

# Selected Discourses from The Dīghanikāya



by  
Bhikkhu Pesala



# Selected Discourses from The Dīghanikāya

by  
Bhikkhu Pesala



AIM Logo

© Latest Edition December 2018

Bhikkhu Pesala

Association for Insight Meditation

You may print copies of this book for your own use. However, all rights are reserved. You may not use this PDF file on your own web site, nor for commercial distribution. If you post an extract on a forum, post a link to the appropriate page. Please do not link directly to the PDF file.

## Foreword

These translations are my own. They differ on some key points from those of Maurice Walshe, Rhys Davids, Ajahn Thanissaro, and other translators. Translation from Pāli to English is an art rather than a science. My aim has always been to make them easy to understand rather than being literal. The meaning sometimes only becomes clear on knowing the context of the discourse.

I have added footnotes to explain my choice of words, and to provide cross-references to other translations on my website.

In several places I have added the Pāli term in parenthesis. An index serves as a glossary of Pāli terms used in the translation.

The order of the discourses is numerical, rather than alphabetical as it is on my Website.

Bhikkhu Pesala  
December 2018

# Contents

Foreword.....	ii
Kevaṭṭa Suttam.....	1
A Discourse to Kevaṭṭa.....	1
The Householder's Son Kevaṭṭa.....	1
The Mystic Wonder of Psychic Powers.....	1
The Mystic Wonder of Mind-reading.....	2
The Mystic Wonder of Instruction.....	3
The Story of a Monk and the Cessation of the Four Elements.....	3
The Simile of the Shore-finding Bird.....	6
Siṅgāla Suttam.....	7
A Discourse to Siṅgāla.....	7
Introduction.....	7
Translation.....	7
Six Directions.....	8
Four Impure Actions.....	8
Four Causes of Evil.....	9
Six Ways of Dissipating Wealth.....	9
Six Dangers of Indulgence in Intoxicants.....	10
Six Dangers of Sauntering in Streets.....	10
Six Dangers of Visiting Shows.....	10
Six Dangers of Gambling.....	10
Six Dangers of Evil Friends.....	11
Six Dangers of Laziness.....	11
Enemies Disguised as Friends.....	12
A Friend Who Only Takes.....	12
A Friend Who Makes Empty Promises.....	12
A Friend Who Flatters.....	13
A Friend Who Is a Wastrel.....	13
Good-hearted Friends.....	13
A Friend Who Is Helpful.....	13
A Friend Who Is Loyal.....	14
A Friend Who Gives Good Counsel.....	14
A Friend Who Is Compassionate.....	14
Securing the Six Directions.....	15
Parents as the East.....	15
Teachers as the South.....	15
Wife as the West.....	16
Friends as the North.....	16
Employees as the Nadir.....	16
Recluses and Priests as the Zenith.....	17
Index.....	20



# Kevaṭṭa Suttam

(D.i.211)

## A Discourse to Kevaṭṭa

### *The Householder's Son Kevaṭṭa*

481. Thus have I heard — at one time the Blessed One was dwelling at Nālandā in Pāvārika's mango grove. Then the householder's son Kevaṭṭa approached the Blessed One, and having approached, paid homage, and sat down at one side. Sitting at one side, the householder's son Kevaṭṭa said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, this Nālandā is prosperous, wealthy, and populous, full of people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good, Venerable sir, if the Blessed One would instruct one monk to perform a superhuman<sup>1</sup> mystic wonder (*pāṭihāriya*) of psychic power (*iddhi*), thus this Nālandā would grow in faith for the Blessed One."

When this was said, the Blessed One said to Kevaṭṭa, the householder's son: "I do not, Kevaṭṭa, teach the Dhamma to the monks thus: 'Go and perform a superhuman feat of psychic power for householders dressed in white.'"

482. [A second and a third time, Kevaṭṭa, the householder's son, repeated his request, and the Blessed One replied as before]. [212]

### *The Mystic Wonder of Psychic Powers*

483. "Kevaṭṭa, there are these three mystic wonders (*pāṭihāriya*) which, having realised them myself by direct knowledge, I explain them. What three? The mystic wonder of psychic power (*iddhipāṭihāriya*), the mystic wonder of mind-reading (*ādesanāpāṭihāriyaṃ*), and the mystic wonder of instruction (*anusāsanīpāṭihāriyaṃ*).

484. "What, Kevaṭṭa, is the mystic wonder of psychic power (*iddhipāṭihāriya*)? Here, Kevaṭṭa, a monk displays various kinds of psychic power. Having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; having been visible, he becomes invisible; having been invisible, he becomes visible; he passes through fences, walls, and mountains unhindered as if it was air; he plunges into the earth and emerges from it as if it was water; he sits cross-legged in the sky like a bird with wings; he touches with his hand the sun and the moon, mighty though they are; [213] he goes with his body even to the Brahma world.

---

<sup>1</sup>Superhuman (*uttarimanussadhamma*). A state that is beyond the capability of ordinary human beings. A Vinaya rule forbids monks from exhibiting such powers. I do not know if the rule was laid down before or after the events described here.

“Then a certain person with faith (*saddho*) and devotion (*passano*)<sup>1</sup> sees that monk display various kinds of psychic power ... Brahma world.

“Then that person with faith and devotion tells a person without faith and devotion: ‘It is wonderful, friend! It is marvellous, friend! The recluses are of great power and skill. Our monk displays various kinds of psychic power. Having been one, he becomes many ... even to the Brahma world.

“Then that person without faith and devotion would say: ‘There is, friend, the Gandhārī charm. With that your monk displays various kinds of psychic power ... Brahma world.

“What do you think, Kevaṭṭa? Wouldn’t a person without faith and devotion say that?” “They would say that, Venerable sir.” “Seeing that danger in the mystic wonder of psychic powers, Kevaṭṭa, I am troubled by<sup>2</sup> the mystic wonder of psychic powers, I am ashamed of it, and I shun it.”

### *The Mystic Wonder of Mind-reading*

**485.** “What, Kevaṭṭa, is the mystic wonder of mind-reading? Here, Kevaṭṭa, a monk points out the thoughts of other beings, of other individuals, he points out their thoughts and reflections: ‘Thus is your mind, your wish, thus are your thoughts.’

“Then a certain person with faith and devotion sees that monk sees that monk pointing out the thoughts of other beings, of other individuals ... ‘Thus is your mind, your wish, thus are your thoughts.’ Then that person with faith and devotion tells a person without faith and devotion: [214] ‘It is wonderful, friend! It is marvellous, friend! The recluses are of great power and skill. Our monk points out the thoughts of others ... thus are your thoughts.’

“Then that person without faith and devotion would say: ‘There is, friend, the Maṇikā charm. With that your monk reads the thoughts of other beings, or other individuals ... ‘Thus is your mind, your wish, thus are your thoughts.’

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Walshe translates these two terms (*saddho passano*) as “one with faith and trust,” and their opposites (*assaddho appassano*) as “one who is sceptical and unbelieving.” Ajahn Thanissaro translates them as “faith and conviction,” and “without faith and conviction.” The word “*passano*” is from the verb *pasīdati* = to be pleased, calm, peaceful, to find satisfaction.

<sup>2</sup> Troubled by (*aṭṭiyāmi*), ashamed of it (*harāyāmi*), and shun it (*jigucchāmi*). The Buddha is free from anxiety and all other mental defilements, but he is concerned for the welfare of all beings. In this case, one without faith and devotion would have unwholesome thoughts that monks exhibiting mystic wonders are using magic tricks to deceive others. When illusionists perform magic tricks, some gullible people are deceived and shocked, while those who know how the tricks are done, or those who are sceptical are not deceived, even if they do not know the method, they know that is just an illusion. Superhuman feats are not tricks, but genuine psychic powers gained by those with deep concentration. To convince the sceptical it is better to use the miracle of instruction.

“What do you think, Kevaṭṭa? Wouldn’t a person without faith and devotion say that?” “They would say that, Venerable sir.” “Seeing that danger in the mystic wonder of mind-reading, Kevaṭṭa, I am troubled by the mystic wonder of mind-reading, I am ashamed of it, and I shun it.

### *The Mystic Wonder of Instruction*

**486.** “What, Kevaṭṭa, is the mystic wonder of instruction? Here, Kevaṭṭa, a monk instructs thus: ‘Apply your mind thus, do not apply your mind thus, pay attention thus, do not pay attention thus, reject this, cultivate that and abide in it.’ This, Kevaṭṭa, is called the mystic wonder of instruction.

“Again, Kevaṭṭa, a Tathāgata arises in the world ... [continued as in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, which is similar, but not identical to, the Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya Sutta] [215] This, Kevaṭṭa, is called the mystic wonder of instruction.

“These three mystic wonders, Kevaṭṭa, having realised them myself with direct knowledge, I explain them.”

### *The Story of a Monk and the Cessation of the Four Elements*

**487.** “At one time, Kevaṭṭa, in this order of monks, this train of thought arose in a certain monk: ‘Where do these four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element?’

**488.** “Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk attained such a state of concentration that the path to the realm of gods arose in him.<sup>1</sup> Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the deities of the Four Great Kings, and having approached them said to those deities: ‘Where do these four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element?’

“When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, the deities of the Four Great Kings said to that monk: ‘Monk, we also do not know where the four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element. There are, monk, the Four Great Kings who surpass us and are superior to us. They may know where the four great elements cease without remainder ...’

---

<sup>1</sup>When relating this long account of a monk with psychic powers who is able to visit the various celestial realms, the Buddha is not troubled that Kevaṭṭa, who has faith and devotion, might not believe him. The Buddhist texts contain many such accounts of psychic powers, mind-reading, predictions, and deities visiting the Buddha or a forest monk to ask questions. The well known *Maṅgala Sutta* is just one example, where the Buddha replies to a question asked by a deity.

489. “Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the Four Great Kings ... the deities of the Thirty-three (Tāvātimsa) ... [216]

490. “Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the deities of the Thirty-three ... [217]

491. “Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached Sakka the king of the gods ... the Yāma gods ... the deity Suyāma ... [218] the gods of Tusita ... the god Santussito ... the Nimmānaratī gods ... [219] the god Sunimmito ... the Paranimmitavasavattī gods ... the god Vasavattī ...

492. “Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the god Vasavattī ... the Brahmakāyika gods who surpass me and are superior to me. [220] They may know where the four great elements cease without remainder ... ’

493. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk attained such a state of concentration that the path to the realm of Brahma arose in him. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the Brahmakāyika gods, and having approached them said to those deities: ‘Where, friends, do these four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element?’

“When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, the Brahmakāyika deities said to that monk: ‘Monk, we also do not know where the four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element. There is, monk, Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Almighty (*abhibhū*), the invincible (*anabhibhūto*), the Omniscient (*aññadattḥudaso*), the Lord (*vasavattī*), the ruler (*issaro*), the maker (*katta*), the Creator (*nimmātā*), the supreme (*setṭho*), the originator (*sajitā*), the master (*vasī*), the father (*pitā*) of all that exists and will exist (*bhūtabhavyānaṃ*) who surpasses us and is superior to us. He may know where the four great elements cease without remainder ... ’

“Where, friends, is that Great Brahma now?” “We do not know, monk, where Brahma is, nor from where he will appear, nor when he will appear. However, monk, when a sign is seen, a light is born, radiance appears, Brahma will appear, these are signs of his appearance. Then, Kevaṭṭa, before long the Great Brahma appeared. [221]

494. “Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the Great Brahma, and having approached, said to that Great Brahma: ‘Where, friend, do these four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element?’ When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, the Great Brahma said to that monk: ‘I am, monk, Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Almighty, the invincible, the Omniscient, the Lord, the ruler, the maker, the Creator, the supreme, the originator, the master, the father of all that exists and will exist.’

“Then a second time, Kevaṭṭa, that bhikkhu spoke to the Great Brahma: ‘I did not, friend ask you thus: ‘Are you Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Almighty, the invincible, the Omniscient, the Lord, the ruler, the maker, the Creator, the supreme, the originator, the master, the father of all that exists and will exist.’ I asked you thus, friend, ‘Where do these four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element?’

“Then a second time, Kevaṭṭa, the Great Brahma said to that monk: ‘I am, monk, Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Almighty, the invincible, the Omniscient, the Lord, the ruler, the maker, the Creator, the supreme, the originator, the master, the father of all that exists and will exist.’

“Then a third time, Kevaṭṭa, that bhikkhu spoke to the Great Brahma: ‘I did not, friend ask you thus: ‘Are you Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Almighty, the invincible, the Omniscient, the Lord, the ruler, the maker, the Creator, the supreme, the originator, the master, the father of all that exists and will exist.’ I asked you thus, friend, ‘Where do these four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element?’

**495.** “Then, Kevaṭṭa, the Great Brahma, having taken that monk by the arm and led him aside,<sup>1</sup> [222] said to that monk: ‘These Brahmakāyika gods believe (*jānanti*) thus: “There is nothing that the Brahma does not know, there is nothing that the Brahma does not see, there is nothing that the Brahma does not understand, there is nothing that the Brahma does not realise.” Therefore, I did not speak in their presence. I too, monk, do not know where the four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element. Therefore, monk, the fault is yours, the mistake is yours, that you have bypassed the Blessed One and sought the answer to your question elsewhere. Go, monk, to that Blessed One, and having approached him, ask him this question, however the Blessed One replies, that is how you should bear it in mind.”

**496.** “Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk as a strong man would stretch out his bent arm, or bend his outstretched arm he departed from the Brahma realm and appeared in front of me. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk, having paid homage, sat

<sup>1</sup> The irony of this passage is hilarious. Whoever says that the Buddha lacked a sense of humour is not familiar with such passages. The Great Brahma who is extolled, and extols himself in such magnificent terms as Almighty, Omniscient, the Lord of all beings that exist or that will exist, and so forth, knows himself that it just a vain pretence that he has to maintain to save face with his sycophantic junior deities. That is why I translate “*jānanti*,” as “believe,” rather than with its usual meaning of “know.” The Buddha often mocked the Brahmins, who believed that Brahma was their Almighty Creator.

down at one side. Sitting at one side, Kevaṭṭa, that monk said to me, ‘Where do these four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element?’”

### *The Simile of the Shore-finding Bird*

497. “When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, I said to that monk: ‘At one time, monk, ocean-going merchants, taking a shore-finding bird entered the ocean with their ship. Not able to see the shore, they would release the shore-finding bird from the ship. It would fly to the east, south, west, and north, up and down, flying in all directions. If it saw the shore, it would fly in that direction. If it was not able to see the shore, it would return to the ship. Thus in this way, monk, you have sought the answer to your question [223] as far as the Brahma realm, but not finding it, you have returned to my presence. However, monk, this question should not be asked thus: ‘Where do these four great elements cease without remainder, that is to say, the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element?’”

498. “This is how, monk, the question should be asked —

“Where do water and earth, fire and air, find no firm footing?<sup>1</sup>

Where are long and short, small and large, beautiful and ugly,

Where are mind and matter annihilated without remainder?”

499. “The answer to that is —

“In that consciousness that is invisible,<sup>2</sup> immeasurable, radiant in every respect.

Here, water and earth, fire and air, find no firm footing.

Here, long and short, small and large, beautiful and ugly,

Here, mind and matter are annihilated without remainder.

With the cessation of consciousness, here this is annihilated.”

500. Thus spoke the Blessed One. Delighted, Kevaṭṭa the householder’s son rejoiced in what the Blessed One had said.

<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, a very different question. The four elements do not cease when an Arahant attains nibbāna.

<sup>2</sup> The consciousness that is invisible (*anidassanaṃ*) is a term for the mind that knows nibbāna. One who realises nibbāna is not unconscious; the mind takes nibbāna as its object. Nibbāna cannot be seen, heard, smelt, tasted, nor touched. However, it can be known by the mind.

# Singāla Suttaṃ

## (D.iii.179)

### A Discourse to Singāla

#### *Introduction*

This important discourse explains in detail the social responsibilities and proper conduct for a lay Buddhist. It is referred to as A Lay Person's Discipline.

I have abbreviated the translation in places to avoid some repetitions that are not needed when writing. I have added some Pāli words in parentheses for those who wish to know the original words used, and some footnotes to explain the meaning of key terms in more detail. Translation is an art, and the best English word to use depends on the context. If you have time, learn sufficient Pāli to read the original texts with the help of a dictionary. The Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka is an excellent tool to study the texts and Commentaries. It includes a dictionary to translate from Pāli to English or Hindi.

#### *Translation*

Thus have I heard — At one time the Blessed One was dwelling at Rājagaha in the Squirrels' Sanctuary in the Bamboo Grove. At that time, Singālaka, the son of a householder, having risen early in the morning, and come out from Rājagaha, in wet clothes and hair, worshipped with joined palms the different directions — the east, the south, the west, the north, the nadir and the zenith.

Then the Blessed One, having dressed (*nivāsetvā*), taking his almsbowl and double-robe (*pattacīvaramādāya*),<sup>1</sup> entered Rājagaha for alms. On seeing Singālaka the Blessed One said: "Why do you, householder's son, have risen early in the morning and come out from Rājagaha, in wet cloths and with wet hair, worship with joined palms the different directions?"

"Venerable sir, on his deathbed my father said, 'Dear son, honour the directions.' So, venerable sir, respecting (*sakkaronto*), esteeming (*garuṃ karonto*), honouring (*mānento*), and venerating (*pūjento*) my father's last words, I rise early in the morning, come out from Rājagaha in wet clothes and with wet hair, and worship with joined palms the different directions."

---

<sup>1</sup> This stock phrase describes how monks prepare to walk for alms. Having put on the lower robe around the waist, and the upper robe around both shoulders, they carry the folded double-robe and the almsbowl. If they live in remote areas they may put on the upper robe only before entering the village.

### *Six Directions*

“It is not thus, householder’s son,<sup>1</sup> that the six directions are worshipped in the noble one’s discipline.”

“How then, venerable sir, should the six directions be worshipped in the noble one’s discipline? It would be good if the Blessed One would teach me how the six directions are to be worshipped in the noble one’s discipline.”

“In that case, householder’s son, listen and pay careful attention. I will speak.”

“Very well, venerable sir,” Siṅgāḷaka replied, and the Blessed One said:–

“Householder’s son, the noble disciple has abandoned four impure actions; he does no evil due to the four causes; and he does not follow six practices that cause dissipation of wealth. By avoiding these fourteen evils, he secures the six directions and practices for success in both worlds. He has accomplished his tasks for this world as well as for the next. On the breakup of the body after death, he is reborn in a fortunate celestial realm.”

### *Four Impure Actions*

“What are the four impure actions that he has abandoned? Killing living beings (*pāṇātipāto*), householder’s son, is an impure action, taking what is not given (*adinnādānaṃ*) is an impure action, sexual misconduct (*kāmesumicchācāro*) is an impure action, telling lies (*musāvādo*) is an impure action. He has abandoned these four impure actions.”

Thus said the Blessed One. After the Fortunate One (*sugato*) had spoken these words, the Teacher (*sathā*) added:–

“Killing, stealing, telling lies, and committing adultery<sup>2</sup> are never praised by the wise.

<sup>1</sup> Householder’s son (*gahapatiputta*). There is no way to tell his age, but one assumes that he was still fairly young and unmarried. On coming into an inheritance at a young age, being faced with many new responsibilities, he would have been in need of advice. His mother, Siṅgālamātā, became a nun and an Arahant, and was praised as the best of the nuns liberated by faith.

<sup>2</sup> Committing adultery. Literally, “Going to the wives of others (*paradāragamanañceva*). Sexual misconduct (*kāmesumicchācāra*) means literally “Misconduct in sensual pleasures,” but the meaning is sexual misconduct. This includes having sexual relations with twenty types of women (Vin.iii.139); ten unmarried and ten married:† (See the additional note on the following page) 1) Protected by her mother (*māturakkhitā*), 2) Protected by her father (*piturakkhitā*), 3) Protected by her mother and father (*mātāpiturakkhitā*), 4) Protected by her brother (*bhāturakkhitā*), 5) Protected by her sister (*bhaginirakkhitā*), 6) Protected by her relatives (*ñātirakkhitā*), 7) Protected by her clan (*gottarakkhitā*), 8) Protected by the Dhamma (*dhammarakkhitā*), 9) Protected in some other way (*sārakkhā*) such as a flower garland (betrothed), 10) Protected by a legal punishment (*saparidaṇḍā*).

### Four Causes of Evil

“What are the four causes through which he does not do evil deeds? Taking a wrong course through desire (*chandāgatiṃ*), one commits evil; taking a wrong course through anger (*dosāgatiṃ*), one commits evil; taking a wrong course through delusion (*mohāgatiṃ*), one commits evil; and taking a wrong course through fear (*bhayagatiṃ*), one commits evil. However, householder’s son, a noble disciple does not commit evil taking a wrong course through these four causes.

Thus said the Blessed One. After the Fortunate One had spoken these words, the Teacher added:–

“Whoever transgresses the Dhamma due to desire, anger, fear, or delusion,  
His fame declines like the moon in the waning half of the month.

“Whoever does not transgress the Dhamma due to desire, anger, fear or delusion,

His fame increases like the moon in the waxing half of the month.”

### Six Ways of Dissipating Wealth

“What are the six ways of dissipating wealth that he does not follow?

“Indulgence in intoxicants that cause heedlessness,<sup>1</sup> householder’s son, leads to the dissipation of wealth. Sauntering in streets at unseemly hours

<sup>1</sup> Indulgence in intoxicants that cause heedlessness (*surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānānuyoge*). Spirits (*surā*), fermented drinks (*meraya*), that intoxicate (*majja*), and cause heedlessness (*pamādaṭṭhāna*), indulgence in, indulging in or having the habit of (*anuyoga*). The fifth precept is an undertaking to abstain from taking intoxicants, not an undertaking to refrain from getting intoxicated. A number of misinformed Buddhists think that taking a little alcohol does not break the precept, but virtuous Buddhist are teetotalers. The precepts are a voluntary undertaking, not commandments. An occasional drink does not lead to a lay person’s downfall. However, drinking intoxicants habitually, being addicted to them, and indulgence clearly leads to the dissipation of one’s wealth for all of the reasons stated. Nothing more need be said regarding drugs. It should be obvious that both legal and illegal drugs that cause heedlessness should be included here.

---

† **Ten kinds of wives:** 1) Bought with money (*dhanakkītā*), 2) Living together through affection (*chandavāsini*), 3) Living together by giving property (*bhogavāsini*), 4) Living together by giving clothing (*paṭavāsini*), 5) Bought by providing water (*odapattakinī*), 6) Living together having removed the water-pot carrying cloth (*obhaṭacumbaṭā*), 7) A female slave (*dāsī*), 8) A female worker (*kammakāri*), 9) A captured wife (*dhajāhaṭā*), 10) A temporary wife (*muhuttikā*). This reference from the Vinaya texts concerns the Saṅghādisesa training rule about acting as a match-maker, but it can also be applied to the context of avoiding sexual misconduct. An unmarried couple living together through affection are not committing sexual misconduct, unless the girl is one of the ten protected by her relatives, *etc.*, or one of the ten kinds of wives. That is, if couples are unmarried, they should remain faithful to each other.

leads to the dissipation of wealth. Indulgence in visiting shows leads to the dissipation of wealth. Indulgence in gambling that causes heedlessness leads to the dissipation of wealth. Associating with evil friends leads to the dissipation of wealth. Indulgence in laziness leads to the dissipation of wealth.”

### **Six Dangers of Indulgence in Intoxicants**

“There are these six dangers, householder’s son, of indulgence in intoxicants that cause heedlessness. The immediate loss of wealth, an increase in quarrels, diseases of the sense-faculties, he gets a bad reputation, indecent exposure of his body, the impairment of wisdom. These, householder’s son, are the six dangers of indulgence in intoxicants that cause heedlessness.”

### **Six Dangers of Sauntering in Streets**

“There are these six dangers, householder’s son, of sauntering in streets at unseemly hours. He himself is unprotected, his wife and children are unprotected, his property is unprotected, he is suspected of committing evil deeds, he is subject to false accusations, he encounters many painful things. These, householder’s son, are the six dangers of sauntering in streets at unseemly hours.”

### **Six Dangers of Visiting Shows**

“There are these six dangers,<sup>1</sup> householder’s son, of visiting shows (*samajjābhicarāṇa*). ‘Where is there dancing (*naccaṃ*)? Where is there singing (*gītaṃ*)? Where is there music (*vāḍitaṃ*)? Where is there story-telling (*akkhānaṃ*)? Where is there playing of tabla (*pāṇissaraṃ*)? Where is there drumming (*kumbhathunaṃ*)?’ These, householder’s son, are the six dangers of visiting shows.”

### **Six Dangers of Gambling**

“There are these six dangers of addiction (*anuyoga*)<sup>2</sup> to gambling that causes heedlessness. Winning begets enmity, the loser grieves over his loss,

<sup>1</sup> Whatever kind of show it is that one likes, the disadvantage is that one must make inquiries to find out where and when they are going to happen, then make plans to go there. While away from one’s house, one’s property is unguarded, which is the danger. Wealth is dissipated in buying tickets or gifts to offer to the performers, the cost of travelling there, and the loss of earnings. In the crowds that gather at such events there will also be thieves looking for a chance to steal from or rob victims, perhaps using violence.

<sup>2</sup> The word “*anuyoga*” means applying oneself to something, being intent on it, and devoted to it. Buying lottery tickets is also gambling, and it also dissipates one’s wealth a little, but most people are not addicted to gambling in a harmful way. In this context, it refers to habitual gambling, which soon leads to poverty and indebtedness so I have translated it as “addiction.” Others (Nārada) translate it as “indulgence in.” In the context of laziness I have translated the same word, *anuyoga*, as “habitual,” and in the context of drinking intoxicants as “indulgence in.”

there is immediate loss of wealth, his word is not trusted in a court of law, he is despised by his friends and associates, he is not sought as a marriage partner because people say, 'He is a gambler, he cannot support a wife.' These, householder's son, are the six dangers of addiction to gambling that causes heedlessness."

### Six Dangers of Evil Friends

"There are these six dangers of associating with evil friends. Those who are gamblers (*dhuttā*), those who are libertines (*soṇḍā*), those who are drunkards (*pipāsā*), those who are fraudsters (*nekatikā*), those who are cheats (*vañcanikā*), and those who are thugs (*sāhasikā*); form his circle of friends. These, householder's son, are the six dangers of associating with evil friends.

### Six Dangers of Laziness

"There are these six dangers of habitual<sup>1</sup> laziness: thinking 'It is too cold,' he does no work, thinking 'It is too hot,' he does no work, thinking 'It is too late,' he does no work, thinking 'It is too early,' he does no work, thinking 'I am too hungry,' he does no work, thinking 'I am too full,' he does no work. Thus many duties are left undone, not acquiring new wealth, but dissipating such wealth as he has already accumulated. These are the six dangers, householder's son, of habitual laziness.

Thus said the Blessed One. After the Fortunate One had spoken these words, the Teacher added:-

"There are those called drinking companions,  
who are friends only in one's presence.  
One who is a friend in times of crisis is a true friend."

"Sleeping until the sun is high; committing adultery;  
Making enemies and engaging in unbeneficial activities;  
Evil friendship and being very selfish. These six causes bring ruin."

"Evil friends and associates of evil conduct and resorts  
Leads to ruin in this world and the next."

<sup>1</sup> The similes of a bee collecting nectar to make honey and termites collecting grains of sand to build up the termite mound make it clear that becoming wealthy is a gradual process. Getting rich by taking advantage of others, while disregarding their true welfare, may be much quicker, but using only honest trading or hard labour it takes time. Nevertheless, great wealth will gradually accumulate if one is frugal and honest. Whether one's business prospers slowly or quickly also depends on one's past kamma, but the importance of present kamma and hard work cannot be overstated.

“Playing dice, womanising, dancing and singing;  
 Sleeping during the day; wandering at the wrong time;  
 Evil friends and selfishness; these six causes bring ruin.”

“Playing dice; indulgence in drinking;  
 Misbehaving with women who are as dear as life to other men,  
 With women sought after by the vile but shunned by the mature;  
 His fame declines like the moon in the waning half of the month.

“The destitute drunkard,  
 Longing to drink, frequents drinking dens.  
 As a stone sinks in water, he becomes immersed in debt.  
 He is quickly disowned and rejected by his relatives.

“He who sleeps in the day, and is lazy at night,  
 Always drunk and lustful, cannot manage a household.

“Saying ‘It is too cold, too hot, too late,’  
 Thus leaving work undone, many opportunities pass the young man by.”

“For him who considers cold and heat as no more than a blade of grass  
 Who dutifully attends to the affairs of men, happiness and prosperity do  
 not decline.”

### *Enemies Disguised as Friends*

“These four, householder’s son, should be regarded as enemies disguised as friends. A friend who only takes should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend; a friend who makes empty promises should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend; a friend who flatters should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend; and a friend who is a wastrel should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.

#### **A Friend Who Only Takes**

“For four reasons, householder’s son, a friend who only takes should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend. He only takes, wanting much but giving little; he does things only out of fear; he follows only for his own advantage. For these four reasons, householder’s son, a friend who only takes should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.”

#### **A Friend Who Makes Empty Promises**

“For four reasons, householder’s son, a friend who makes empty promises should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend. He speaks about what

he would have done in the past; he speaks about what he would do in the future; he tries to please one with empty promises; when an occasion arises to help, he shows his inability. For these four reasons, householder's son, a friend who makes empty promises should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend."

### **A Friend Who Flatters**

"For four reasons, householder's son, a friend who flatters should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend. He approves of your evil deeds; He also approves of your good deeds; He speaks of your virtues in your presence; He speaks of your faults in your absence. For these four reasons, householder's son, a friend who flatters should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend."

### **A Friend Who Is a Wastrel**

"For four reasons, householder's son, a friend who is a wastrel should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend. He is a companion when indulging in intoxicants that cause heedlessness; He is a companion when sauntering in streets at unseemly hours; He is a companion when frequenting shows; He is a companion when indulging in gambling, which causes heedlessness. For these four reasons, householder's son, a friend who is a wastrel should be known as an enemy disguised as a friend."

Thus said the Blessed One. After the Fortunate One had spoken these words, the Teacher added:-

"The friend who only takes, the friend who makes empty promises,  
The friend who flatters, and the friend who is a wastrel —  
The wise knowing these four as enemies,  
Avoid them like a dangerous road."

### ***Good-hearted Friends***

"These four, householder's son, should be known as good-hearted (*suhado*) friends: he who is helpful (*upakāro*); he who is the same in prosperity and adversity (*samānasukhadukkho*); he who gives good counsel (*atthakhāyī*); and he who is compassionate (*anukampaka*).

### **A Friend Who Is Helpful**

"For four reasons, householder's son, a friend who is helpful should be known as a good-hearted friend: he protects you when you are heedless (*pamattam*); he protects your property when you are heedless; he is a refuge

when you are afraid; when something needs to be done he gives you twice what you need. For these four reasons, householder's son, a friend who is helpful should be known as a good-hearted friend."

### **A Friend Who Is Loyal**

"For four reasons, householder's son, a friend who is the same in prosperity and adversity should be known as a good-hearted friend: he tells you his secrets; he keeps your secrets; he does not forsake you in adversity; he will even sacrifice his life for you. For these four reasons, householder's son, a friend who is loyal should be known as a good-hearted friend."

### **A Friend Who Gives Good Counsel**

"For four reasons, householder's son, a friend who gives good counsel should be known as a good-hearted friend: he restrains you from evil; he exhorts you to do good; he tells you what you do not know; he shows you the way to heaven. For these four reasons, householder's son, a friend who gives good counsel should be known as a good-hearted friend."

### **A Friend Who Is Compassionate**

"For four reasons, householder's son, a friend who is compassionate should be known as a good-hearted friend: he does not rejoice in your misfortune; he rejoices in your prosperity; he restrains those who speak about your faults; he praises those who speak about your virtues. For these four reasons, householder's son, a friend who is compassionate should be known as a good-hearted friend."

Thus said the Blessed One. After the Fortunate One had spoken these words, the Teacher added:-

"The friend who is helpful, the friend who is loyal,  
The friend who gives good counsel, and the friend who is compassionate  
The wise should know these four as good-hearted friends.  
Care for them with devotion as a mother cares for her own child.

"The wise man endowed with virtue shines bright like a blazing fire.  
The wealth acquired harmlessly, as a bee gathers nectar from flowers  
Grow as a termite mound grows<sup>7</sup> higher and higher.

"Having acquired wealth in this way, a man who can set up a household  
Should divide his wealth into four portions; thus he can gather friends.  
He should spend one portion; use two to run his business;  
The fourth should be reserved for emergencies."

## Securing the Six Directions

“How, householder’s son, does the noble disciple secure the six directions? These six directions should be known. The parents should be known as the east, teachers should be known as the south, wife and children should be known as the west, friends and associates should be known as the north, slaves<sup>1</sup> (*dasā*) and employees (*kammakarā*) should be known as the nadir and recluses and priests should be known as the zenith.

### Parents as the East

“In five ways, householder’s son, should a son minister to his parents as the east. My parents have supported me, I will support them in turn; I will manage affairs on their behalf; I will maintain the family traditions; I will be worthy of my inheritance; I will offer alms on behalf of my departed parents.

“In five ways, householder’s son, the parents ministered to as the east by a son show him compassion. They restrain him from evil, they exhort him to do good, they train him to acquire skills, they seek a suitable wife for him, they give him his inheritance when the time comes. In these five ways, householder’s son, the parents ministered to as the east by a son show him compassion. Thus the eastern direction is made secure, peaceful, and free from dangers.”

### Teachers as the South

“In five ways, householder’s son, should a son minister to his teachers as the south. By standing up to greet them; by attending on and waiting on them daily; by obeying their instructions; by performing personal services; by acquiring their skill thoroughly.

“In five ways, householder’s son, the teacher ministered to as the south by a pupil shows him compassion. He trains him well, he makes him master his skill, he teaches him everything he knows about his skill, he introduces him to his friends and associates, he protects him from all directions. In these five ways, householder’s son, the teacher ministered to as the south by a pupil shows him compassion. Thus the southern direction is made secure, peaceful, and free from dangers.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Slaves in the Buddha’s time seem to have been common-place. They were bonded labourers born into a household rather than slaves traded by human traffickers. Anāthapiṇḍika had a slave woman named Puṇṇā. He liberated her when she was able to persuade the Buddha to remain longer. They were part of the household and provided with food and somewhere to live, but were not entitled to wages. They would have been highly dependent on the good-will of their owner. Employees (*kammakarā*) were hired for a wage and so were free to come and go as they pleased.

### Wife as the West

“In five ways, householder’s son, should a husband minister to his wife as the west. By honouring her (*sammānanāya*); by not disrespecting her (*anavamānāya*);<sup>1</sup> by not being unfaithful to her (*anaticariyāya*); by relinquishing control to her in domestic matters (*issariyavossaggena*); by providing her with ornaments (*alaṅkāraṇuppadānena*).

“In five ways, householder’s son, the wife ministered to as the west by a husband shows him compassion. She performs her work well (*susaṃvihitakammantā*), she treats the members of the household well (*saṅgahitaparijanā*), she is not unfaithful (*anaticārini*), she carefully protects what her husband brings home (*sambhataṅca anurakkhati*), she is skilled (*dakkhā*) and not lazy (*analasā*) in performing all of her duties (*sabbakiccesu*). In these five ways, householder’s son, a wife ministered to as the west by a husband shows him compassion. Thus the western direction is made secure, peaceful, and free from dangers.”

### Friends as the North

“In five ways, householder’s son, should a son of a good family (*kulaputta*) minister to friends and associations as the north. By generosity; by courteous speech; by being helpful; by being impartial; by being true to his word.

“In five ways, householder’s son, the friends and associates ministered to as the north by a son of a good family show him compassion. They protect him when he is heedless, they protect his property when he is heedless, they are a refuge when he afraid, they do not forsake him when he faces adversity, they help his descendants. In these five ways, householder’s son, the friends and associates ministered to as the north by the son of a good family show him compassion. Thus the northern direction is made secure, peaceful, and free from dangers.”

### Employees as the Nadir

“In five ways, householder’s son, should an employer minister to slaves and employees as the nadir. By assigning them work according to their strength; by giving them food and wages; by caring for them when sick; by sharing delicious unexpected treats; by granting them leave at times.

“In five ways, householder’s son, the employees ministered to as the nadir by an employer show him compassion. They rise before him, they sleep after him, they take only what is given, they perform their duties well, they spread his good reputation. In these five ways, householder’s son, the employees ministered to as the nadir by the employer show him compassion. Thus the nadir is made secure, peaceful, and free from dangers.”

<sup>1</sup> He should not treat her like a slave or employee, by beating or threatening her.

### Recluses and Priests as the Zenith

“In five ways, householder’s son, should the son of a good family minister to recluses (*samaṇa*) and priests (*brāhmaṇā*) as the zenith. By kind actions; by kind speech; by kind thoughts; by keeping an open door for them; by providing their material needs.

“In six ways, householder’s son, the recluses and priests ministered to as the zenith by the son of a good family show him compassion. They restrain him from evil, they exhort him to do good, they maintain a compassionate mind towards him, they teach him what he have not heard, they explain what he has heard already, they point out the path to heaven. In these six ways, householder’s son, the recluses and priests ministered to as the zenith by the son of a good family show him compassion. Thus the zenith is made secure, peaceful, and free from dangers.”

Thus said the Blessed One. After the Fortunate One had spoken these words, the Teacher added:–

“Mother and father as the east, teachers as the south,  
Wife and children as the west, friends and associates as the north  
Slaves and employees as the zenith, recluses and priests above.  
These six directions a truly good householder should honour.

“The wise and virtuous man  
who is gentle (*saṅho*) and quick-witted (*paṭibhānavā*),  
Humble (*nivātavutti*) and prudent (*atthaddho*), such a one gains fame.

“Diligent (*utthānako*) and not lazy (*analo*),  
not shaken (*vedhati*) in adversity (*āpadāsu*),  
Constantly employed and intelligent, such a one gains fame.

“Benevolent and friendly, he understands what is said, free from meanness,  
He leads with helpful counsel and well-reasoned advice.

“Generosity and amiable speech, and helping others here,  
Treating others impartially, just as he would treat himself,  
These four benevolent practices in this world are like the yoke of a chariot,

“If these did not exist in the world,  
Parents would not be respected by their children.

“Because they are rightly esteemed by the wise,  
Therefore they reach eminence and are universally praised.”

When this had been said, Singāla the householder’s son said this to the Blessed One: “It is excellent, venerable sir! It is marvellous, venerable sir!

What was overturned has been set upright, what was hidden has been revealed, the right path has been pointed out to one who was lost, a light has been brought into the darkness so that those with eyes can see forms. Thus the Blessed One has explained the Dhamma in various ways. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. May the Blessed One regard me as a lay disciple from today onwards as long as life lasts.”



# Index

## A

addiction (*anuyoga*), 10  
adversity (*āpadāsu*), 17  
all duties (*sabbakiccesu*), 16  
all that exists and will exist  
(*bhūtabhavyānaṃ*), 4  
Almighty (*abhibhū*), 4  
ashamed of (*harāyāmi*), 2

## B

bought by providing water  
(*odapattakīṇi*), 9  
bought with money (*dhanakkītā*), 9

## C

captured wife (*dhajāhaṭā*), 9  
cheats (*vañcanikā*), 11  
compassionate (*anukampaka*), 13  
control in domestic matters  
(*issariyavossaggena*), 16  
Creator (*nimmātā*), 4

## D

dancing (*naccaṃ*), 10  
devotion (*passano*), 2  
diligent (*uṭṭhānako*), 17  
disrespecting her (*anavamānāya*), 16  
drumming (*kumbhathunaṃ*), 10  
drunkards (*pipāsā*), 11

## E

employees (*kammakarā*), 15  
esteeming (*garuṃ karonto*), 7

## F

faith (*saddho*), 2  
father (*pitā*), 4  
female slave (*dāsī*), 9  
female worker (*kammakārī*), 9  
fermented drinks (*meraya*), 9

Fortunate One (*sugato*), 8  
fraudsters (*nekatikā*), 11

## G

gamblers (*dhuttā*), 11  
gentle (*saṃho*), 17  
going to the wives of others (*paradāra-  
gamanañceva*)  
adultery, 8  
good counsel (*atthakhāyī*), 13  
good family (*kulaputta*), 16  
good-hearted (*suhado*), 13

## H

habit of (*anuyoga*), 9  
having dressed (*nivāsetvā*), 7  
heedless (*pamattaṃ*), 13  
heedlessness (*pamādaṭṭhāna*), 9  
helpful (*upakāro*), 13  
honouring (*mānento*), 7  
honouring her (*sammānanāya*), 16  
householder's son (*gahapatiputta*), 8  
humble (*nivātavutti*), 17

## I

indulgence in intoxicants that cause  
heedlessness (*surāmerayamajjap-  
pamādaṭṭhānānuyoge*), 9  
intoxicate (*majja*), 9  
invincible (*anabhibhūto*), 4  
invisible (*anidassanaṃ*), 6

## K

killing living beings (*pāṇātipāto*), 8

## L

libertines (*soṇḍā*), 11  
living together  
by giving clothing (*paṭavāsini*), 9  
by giving property (*bhogavāsini*), 9

having removed the water-pot  
 carrying cloth (*obhatacumbaṭā*), 9  
 through affection (*chandavāsini*), 9  
 Lord (*vasavattī*), 4

## M

maker (*katta*), 4  
 master (*vasī*), 4  
 members of the household  
 (*saṅgahitaparijanā*), 16  
 music (*vāditam*), 10  
 mystic wonder (*pāṭihāriya*), 1  
 of instruction (*anusāsaniṭpāṭihāriyaṃ*),  
 1  
 of mind-reading (*ādesanāpāṭihāriyaṃ*),  
 1  
 of psychic power (*iddhipāṭihāriya*), 1

## N

not lazy (*analasa*), 16, 17  
 not shaken (*vedhati*), 17

## O

Omniscient (*aññadatthudaso*), 4  
 originator (*sajitā*), 4

## P

performs her work well (*susaṃvohita-*  
*kammantā*), 16  
 playing of tabla (*pāṇissaram*), 10  
 priests (*brāhmaṇā*), 17  
 protected  
 by a legal punishment (*saparidaṇḍā*), 8  
 by her brother (*bhāturakkhitā*), 8  
 by her clan (*gottarakkhitā*), 8  
 by her father (*piturakkhitā*), 8  
 by her mother (*māturakkhitā*), 8  
 by her mother and father (*mātāpitu-*  
*rakkhitā*), 8  
 by her relatives (*ñātirakkhitā*), 8  
 by her sister (*bhaginirakkhitā*), 8  
 by the Dhamma (*dhammarakkhitā*), 8

in some other way (*sārakkhā*), 8  
 protects what her husband brings  
 home (*sambhatañca anurakkhati*), 16  
 providing her with ornaments  
 (*alaṅkāranuppadānena*), 16  
 prudent (*atthaddho*), 17  
 psychic power (*iddhi*), 1

## Q

quick-witted (*paṭibhānavā*), 17

## R

recluses (*samaṇa*), 17  
 respecting (*sakkaronto*), 7  
 ruler (*issaro*), 4

## S

same in prosperity and adversity  
 (*samānasukhadukkho*), 13  
 sexual misconduct (*kāmesumicchācāra*),  
 8  
 shun (*jigucchāmi*), 2  
 singing (*gītam*), 10  
 skilled (*dakkhā*), 16  
 slaves (*dasā*), 15  
 spirits (*surā*), 9  
 story-telling (*akkhānaṃ*), 10  
 superhuman (*uttarimanussadhamma*), 1  
 supreme (*seṭṭho*), 4

## T

taking a wrong course  
 through anger (*dosāgatiṃ*), 9  
 through delusion (*mohāgatiṃ*), 9  
 through desire (*chandāgatiṃ*), 9  
 through fear (*bhayāgatiṃ*), 9  
 taking his almsbowl and double-robe  
 (*pattacīvaramādāya*), 7  
 taking what is not given (*adinnādānaṃ*),  
 8  
 Teacher (*satthā*), 8  
 telling lies (*musāvādo*), 8

temporary wife (*muhuttikā*), 9  
 thugs (*sāhasikā*), 11  
 troubled by (*aṭṭiyāmi*), 2

## U

unfaithful (*anaticārini*), 16  
 unfaithful (*anaticariyāya*), 16

## V

venerating (*pūjento*), 7  
 visiting shows (*samajjābhicaraṇa*), 10