiness, with joy having faded away. It is just like a pond where some blue, white or red lotuses are born, grow, and bloom while being immersed within the water, with their tops and roots remaining submerged, thriving in the cool refreshing water, without rising above its surface as the cool water drenches, fills, saturates, and pervades the entire length of each of these lotuses, from their tips to their roots. In the same manner, the Bhikkhu drenches and fills his entire body with soothing happiness where joy has faded away, as he saturates and pervades his physical body with it from top to bottom and everywhere, *without* leaving any spot that is untouched by this experience of soothing happiness, with its joy having faded away.

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

d. “Afterwards, by giving up both pleasure and pain, and having already gone beyond joy and anguish, he remains in the continuous state of purifying mindfulness, with an ever-present sense of equanimity, as he enters upon and abides in the fourth *jhāna*, while experiencing neither pleasure nor pain, having now gone beyond both of them.

“Here, also, Kevaddha, the Bhikkhu sits while his entire body is being pervaded with a pure, bright mind, without having any part of his body not be touched by the pure, bright mind. It is just like someone sitting while being draped from head to toe with a soft white linen or fine fabric, without having any part of his body not be covered by that soft white linen or fabric. In the same manner, the Bhikkhu sits while his entire body is being pervaded with a pure, bright mind, without having any part of his body not be touched by the pure, bright mind.

“This also, Kevaddha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

HIGHER KNOWLEDGES (ABHIÑÑĀ)

1. INSIGHT KNOWLEDGE (VIPASSANĀ ÑĀṆA)

“Now, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes thus collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards the attainment and experiencing of knowledge and vision.

“To this end, he comes to understand directly and viscerally:

‘This body of mine is made up of material form, put together by the four primary elements, that found their material origin thanks to a father and a mother, sustained by rice and porridge.

‘And because it is, by nature, impermanent, this body of mine is and will always be susceptible to being scraped, scratched, broken, subject to pressure, heat and cold, to rubbing and touching, and ultimately, to being destroyed and dispersed.

‘Moreover, this is the consciousness that is supporting it, whereby the body still exists, right here and now, and to which it is tied and bound.’

“Kevaddha, imagine there was a beautiful beryl gem, as pure in its clarity as spring water, eight-faceted, well-cut, unblemished, translucent, flawless, and possessing all the excellent qualities of a precious gem. Now, suppose one were to pass through it a blue, yellow, red, white, or brown string, and a man with very good eyesight would take it in his hand, and after carefully examining, would comment by saying:

‘Ah, this happens to be a beautiful beryl gem that is as pure in its clarity as spring water! It has all its eight-facets, well-cut, unblemished, translucent, flawless, and possessing all the excellent qualities of a precious gem, which has a blue, yellow, red, white, or brown string running through it.’

“Now, Kevaḍḍha, in just the same way, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes thus collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards the attainment and experiencing of knowledge and vision.

“To this end, he comes to understand directly and viscerally:

‘This body of mine is made up of material form, put together by the four primary elements, that found their material origin thanks to a father and a mother, sustained by rice and porridge.

‘And because it is, by nature, impermanent, this body of mine is and will always be susceptible to being scraped, scratched, broken, subject to pressure, heat and cold, to rubbing and touching, and ultimately, to being destroyed and dispersed.

‘Moreover, this is the consciousness that is supporting it, whereby the body still exists, right here and now, and to which it is tied and bound.’

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF CREATING A MIND-MADE BODY (MANOMAYIDDHI ÑĀṆA)

“Now, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards creating a mind-made body.

“To this end, he creates another body for himself, fully complete in its form and all its parts and constituents; entirely made by the mind and not lacking in any of its faculties.

“Kevaḍḍha, imagine a man were to peel off a reed from its sheath, whereby while holding the two he would clearly know and discern, that one is the reed and the other is the sheath.

“Or Kevaḍḍha, imagine someone pulling a sword from its scabbard. Now, he too, would clearly distinguish the two, as one being the scabbard, while the other being the sword itself.

“Or Kevaḍḍha, imagine someone pulling away the worn-out slough from the snake’s body, who would see that there is in fact a clear difference between the snake itself, and the slough, which happens to be its old skin.

“Now, in just the same manner, Kevaḍḍha, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards creating a mind-made body.

“To this end, he creates another body for himself, fully complete in its form and all its various parts and constituents, entirely made by the mind, and not lacking in any of its faculties.

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

KNOWLEDGE OF VARIOUS PSYCHIC POWERS (IDDHIVIDHA ÑĀṆA)

3. PLETHORA OF PSYCHIC POWERS (IDDHIVIDHA ÑĀṆA)

“Now, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes thus collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards activating his psychic powers as he wields a plethora of psychic abilities, such as:

“While being one, he becomes many, and then reverts back to being one again; he moves without any obstructions through rocks and walls and other fortifications as if walking through space; he dives into the earth and comes out of it as though it were water; he walks on water without disturbing it, walking on it as if on solid ground; he sits comfortably and flies through the air like birds of all sizes do, without any difficulty; he reaches and touches the moon and the sun, despite their mighty size and magnitude. Thus, with the psychic powers he wields, he is able to carry his body even as far as the Brahma realms, without any difficulty.

“Kevaḍḍha, imagine an experienced potter or his top apprentice who takes a lump of fine quality and malleable clay, and then starts molding it into whatever kind of pottery or shape he would want.

“Or Kevaḍḍha, imagine someone who is talented at carving ivory pieces, or his number one apprentice, who would take any kind of ivory and then begin shaping and carving it into whatever design he wants.

“Or Kevaḍḍha, imagine an experienced jeweler or his top apprentice who takes a piece of gold and then fashions it into any kind of shape or design he may desire to.

“Now, in just the same manner, Kevaḍḍha, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then

directs it towards activating his psychic powers as he wields a plethora of psychic abilities, such as:

“While being one, he becomes many, and then reverts back to being one again; he moves without any obstructions through rocks and walls and other fortifications as if walking through space; he dives into the earth and comes out of it as though it were water; he walks on water without disturbing it, walking on it as if on solid ground; he sits comfortably and flies through the air like birds of all sizes do, without any difficulty; he reaches and touches the moon and the sun, despite their mighty size and magnitude. Thus, with the psychic powers he wields, he is able to carry his body even as far as the Brahma realms, without any difficulty.

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

4. KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE EAR (DIBBA SOTA ÑĀṆA)

“Now, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes thus fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards the Divine-Ear Element.

“To this end, while possessing the Divine Ear, far surpassing that of the human in its strength and purity, he starts hearing the sounds of both heavenly and human beings, whether far or near.

“Kevaḍḍha, imagine a man traveling on the main road while witnessing the world around himself, who begins to hear the sounds of various drums, whether big or small, such as dhols, tablas, conches, udukkus, damarus, khols, nakkaras, or cymbals. He would then discern clearly and identify every one of these drums from the distinct sound each of them makes.

“Now, in just the same manner, Kevaḍḍha, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards the Divine-Ear Element.

“To this end, while possessing the Divine Ear, far surpassing that of the human in its strength and purity, he starts hearing the sounds of both heavenly and human beings, whether far or near.

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

5. KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF OTHERS (CETOPARIYA ÑĀṆA)

“Now, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes thus collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by

having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards knowing the hearts and minds of other beings.

“To this end, he directly comes to know a heart that is full of lust as it truly is; clearly seeing it drenched in lust.

Similarly, he directly comes to know a heart that is full of hatred as it truly is; clearly seeing it drenched in hatred.

Similarly, he directly comes to know a heart that is full of delusion as it truly is; clearly seeing it drenched in delusion.

Also, he directly comes to know a heart that is collapsing, or one that is sluggish, drowsy, and caving in, or driven to procrastination, as well as clearly seeing if the heart is distracted and pulled this way and that, being scattered and unstable, in the presence of restlessness or worry. Also, he directly comes to know a heart that is in an exalted or lofty state as a result of meditative practice, and a heart that is still not yet developed to experience such sublime and lofty states.

Also, he directly comes to know a heart that is in a mundane and surpassable state, clearly distinguishing it from a heart that is, in fact, unsurpassable.

Also, he directly comes to know a heart that is in a concentrated and stable state, clearly distinguishing it from a heart that is, in fact, unconcentrated and unstable.

And he directly comes to know a heart that is indeed liberated and released, while clearly distinguishing it from a heart that is, in fact, unliberated and still unreleased.

“Kevaḍḍha, imagine a young man or a woman who places a lot of focus on being and looking attractive, who while putting on ornaments and jewelry, carefully examines his or her reflection through a flawless mirror, or a bowl of clear water. Now, in the presence of a blemish on the face, he or she would immediately notice it, and see that there is in fact the undeniable fact of a blemish on the face. And when seeing that there are no blemishes, that person would again clearly discern that there is in fact, no blemishes to be found at all.

“Now, in just the same manner, Kevaḍḍha, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards knowing the hearts and minds of other beings.

“Thus, he directly comes to know a heart that is full of lust as it truly is; clearly seeing it drenched in lust.

Similarly, he directly comes to know a heart that is full of hatred as it truly is; clearly seeing it drenched in hatred.

Similarly, he directly comes to know a heart that is full of delusion as it truly is; clearly seeing it drenched in delusion.

Also, he directly comes to know a heart that is collapsing, or one that is sluggish, drowsy, and caving in, or driven to procrastination, as well as clearly seeing if the heart is distracted and pulled this way and that, being scattered and unstable, in the presence of restlessness or worry. Also, he directly comes to know a heart that is in an exalted or lofty state as a result of meditative practice, and a heart that is still not developed to experience such sublime and lofty states.

Also, he directly comes to know a heart that is in a mundane and surpassable state, clearly distinguishing it from a heart that is, in fact, unsurpassable.

Also, he directly comes to know a heart that is in a concentrated and stable state, clearly distinguishing it from a heart that is, in fact, unconcentrated and unstable.

And he directly comes to know a heart that is indeed liberated and released, while clearly distinguishing it from a heart that is, in fact, unliberated and still unreleased.

“This also, Kevaddha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

6. KNOWLEDGE OF THE RECOLLECTION OF PAST LIVES (PUBBENIVĀSĀBUSSATI ÑĀṆA)

“Now, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes thus collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards recollecting and knowing the past lives and existences of himself and other beings.

“Thus, he is able to remember his many past lives, in all their details and features; that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty, forty, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many eons of world expansions, many eons of world contractions, many eons of world expansions and contractions, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

“In this manner, Kevaddha, the Bhikkhu recalls his numerous previous lives and existences, in addition to their specific details and features.

“Kevaddha, imagine there was someone who decides to travel from his own village and goes to another one, and later, after departing from that village too, he travels to yet another village, and once he finishes his touring, he finally returns back to his native village.

“Now, Kevaddha, this man would start reflecting:

‘Earlier, I was in my own village, but then I left as I traveled to the other village. While I was over there, I was standing there, then I sat like that in such and such a place, talked and conversed with others in this way, while keeping quiet elsewhere, in that way. Later, when I left that village, I went to the other one, where I sat on such a seat, stood in such a place, while communicated with those around me in this or that manner, and remained silent on such occasions. It was only after that when I decided to return back to my native village.’

“Now, in just the same manner, Kevaḍḍha, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards recollecting and knowing the past lives and existences of himself and other beings.

“Thus, he is able to remember his many past lives in all their details and features; that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty, forty, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many eons of world expansions, many eons of world contractions, many eons of world expansions and contractions, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

7. KNOWLEDGE OF THE PASSING AWAY & REAPPEARANCE OF BEINGS (DIBBACAKKHU ÑĀṆA)

“Now, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes thus fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards knowing the dying and rebirth of beings into the various realms.

“To this end, with the Divine Eye which is pure and far superior to those of humans and other beings, he applies the psychic power of knowing the destinations of beings, as they die and reappear into the different realms of existence. Thus, he sees clearly all types of beings dying at the end of life, whether being reborn into exalted or miserable states, beautiful or ugly, fortunate, or unfortunate, witnessing this by directly seeing, and therefore understanding clearly how beings pass on to different states according to their actions, whereby he knows how:

‘These beings who behaved badly through their bodily actions, their speech, and their mental actions, being disrespectful towards the Noble Ones, while grasping onto their wrong views, and on account of their wrong views in action, with the breakup of the body, after death, they are now reborn in a state of misery, utter deprivation, in a bad destination, in evil states, and in the hells; but these worthy beings who behaved virtuously through their bodily actions, their speech, and their mental actions, being respectful towards the Noble Ones, being right in their views, and on account of their right views in action, with the breakup of the body, after death, they are now reborn to a state of happiness, in a good destination, even in the heavenly world.’

“Therefore, with the Divine Eye, which is far superior to those of human beings and other animals, the Bhikkhu sees clearly beings dying at the end of their life and how they are reborn into either exalted or miserable states, beautiful or ugly, fortunate or unfortunate, witnessing this by directly seeing, and therefore understanding clearly how beings pass on to different states according to their actions.

“Kevaddha, imagine that right where there is a major crossroad of four paths meeting, there was a mansion built in the central square. Then, someone with excellent eyesight climbs up to the highest level of that mansion and begins looking at the people moving about in this and that direction, all in full view to his clear and unobstructed vision.

“Now, in just the same manner, Kevaddha, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards knowing the dying and rebirth of beings into the various realms.

“To this end, with the Divine Ear which is pure and far superior to those of humans and other beings, he applies the psychic power of knowing the destinations of beings, as they die and reappear into the different realms of existence. Thus, he sees clearly all types of beings dying at the end of life, whether being reborn into exalted or miserable states, beautiful or ugly, fortunate, or unfortunate, witnessing this by directly seeing, and therefore understanding clearly how beings pass on to different states according to their actions, whereby he knows:

‘These beings who behaved badly through their bodily actions, their speech, and their mental actions, being disrespectful towards the Noble Ones, while grasping onto their wrong views, and on account of their wrong views in action, with the breakup of the body, after death, they are now reborn in a state of misery, utter deprivation, in a bad destination, in evil states, and in the hells; but these worthy beings who behaved virtuously through their bodily actions, their speech, and their mental actions, being respectful towards the Noble Ones, being right in their views, and on account of their right views in action, with the breakup of the body, after death, they are now reborn to a state of happiness, in a good destination, even in the heavenly world.’

“Therefore, with the Divine Eye, which is far superior to those of human beings and other animals, the Bhikkhu sees clearly how beings die at the end of their life and are reborn into either exalted or miserable states, beautiful or ugly, fortunate or unfortunate, witnessing this by directly seeing, and therefore understanding clearly how beings pass on to different states according to their actions.

“This also, Kevaddha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

8. KNOWLEDGE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE HEART'S CONTAMINANTS (ĀSAVAKKHAYA ÑĀṆA)

“Now, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes thus collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards the knowledge of the destruction of the heart’s contaminants.

“Thus, he comes to directly know and unmistakably see: *‘This is suffering.’*
He comes to directly know and unmistakably see: *‘This is the origin and arising of suffering!’*
He comes to directly know and unmistakably see: *‘This is the very cessation of suffering!’*
He comes to directly know and unmistakably see: *‘This is the Path itself that leads to the ending of suffering!’*

“Furthermore, he comes to directly know and unmistakably see: *‘These are the āsavas, the heart’s contaminants!’*
He comes to directly know and unmistakably see: *‘This is the origin and arising of the āsavas, the heart’s contaminants!’*
He comes to directly know and unmistakably see: *‘This is the very cessation of the āsavas, the heart’s contaminants!’*
And he comes to directly know and unmistakably see: *‘This is the Path itself that leads to the ending of the āsavas, the heart’s contaminants!’*

“Thus, by seeing and understanding the truth of this, the Bhikkhu is then fully released from the contaminant of sensuality. Similarly, he is fully released from the contaminant of becoming. And, he is fully released from the contaminant of ignorance.

“And by knowing viscerally, for himself and beyond the shadow of a doubt, he comes to the very unmistakable and unprecedented realization: *‘I am now finally released, indeed!’*

“Thus, he attains to the Noble End of the Holy Life, as he finally understands it for himself, in this very birth, in the here and now, knowing it for sure, with direct understanding:

*Birth is now finally destroyed.
The Holy Life has been fully lived, with its Goal achieved.
There is no more coming back to any state of becoming.*

“Imagine, Kevaddha, there was a pool of water in a secluded place, that was pristine and clear, utterly pure and with perfect visibility all the way down to its bottom. Then, someone with excellent eyesight standing at its edge on dry land, looks down into the water, and he can clearly see the different shells, pebbles and rocks of different colors, as well as schools of fish swimming and comfortably living and frolicking in it.

“Now, that man would start thinking to himself:

‘This lovely pool, in this secluded place is so pristine and clear, utterly pure and with perfect visibility all the way down to its bottom, whereby while I stand at its edge and on dry land, while looking down into it, I can clearly see the different shells, pebbles and rocks of different colors, as well as schools of fish swimming and comfortably living and frolicking in it.’

“Now, in just the same manner, Kevaḍḍha, when the Bhikkhu’s mind becomes fully collected and stable, well concentrated, bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, absent of any imperfections, flawless, unshakable by having reached the state of imperturbability, he then directs it towards the knowledge of the destruction of the heart’s contaminants. To this end, given the work he has already done, his heart is fully released.

“This also, Kevaḍḍha, is what is meant by The Miracle of Instruction.

“These, therefore, Kevaḍḍha, are the three types of miraculous feats, that I have personally realized and experienced myself, while also teaching them to my students.

A BHIKKHU SEEKING THE VERY END OF EXISTENCE (BHŪTA NIRODHESAKA BHIKKHU VATTHU)

1. INQUIRING FROM THE GODS

“Once, Kevaḍḍha, a Bhikkhu from this very Dispensation had a question occurring to him, which he pursued as he kept contemplating over:

‘Where is it that the four great primaries, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving behind any trace?’

“Now, Kevaḍḍha, this Bhikkhu was one who had practiced enough that he was able to attain the level of concentration whereby he had before him the clear path and means to travel with his very body to the heavenly realms and communicate with the Devas.

a. “So, that Bhikkhu, Kevaḍḍha, traveled to the realm of the Four Great Kings and in an attempt to try and find an answer to his question from those Devas, he asked:

‘Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

“When asked, those Devas replied:

'We also do not know the answer to that question, Bhikkhu. However, most probably our rulers, the Four Great Kings, could provide you with an answer.'

aa. "Then, Kevaḍḍha, that Bhikkhu went and approached the Four Great Kings, as he asked them his question:

'Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?'

"But they too, turned to him and said:

'We too, Bhikkhu, do not know the answer to that question! However, there are the Gods of the Thirty-Three in Tāvātimsā Heaven, you should go there and ask those superior Devas this question of yours. They most probably will have an answer for you!'

b. "Then, Kevaḍḍha, the Bhikkhu traveled to Tāvātimsā Heaven and began asking his question to the Gods of the Thirty-Three that he met there:

'Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?'

"When asked, those Gods of the Thirty-Three replied:

'We also do not know the answer to that question, Bhikkhu. However, most probably our King Sakka, Lord of all Devas, might be able to provide you with an answer.'

bb. "So, Kevaḍḍha, that Bhikkhu went and approached the Lord Sakka, and asked him his question:

'Where is it, friend, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?'

"But he too, turned to him and said:

'Sadly, I also, Bhikkhu, do not know the answer to that question! However, there are the Yama Gods who are more superior and powerful than us. You should go there and ask those superior Devas this question of yours. They most probably will have an answer for you!'

c. "As advised, Kevaḍḍha, the Bhikkhu traveled to the Yama Devas and began asking his question to those Gods:

'Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?'

"When asked, those Yama Gods replied:

‘We also do not know the answer to that question, Bhikkhu. However, most probably our Senior, God Suyāma, who is far superior to us, might be able to provide you with an answer.’

cc. “So, Kevaḍḍha, that Bhikkhu went and approached the God Suyāma, and asked him his question:

‘Where is it, friend, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

“But he too, turned to him and said:

‘Sadly, I also, Bhikkhu, do not know the answer to that question! However, if you were to travel to the Tusita realm, the Divine Beings there who are far more superior and powerful than us, might be able to give you the answer you seek!’

d. “Then, as advised, Kevaḍḍha, the Bhikkhu went and approached the Divine Beings within the Tusita realm, as he began asking them his question:

‘Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

“When asked, those Divine Beings of Tusita realm replied:

‘We also do not know the answer to that question, Bhikkhu. However, the most senior among us, the God Santusita, could perhaps provide an answer to your question.’

dd. “So, Kevaḍḍha, the Bhikkhu went and approached the God Santusita, and asked him his question:

‘Where is it, friend, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

“But he too, turned to him and said:

‘Sadly, I also, Bhikkhu, do not know the answer to that question! However, if you were to travel to the realm of the Nimmānaratī Devas, those Divine Beings who delight in creating and who are far greater and superior to us, then perhaps you might obtain the answer you seek!’

e. “Then, Kevaḍḍha, that Bhikkhu went and approached the Divine Beings within the Nimmānaratī realm, as he began asking them his question:

‘Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

“When asked, those Divine Beings of the Nimmānaratī realm replied:

'We also do not know the answer to that question, Bhikkhu. However, the most senior among us, the God Sunimmita, might provide an answer to your question.'

ee. "Then, Kevaḍḍha, the Bhikkhu went and approached the God Sunimmita, and asked him his question:

'Where is it, friend, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?'

"But he too, turned to him and said:

'Sadly, I also, Bhikkhu, do not know the answer to that question! However, if you were to travel to the realm of the Paranimmita Vasavatti Devas, those Divine Beings who are far greater and superior to us and who often control our own creations, perhaps you might get an answer to your question!'

f. "Then, Kevaḍḍha, that Bhikkhu went and approached the Divine Beings within the Paranimmita Vasavatti realm, as he began asking them his question:

'Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?'

"When asked, those Divine Beings of the Paranimmita Vasavatti realm replied:

'We also, Bhikkhu, do not know the answer to that question! However, the most senior among us, the God Vasavatti, might provide an answer to your question.'

ff. "So, Kevaḍḍha, the Bhikkhu went and approached the God Vasavatti, and asked him his question:

'Where is it, friend, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?'

"But he too, turned to him and said:

'Sadly, I also, Bhikkhu, do not know the answer to that question! However, if you were to travel to the realm of the Brahmā and ask your question from those Gods in Brahma's retinue, who happen to be even greater and more superior than us, then perhaps, you might be provided with the answer to your question!'

g. "Then, Kevaḍḍha, that Bhikkhu went and approached the Divine Beings within the realm of the Brahmā, as he began asking them his question:

'Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?'

“When asked, those Divine Beings in Brahma’s retinue replied:

‘We also do not know the answer to that question, Bhikkhu! However, if you were to travel to the realm of the Brahmā and ask your question from those Gods in Mahā Brahmā’s retinue, who happen to be even greater and more superior than us, then perhaps you might be provided with the answer to your question!’

gg. “Then, Kevaddha, that Bhikkhu deepened his samādhi, whereby he had before him the clear path and means to travel, with his very body, to the Brahmā realms, and communicate with those Divine Beings within the retinue of Mahā Brahmā, as he began asking them his question:

‘Where is it, friends, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

“When asked, those Divine Beings within the company of the Mahā Brahmā realm replied:

‘We also do not know the answer to that question, Bhikkhu. However, our Supreme Lord, the Great Vanquisher and Ruler, the Undefeated, the Lord of All beings, the Ultimate Creator and Chief of us all and of all those who are yet to become, Our very Father and the Oldest among us, who, indeed, is the Most Glorious and Supreme, surely, He will provide you with the answer you seek, Bhikkhu!’

2. MAHĀ BRAHMĀ IS CLUELESS, HIMSELF

“Then, Kevaddha, that Bhikkhu inquired from those Divine Beings in Mahā Brahmā’s retinue:

‘But, where, friends, might Mahā Brahmā be at this moment?’

“And those Divine Beings in Mahā Brahmā’s retinue replied:

‘That is something we do not know, Bhikkhu, nor do we comprehend as to where or how he may appear next. However, Bhikkhu, when we do see certain radiant signs and lights shining all around us, then we know that Mahā Brahmā will be appearing next. Therefore, through those signs, we can foretell that Our Lord, Mahā Brahmā, is about to appear!’

“Not long after, Kevaddha, those marks of radiant signs and lights mentioned manifested, and soon enough Mahā Brahmā himself appeared. So, finding the opportunity to approach, that Bhikkhu, Kevaddha, went to Mahā Brahmā and asked:

‘Where is it, friend, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

“Kevaddha, once this was said, Mahā Brahmā addressed that Bhikkhu and said:

‘Bhikkhu, I am Brahmā, Mahā Brahmā Himself! I am The Supreme Lord, the Great Vanquisher and Ruler, the Undeclared, the Lord of All beings, the Ultimate Creator and Chief of all those who are, and who are yet to become, I am The Father and The Oldest among all beings!’

“Then, Kevaddha, that Bhikkhu repeated his question for the second time, and for a second time, Mahā Brahmā repeated the exclamation of his accolades.

“Until the Bhikkhu, while addressing Mahā Brahmā, spoke these words:

‘Friend, I did not ask you whether you were Brahmā or Mahā Brahmā, or not! I did not come here either to ask you whether or not you are The Supreme Lord, the Great Vanquisher and Ruler, the Undeclared, the Lord of All beings, the Ultimate Creator and Chief of all those who are and who are yet to become; whether you are The Father and The Oldest among all beings, or not!’

“But I did come here to ask you this question:

‘Where is it, friend, that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

At this, Mahā Brahmā came towards the Bhikkhu and by taking him by the arm and leading him off to one side, he began whispering:

‘You must understand that these Divine Beings, these Gods in my retinue, deeply and fully believe that there can be nothing that is left unknown or hidden from me! They firmly and blindly think that I, Mahā Brahmā, see everything and nothing could escape me! That there can be nothing that Mahā Brahmā could be blinded to, or unaware of, nothing that Mahā Brahmā could not have already realized and known!’

‘So, you see, that is the reason why I could not be so straightforward with you earlier, to just come out and say to you that I too, do not know as to where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind!’

‘But here, one might inquire as to why you are even here; having come to ask us this question, instead of asking it to The Blessed One Himself? Is He not your Teacher?’

‘You have bypassed the only one who can answer your question, Bhikkhu, and instead came all the way here, to us, only to be disappointed by what we have to say!’

‘Now go back, Bhikkhu, and by approaching The Blessed One, ask Him your question. And, however The Blessed One instructs you, that is exactly how you should remember and apply it!’

“Then, Kevaddha, just as easily as a strong and agile man would stretch out his flexed arm or draw in his outstretched arm, that Bhikkhu disappeared from Mahā Brahmā’s realm and immediately reappeared in my presence.

“And after paying homage to me, that Bhikkhu, Kevaddha, sat to one side and said:

‘Bhante, where is that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

3. THE SIMILE OF THE BIRD TRYING TO FIND DRY LAND (TĪRADASSISAKUṆUPAMĀ)

“Now, Kevaddha, once this was spoken, I replied to that Bhikkhu’s question, while instructing him:

“Once, Bhikkhu, a group of sea-faring merchants went on a journey, as they sailed into the deep open waters. Now, having traveled for some time, they wanted to reach dry land, so they released a bird they had brought on board with them, to fly off and help them locate dry land.

“Thus, the bird went flying in the eastern direction, then to the south, to the west, and then to the north, flying high and upwards as it did, and all around the sky. Whenever it was unsuccessful to locate land, it would fly back to the ship. But once it found land, it would not return.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhu, you have gone as far as the Brahmā world in search of an answer to this question of yours, only to return back here and come to me, trying to find an answer to your question!

“Firstly, you must reformulate your question, for it is wrongly structured. Instead of asking:

‘Bhante, where is that place where the four great primaries - the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, come to finally cease and be no more, without leaving any trace behind?’

“You must ask your question in this manner:

*‘Bhante, where do earth and water, fire, and air no longer find any footing?
Where is it that long and short, fine and coarse, pleasant, and unpleasant, as well as name-and-form, are all held in check, and left behind with no trace?’*

“Now, the answer to that question is the following:

“It is in consciousness, which is non-manifestative, boundless and endless, remaining lustrous on all sides: it is right here, where water, earth, fire, and air no longer find any footing.

“It is herein, where long and short, fine and coarse, pleasant and unpleasant, as well as name-and-form, are all held in check, and left behind with no trace.

“Therefore, with the cessation of consciousness, is where you’ll find them all come to a stop, and cease.”

This is what The Blessed One said, while Kevaḍḍha, the young householder was delighted and joyful in having listened to The Blessed One’s words.

(Here ends the Kevaḍḍha Sutta)



Sādhū

Sādhū

Sādhū

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