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# NAGASENA BHIKSU SUTRA



# NAGASENA BHIKSU SUTRA

VOLUME I



*English Translator*  
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*Nagasena Bhiksu Sutra*  
Translated by Venerable Guang Xing, Ph.D.

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Frontispiece: A typical representation of a standing bodhisattva made of stone from Gandhara during the 1st - 2nd century CE. This region's proximity to Greek-ruled kingdoms allowed an exchange of artistic expression between India and the Hellenistic world.

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《那先比丘經》

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經頭插圖：公元一至二世紀間的犍陀羅藝術菩薩石  
雕立像。犍陀羅國位於印度與希臘的交流區，也展  
現雙方藝術的融合。

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那先比丘經

NAGASENA BHIKSU SUTRA



(Anonymous)

開  
經  
偈

無上甚深微妙法，  
百千萬劫難遭遇，  
我今見聞得受持，  
願解如來真實義。



VERSE FOR COMMENCING THE SUTRA



The unexcelled, most profound, and exquisitely  
wondrous Dharma,

Is difficult to encounter throughout hundreds of  
thousands of millions of *kalpas*.

Since we are now able to see, hear, receive and  
retain it,

May we comprehend the true meaning of the  
Tathagata.

一、那先比丘經卷上

佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園，時諸比丘僧、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷、諸天王、大臣、長者、人民，及事九十六種道者，凡萬餘人，日於佛前聽經。佛自念：人眾日多，身不得安。佛意欲捨人眾，去到閑屏處坐，思惟念道。佛即捨人眾，去入山至校羅叢樹間。其樹有神，佛坐其下，思念清淨之道。



## THE NAGASENA BHIKSU SUTRA<sup>1</sup>

(Based on *Taishō* no. 1670B)<sup>2</sup>



### PART I: THE SECULAR NARRATIVE

#### 1. Introduction<sup>3</sup>

The Buddha once dwelt in the Kingdom of Sravasti, in Jetavana, Anathapindika's Park.<sup>4</sup> At that time all the *bhikṣu sangha*, *bhikṣuṇī sangha*, *upasakas*, *upasikas*, all the kings of heaven, great ministers, wealthy men and ordinary people, and also those who pursue the heretical views of the ninety six doctrines<sup>5</sup> – the total number amounting to more than ten-thousand – came daily to the Buddha to hear the Dharma.

It occurred to the Buddha, “The assembly of men here is becoming greater from day to day, and my body cannot be at ease.” The Buddha wished to forsake the assembly of men and retire to a solitary place, where he could sit down, contemplate, and meditate on the Path. The Buddha then deserted the assembly of men, and entered a mountain called the Jiaoluo<sup>6</sup> forest. These trees were imbued with spirits,<sup>7</sup> and the Buddha sat himself at the foot of one of the trees and meditated on the path of purity.





二、去叢樹不遠，有群象五百餘頭，中有象王賢善，知善惡之事。譬如人狀，象輩眾多，周匝象王邊，中有雄雌，長齒、中齒、少齒者。象王渴欲行飲水，時諸小象走居前入水飲，飲已於水中走戲，撓撈水令濁惡，象王不能得清水飲。象王飢欲行食草，諸小象復走居前食噉美草，走戲蹈踐其上，象王不能得淨草食。

## 2. Nagasena's Previous Life as an Elephant-king

Not far from the forest, there was a group of elephants that numbered more than five hundred. Among them there was an elephant-king who was wise and good, who was able to judge between good and bad, and whose manners resembled those of men. All the elephants used to surround the king, and among them there were males and females, all large-tusked, medium-tusked, and small-tusked.<sup>8</sup>

Whenever the elephant-king was thirsty and wished to go and drink water, all the smaller elephants ran before the king and entered the water to drink. After that, they would play in the water, running about and stirring it up, or by fishing in the water they made it turbid and impure. As a result, the king could not have any pure water to drink. Whenever the king was hungry and wanted to go and eat grass, all the small elephants used to run before him and eat all the beautiful grass before sporting around, running about, jumping, and treading on the grass until the king himself would not have any fresh grass to eat at all.

象王自念：我群眾多患，是諸象及小象子撓水令濁，令草不淨，而返常飲濁水，食足踐之草。象王自念：我欲棄是諸象，去至一屏處快耶。象王即棄群而去，轉行入山，到校羅叢樹間。象王見佛，佛坐樹下，心大歡喜，則前至佛所，低頭屈膝，為佛作禮，却在一面住。佛自念：我棄眾人來在是間，象王亦復棄眾象來到是樹間，其義適同。佛為象王說經言：

The elephant-king thereupon thought to himself, “My companions are too numerous and troublesome. I regret that all the elephants and their young ones stir up water before I drink, making it turbid, or eat the grass before me, making it impure by treading on it. I always have to drink impure water and eat trodden grass. What if I were to abandon all the elephants and retire to a quiet place where I can be happy?”

Thereupon the elephant-king abandoned the assembly, went to the mountains, and came upon the Jiaoluo forest. He saw the Buddha there, sitting at the foot of a tree. Greatly rejoicing in his heart, the elephant-king came before the Buddha, bowed, knelt down, worshipped him, and then retired to one side and remained there.

The Buddha then thought to himself, “I have abandoned my companions and have come here in the forest. The elephant-king has also forsaken his retinue and come here to the same place.” (704a)<sup>9</sup> Thus, we have come here for exactly the same purpose.”

The Buddha then preached the Dharma for the sake of the elephant-king, and said,...

佛於人中最尊，象王於諸象中亦尊。佛言：我心與象王心適相中合，我與象王俱樂是樹間。象王聽經竟，心即開解，曉知佛意，便視佛所徜徉經行處，以鼻取水灑地，以鼻撈草掃地，以足蹈地令平好。象王日朝暮承事。❀

三、如是久後，佛便取無為泥洹道去，象王不知佛處，為周旋行求索，佛不得，啼泣愁憂不樂，不敢食飲。

...“A Buddha is the most honored among men, and the elephant-king is the most honored among the elephants.”

The Buddha said, “My intention<sup>10</sup> is similar to that of yours, the elephant-king; I will be happy being together with the elephant-king in the forest.”

When the elephant-king heard the Dharma, his mind was enlightened and he understood what the Buddha taught. Then he wandered about at the place where the Buddha was.<sup>11</sup> He drew water with his trunk and watered the ground, then he plucked some grass with his trunk and swept the place and he made the ground flat by treading on it. The elephant-king served the Buddha in this way from morning till evening everyday.<sup>12</sup> ❀

### 3. The Attendance by the Elephant-king to the Sutra-recitation

Sometime afterwards, the Buddha took the quiet path of *nirvana*<sup>13</sup> and disappeared. The elephant-king did not know where the Buddha was and therefore he wandered about to look for the Buddha, but without success. Thereupon he wept and cried, and was full of sorrow, unable to enjoy anything; he did not even eat or drink.

時國中有一佛舍在山上，名迦羅洹。中有五百沙門，共止其中。皆已得阿羅漢道。常以月六齋日誦經至明時。象王亦在山上，近於寺邊。象王知有六齋日誦經，至其日，象王常行入寺聽經。諸沙門知象王喜聽經，欲誦經時，須象王來到，乃誦經。象王聽經，徹明不睡，不臥，不動不搖。

四、象王數聞經，承事佛故，久後象王亦以壽終，死便得為人作子，生婆羅門家，不復聞佛經，亦不見沙門。

At that time there was a Buddhist monastery on a mountain in that country. It was called Jialuohuan,<sup>14</sup> and in it lived five hundred *sramanas*, who were all *arhats*. They used to recite sutras throughout the night on the six fast-days each month.<sup>15</sup> The elephant-king was also on the mountain near the monastery.<sup>16</sup> He noticed that there was a recitation of sutras on the six fast-days, and came to the monastery every fast-day in order to hear sutra recitation.

All the *sramanas* knew that the elephant-king was glad to hear the recitation, and waited each time until he arrived before starting. While hearing the recitation of a sutra he would neither sleep nor lie down, neither move nor sway, the whole night.



#### 4. Relation Between Nagasena and Menander in Their Previous Lives

As the elephant-king had often heard the exposition of the sutras and had served the Buddha, when his long life as an elephant-king had come to an end, he was later born as a human. He was born in a Brahmin family and did not hear of the Buddha or of the sutras, nor did he see any *sramana*.

便棄家入深山學婆羅門道，在山上止近比  
 亦有一婆羅門道人，俱在山上，相與往來共  
 為知識。其一人自念：我厭世間，憂苦、老、  
 病死，後當入地獄、餓鬼、畜生、貧窮中，用是故  
 我除頭鬚，被袈裟，作沙門，求度世無為道。其  
 一人自念：我願欲求作國王，得自在，令天下  
 五、人民皆共屬我，隨我教令。❀

兩人共願如是，久後二人各復壽終，得於世  
 間作人。

Thus, he left his family and went into the deep forests of a mountain to learn the path of a *brahman*. There was another hermit *brahman* living in the same forest and the two visited each other and made each other's acquaintance.

One of the two thought to himself, "I am disgusted with the human life, with the district magistrate,<sup>17</sup> with the conditions of sorrow, suffering, old age, sickness and death; after death we are to fall into the hells, or to become a hungry ghost (*preta*), or an animal, or live a poor and miserable life when born as a human. Therefore I will shave my hair and beard, and become a *sramana*, wear a *kasaya*, and seek after the quiet path (*nirvana*), which is the means of saving the world."<sup>18</sup> The other *brahman* also thought to himself, "I wish to be a sovereign, possessed with might and power, and let all the people under heaven follow me and obey my commands and instructions." ❀

##### 5. The Births of Nagasena and Menander According to Their Vows in Previous Lives

Some time after they both made these vows, they died and were reborn in the world as men.

徹沙那六、字象所以屬世為其  
 听門先、其王以賓宿國一人  
 有絕長子亦與縣命王太子前世  
 妙大年名同袈袈父母度世宿  
 之才十五生俱便字無為便命  
 世間六、天竺竺者為陀獵泥字  
 無比、有舅象為那所願被袈袈  
 父字樓漢樓漢、父母便因象  
 眼能徹視耳能

The one who wished to become a sovereign in his former life was born as a crown-prince to a king in a land bordering a sea. His parents<sup>19</sup> named him “Menander.”<sup>20</sup>

The other, who wished to pursue the quiet path of *nirvana*<sup>21</sup> in order to save the world, was born in Sindhu (the ancient name for India), in the district of Kashmir.<sup>22</sup> His parents named him “Tuolie.”<sup>23</sup> He was born wearing a *kasaya*,<sup>24</sup> in consequence of the vow he made in his former life.<sup>25</sup> In his household, (704b) there was an elephant-king born on the same day as him. [Since elephants were called naga in Sindhu],<sup>26</sup> the parents also named their son “Nagasena.”<sup>27</sup> ❀

### 6. Nagasena's Admission into the Sangha

Nagasena grew up and reached fourteen or fifteen years of age. He had a maternal uncle named Rohana<sup>28</sup> who was a *sramana* and possessed exceptional abilities that were unequalled anywhere.<sup>29</sup> He had the ability of seeing distant things<sup>30</sup> and hearing distant sounds...<sup>31</sup>

自 知 所 從 來， 生 行 即 能 飛， 能 出 無 間 入 無 孔，  
自 在 變 化， 無 所 不 作， 天 上 天 下 人 民 及 蜻 飛  
蠕 動 之 類， 心 所 念 樓 漢 皆 預 知 之。 那 先 便 自  
往 到 舅 父 計 自 說 言： 我 意 佛 道， 欲 除 頭 鬚， 被  
袈 娑 作 娑 門， 今 我 當 為 舅 父 作 弟 子， 寧 可 持  
我 作 沙 門 耶？ 樓 漢 知 那 先 宿 命 作 善 有 慧， 甚  
重 哀 之， 因 听 令 作 沙 彌。 那 先 始 作 小 沙 彌， 受  
十 戒， 日 誦 經、 學 問， 思 惟 經 戒， 即 得 四 禪， 悉 知  
諸 經， 獨 未 受 大 沙 門 戒。

and also knew from where he came.<sup>32</sup> From birth, Rohana could fly, he could go out from where there is no slit and enter where there is no gap<sup>33</sup> and could become whatever he liked freely without any difficulty. Rohana also knew the mind or the thought of *devas* in the heavens and that of men on earth, including beings which could fly and which could walk.<sup>34</sup>

Nagasena came to his uncle on his own and told him, “Uncle, it is my intention to follow the Buddha’s Path and I wish to shave my hair and beard, don the *kasaya* robe and become a *sramana*. I want to become your disciple. Uncle, would you accept me as a *sramana*?”<sup>35</sup>

Rohana knew Nagasena’s good deeds in his previous life<sup>36</sup> and his wisdom, and hence took pity on him and admitted him as a *sramanera*. Nagasena, at the beginning, was a novice *sramanera* who observed the ten precepts, recited the sutras daily, and who also learned about and meditated on the Dharma. As a result, he attained the four *dhyanas* and therefore he was able to grasp the essence<sup>37</sup> of the doctrines. The only thing he lacked was the high ordination he had yet to obtain.<sup>38</sup>



於時國山中有佛寺舍名曰和禪。和禪寺中有五百沙門，皆得阿羅漢道。中有第一阿羅漢名頽陂，曰：「能知天上天下來見在之事。」那先年滿二十，因作大沙門，受大沙門戒，便到和禪寺中。至頽陂曰：「所時五百阿羅漢，適以十五日說大沙門戒經在堂上坐。大沙門皆入，那先亦在其中。」眾沙門悉坐，頽陂曰：「悉視坐中諸沙門，心皆是阿羅漢，獨那先未得阿羅漢道。」頽陂曰：「便說譬喻經言。」

Now at that time, there was a Buddhist monastery called Hechan<sup>39</sup> on a mountain in the country, and in this monastery dwelled five hundred *sramanas* who all had attained arhathood. Among them, the leading *arhat* was called Assagutta<sup>40</sup> and knew about things both in heaven and on earth, as well as the past, present and future.

Nagasena was twenty years of age at the time, and in order to get the higher ordination to becoming a *sramana*, he went to Hechan monastery where Assagutta lived. Incidentally, it happened to be the full moon day, and all five hundred *arhats* were sitting in the hall to recite the great *sramana* precept sutra<sup>41</sup> (*pratimoksa*). All great *sramanas* entered into the hall, and Nagasena was also among them.

When all the *sramanas* had sat down (in the hall), Assagutta surveyed the whole assembly and noticed that all *sramanas* in the hall were *arhats* except Nagasena.

Thereupon Assagutta gave a discourse on the *Sutra of Parables*<sup>42</sup> and said,...



若人折米，米正白，中有黑米，即剔不好。今我  
 坐中，皆清白，獨那先為黑米，得阿羅漢道。那  
 先聞頽陂曰：「說經如是，大愁，便起為五百沙  
 門，作禮已，即出去。那先自念：我不宜在是座  
 中坐，我亦未得脫，其餘沙門，皆已度脫，譬  
 若眾師子，中有狐狗，今我亦如是。我從今不  
 得道者，不復入眾中坐也。頽陂曰：「汝今得阿  
 羅漢，呼那先著前，以手摩那先頭。汝今得阿  
 漢，不久勿愁憂也。頽陂曰：「便欲坐止。那先  
 七、那先復有一師，年八十餘，字迦惟曰。

“Just like people judging rice, it is considered to be bad rice even if there is one grain of black rice among the white ones. Now, all of us are white and pure, only Nagasena is black and has not attained arhathood yet.”

On hearing these words of Assagutta, Nagasena was greatly worried, got up and bowed down towards the five hundred *sramanas*, and then went out. He thought to himself, “It is not appropriate for me to sit among them, I have not crossed over (the stream of *samsara*), but all others have crossed over. It is like the jackal among the lions. So am I now. From now on, I will not sit among them unless I have attained the Path (of arhathood).”<sup>43</sup>

Knowing<sup>44</sup> the thoughts of Nagasena, Assagutta called him to come forward and touched his head with his hand saying, “Don’t worry, before long you will attain arhathood.” (704c) So Assagutta asked Nagasena to stay.<sup>45</sup> ❀

### 7. His Conversion

Again Nagasena had another teacher named Kavigupta<sup>46</sup> whose age was over eighty.

其縣中有一優婆塞大賢善，常日飯迦，惟曰：弟子。那先至為師，持應器，行取飯具。師令那先口含水，行到優婆塞家，取飯具。優婆塞見那先年少端正，行與人絕異，宿知有慧，預聞有明志之名，能說經道。優婆塞見那先入其舍中，便即起立，前為作禮，却又手言：「我飯諸沙門日久，未嘗有為我說經者。今從我那先求哀願，為我說經，解我愚癡。那先即自念：我受師教，令我口含水不得語。我今吐水者，為犯師戒，如是當云何。」

There was an *upasaka*<sup>47</sup> in the county who was wise and good and who used to give alms to Kavigupta and his disciples daily. One day, Nagasena, taking the bowl, went to collect the alms, but his teacher asked him to fill his mouth with water, then to go to take the alms from the *upasaka*'s house.

The *upasaka* saw the young Nagasena who was handsome and whose behavior was far above the common people. He had heard of his reputation and knew that he was of sharp intelligence and had a distinct ambition as well as the ability of expounding the Dharma. The *upasaka* upon seeing Nagasena coming into his house, got up and bowed down with crossed hands, saying, "I have been offering alms to the *sramanas*<sup>48</sup> for a long time, and they usually come and preach me the Dharma.<sup>49</sup> Today I beg you, Venerable Nagasena, please expound the Dharma to me and dispel my doubts."

Nagasena, thereupon, thought to himself, "My teacher instructed me not to preach by filling my mouth with water. Now, if I spit out the water to preach, it would be against my teacher's instructions. What should I do?"

那先念優婆塞亦高才有志，我為其說經，想即得道。那先便吐水而坐，即為說經。人布施作善奉行經戒，今世安隱，後世便生天上，下生人中，即當明慧富貴，後不復入地獄餓鬼畜生中。人不奉行經戒者，於今世苦，後世復墮三惡道中，無有出時。優婆塞聞經心即歡喜。那先知優婆塞心歡喜，便復說深經言：

Then Nagasena thought again, “The *upasaka* is of intelligence and noble aspiration. If I preach the Dharma to him, he might enter the Path. Thereupon, Nagasena spat out the water, sat down and gave a talk on the Dharma:

“If a person takes delights in giving and doing good deeds and also observes moral precepts, he will live happily now and will be reborn in the heavens after death. He will be a person of wisdom, intelligence<sup>50</sup> and wealth, and he will be reborn in the human world on descending from heaven. And thereafter, he will not be reborn in hell, in the kingdom of hungry ghosts or in the animal kingdom.<sup>51</sup> But if a person does not observe the dharma and precepts, he would suffer now in this world and in the next life, and will fall into the three evil realms<sup>52</sup> without any opportunity of getting out.”<sup>53</sup>

Nagasena knew that having heard the Dharma, the *upasaka* was delighted in the heart. Therefore he again preached the profound teaching (of the Buddha):<sup>54</sup>

世間萬物皆當過去，無有常在者。萬物過去皆苦，世間人身亦如是。世間人皆言：是我身過我許是，皆不得自在。泥洹道者，最樂泥洹者，不生不老，不病不死，不憂不慮，諸惡勤苦，皆悉消滅。那先說經已，優婆塞即得第一須陀洹道。那先亦自得須陀洹道。優婆塞大歡喜，便為那先好美飯。那先語優婆塞：先取具著師鉢中。那先飯竟，澡漱訖畢，持飯具還與師。

“Nothing in the world is permanent (anicca), and all will pass away. Therefore, there is suffering (dukkha) when everything passes away or comes to an end. The physical bodies of people are the same. People in the world agree and say that ‘My body will pass away, but my Self (pudgala) is going to (remain or continue).’<sup>55</sup> Therefore they could not attain freedom, the liberated Path of nirvana. This nirvana is the ultimate happiness without birth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, grief, and all evils and sufferings are eliminated.”<sup>56</sup>

After Nagasena had preached the Dharma, the *upasaka* attained the first stage of the Path which is called the *srotapanna*, and Nagasena himself too, had attained the Path of *srotapanna*. The *upasaka* was overjoyed and served Nagasena with excellent and delicious food. Nagasena then told the *upasaka* that the teacher’s bowl should be filled with food first. After Nagasena had his meal and washed his mouth and hands, he took his teacher’s bowl and returned to the monastery.

師見飯具言：若今日持飯具來大好，已犯眾人約，當逐出汝。那先愁不樂，師言：會眾比丘僧眾，比丘僧悉會坐，師言：那先犯我曹眾人約來，當共逐出，不得止眾中也。頰陂曰：說譬喻言：如人持一箭射兩準，如是曹人不應逐出也。那先自說得道，亦令優婆塞得道，不應逐出。那先師迦維曰言：正使一箭中百準，會為眾人約，不得留止。餘人悉不能如那先得道，當已絕後。

His teacher saw the delicious food and said, “Today you have brought good food, you have violated the agreement<sup>57</sup> of our people, and therefore you should be expelled (from the *sangha*).”<sup>58</sup> Nagasena was not happy and greatly worried about it. The teacher told Nagasena to meet all the *bhiksus* of the temple in the assembly. After all *bhiksus* had assembled, his teacher said, “Nagasena has violated our agreement, we should expel him (705a) and ask him not to stay among us.”

Assagutta gave a discourse on the *Sutra of Parables*<sup>59</sup> and said, “It is like a person who has shot two targets with one arrow. Such a person should not be expelled. Nagasena has preached (the Dharma) and as a result, he has attained the Path (of *srotapanna*) and the *upasaka* has also attained the Path (of *srotapanna*). Therefore such a person should not be expelled.”

Then Nagasena’s teacher, Kavigupta said, “Even if Nagasena has shot a hundred targets with one arrow, he has still violated our agreement, we should not allow him to stay in the *sangha*. If all others cannot attain the Path like Nagasena, then there is no future.

不逐出那先者，餘人復效無以却後。眾坐中皆默然，隨師教即逐出那先。那先便以頭面著師足，起遍為眾比丘僧作禮。❀

八、禮竟，便去入深山中，坐樹下，晝夜精進，念道不懈，便自成得阿羅漢道，能飛行，亦能眼徹視耳徹聽，亦能知他人心中所念，自知前世所從來生得阿羅漢已，便即來還入愁禪寺中，諸眾比丘僧中叩頭求哀悔過，愁禪諸比丘僧，諸比丘僧即聽之。那先作禮竟，便出去。❀

If Nagasena is not expelled, we cannot stop others who would imitate him in the future.”<sup>60</sup>

The monks in the assembly were silent and Nagasena was expelled according to his teacher’s instruction. Then Nagasena prostrated before his teacher’s feet and worshipped him, then paid respect to the *bhiksu sangha*. ❀

### 8. His Attainment of Arhathood

After paying his respects, Nagasena departed and went into a mountain. He sat down at the foot of a tree and exerted himself by meditating on the Path day and night diligently without slacking. Soon he attained the Path of arhathood. Thereafter, he could fly, gained clairaudience and clairvoyance, and also could read the thoughts of others and knew his own former lives.

After Nagasena had attained arhathood, he returned to Hechan monastery and came before the *sangha* confessing his offence,<sup>61</sup> and asked for rehabilitation. The *bhiksu sangha* in the monastery accepted his request. Then Nagasena paid his respects and departed. ❀

九、那先轉行入諸郡縣街曲里巷為人說經戒，  
 教人為善。中有受戒者，阿那含道者，中有  
 中得斯陀含道者，第一四天王，第二有  
 作沙門得阿羅漢道者。第一四天王，第二有  
 利天帝釋第七梵天王皆來到那先，作禮，  
 以頭面著足却坐。那先皆為諸人說經，名  
 徹聞四天。那先所行處，諸人民鬼神龍見  
 十、那先無不歡喜者，皆得其福。

那先便轉到天竺舍竭國，止泄坻迦寺中。

## 9. His Preaching Activities

Nagasena went on a preaching tour from village to village, from town to town exhorting people to perform meritorious deeds. Among them some people received the five precepts, some attained the stage of *srotapanna*, some attained the stage of *sakrdagamin*, some attained the stage of *anagamin* and some became monks and attained arhathood.

The four heavenly kings of the first heaven,<sup>62</sup> Sakra of the second Tusita heaven and Brahman of the seventh heaven all came before Nagasena and paid him respects with their hands touching his feet, then sat down beside him. Nagasena preached the Dharma to them all. So Nagasena's name became well known in the four heavens. Wherever Nagasena went, deities, human beings, spirits, serpents, etc., welcomed him. They were happy to see him and also obtained merits. ❀

## 10. King Menander's Learning

Nagasena then came to the country of Sagala<sup>63</sup> in Sindhu, and stayed in Sankheyya<sup>64</sup> monastery.



有前世故知識一人，在海邊作國王。太子名彌蘭，彌蘭少，好喜讀經，學異道，悉知異道經法，難異道人，無有能勝者。彌蘭父王壽終，彌蘭即立為國王。王問左右邊臣言：「國中道人及人民，誰能與我共難經道者？」邊臣白王言：「有學佛道者，人呼為沙門，其人智慧博達，能與大王共難經道。」  
 十一、今在北方大秦國，名舍竭，古王之宮。國中  
 外安隱，人民皆善。

There, Nagasena met an acquaintance from his former life called Menander, who was a prince in a country near the sea.

Ever since he was a child, Menander delighted in reading sutras and learning the heretical teachings. Therefore he knew all the heretical teachings. He liked to discuss them with heretical teachers and no one could beat him in argument. When the father of Menander died of a natural death, Menander was crowned king.

Menander asked his ministers: "Are there any religious men<sup>65</sup> who are able to hold discussions with me on religious matters in the country?"

The ministers replied, "Yes, there is a person who has learned the doctrines of the Buddha. People called him a *sramana*. This person is wise and erudite and he would be able to discuss religious doctrines with the king." ❀

### 11. Description of Sagala

{In the north of Yonaka<sup>66</sup> country, (705b) there was a kingdom called Sagala, a citadel of ancient kings. The country enjoyed peace within its border sand in relation with its neighbors<sup>67</sup> and its people were good and honest.



其城四方，皆復道行，諸城門皆彫文刻鏤，宮中婦女，各有處所，諸街市里，羅列成行，官道廣大，列肆成行，象馬車步，男女熾盛，乘門道人，親戚工師，細民及諸小國，皆多高明，人民被服，五色焜煌，婦女傅白，皆著珠環，國土高燥，珍寶眾多，四方賈客，賣買皆以金錢，五穀豐賤，家有儲畜，市邊羅賣，諸美羹飯，飢即得食，渴飲蒲萄雜酒，樂不可言，其國王字彌蘭，以正法治國。

The city was surrounded on all four sides by roads. The gates of the citadel were adorned with sculptures and engravings.

The ladies in the palace each had a special apartment. The streets and markets were aligned in rows. Roads and thoroughfares were large, with shops on both sides. The place was prosperous and crowded with elephants, horses, chariots, infantry, gentlemen, ladies, wealthy people,<sup>68</sup> *brahmans*, religious people, workers, teachers, and ordinary people.<sup>69</sup> People in all the smaller kingdoms were all wise and noble.

People were dressed in dazzling colors. The women and girls wore white clothes and they adorned themselves with jewels.<sup>70</sup> The land was high, dry and rich in precious stones. Traders from all four directions came to trade and paid in gold coins, the five kinds of crops were plentiful and even the modest families had savings. Stalls near the markets were selling pastries and food to satisfy the hungry and grape juice and various sorts of wine quenched all kinds of thirst.<sup>71</sup> All were enjoying happiness beyond description.<sup>72</sup>

The king of this country was called Menander who ruled the country in accordance...

彌蘭者高才有智，明世經道，能難去來見在  
 之事，明於官事戰鬥之術，智謀無不通達。  
 十二、時王出城遊戲，諸兵眾屯繞外。其王心自貢  
 高，我為王，能答九十六種經道。人所問不窮，  
 人心適發，便豫知所言。王語諸傍臣曰：尚早  
 入城，亦無所作，是問寧有明經道人沙門，能  
 與我共難經說道者無？王傍臣名沾彌利望  
 群，沾彌利望群白王言：

...with righteousness (Dharma). King Menander was learned and wise and knew the teachings of all religions in the world. Therefore he was capable of discussing puzzling questions concerning the past, future and present.<sup>73</sup> He was an expert in administrative works and arts of warfare.<sup>74</sup> As far as strategies were concerned, he had mastered them all.<sup>75}</sup><sup>76</sup> ❀

## 12. Discussion Between Ayupala and King Menander

At that time, the king was playing games outside the capital, and his fourfold army was camped outside. The king was proud and thought to himself, “I am the king<sup>77</sup> and know the heretical doctrines of ninety-six varieties, whomsoever asks whatsoever questions, I could guess the meaning of the words scarcely uttered.”

The king said to his minister beside him, “The day is yet young, it would be no use getting back so early.<sup>78</sup> Is there any learned religious teacher or *sramana*, who would be able to discuss doctrines with me?”

The ministers named Devamantiya and Mankura,<sup>79</sup> who were beside the king, said,...

然有沙門字野耆羅，大明經道，能與王共難  
 經說道。王便勅沾彌利望群，行往請來。沾彌  
 利望群即行請野耆羅言：「大王欲見大師。野  
 耆羅言：「大善，王欲相見者，當自來耳。我不往  
 也。沾彌利還白王如是，王即乘車與五百騎  
 共往到寺中，王與野耆羅相見，前問訊已便  
 就坐，五百騎從悉皆亦坐。王即問野耆羅言：「  
 卿用何故棄家捐妻子剃頭鬚，被袈裟作沙  
 門乎，卿所求何等道？」野耆羅報王：「我曹學佛  
 道，行忠政。」

...“There is a *sramana* called Ayupala<sup>80</sup> with profound learning in the doctrines, he would be able to discuss religious doctrines with Your Excellence.” So the king asked the ministers Devamantiya and Mankura to invite him.

Devamantiya and Mankura went to invite the monk and said to him, “The king wishes to meet you.”

Ayupala said, “Very good, if the king wants to meet me, he should come himself. I will not go.”

Devamantiya and Mankura went back and told the king what happened. The king, attended by the five hundred cavalymen, mounted his royal chariot and proceeded to the monastery<sup>81</sup> where Ayupala lived. He exchanged greetings and compliments of friendship and courtesy with Ayupala, and took his seat. The five hundred cavalymen also took their seats.

The king asked Ayupala, “For what purpose, Ayupala, have you renounced the world, after abandoning your wife and children, shaving your hair and beard, donning the *kasaya* robe and becoming a *sramana*? What kind of path are you seeking?”

Ayupala replied to the king, “We study the Buddha’s teaching and practice righteousness<sup>82</sup>...”

於今世得其福，後世亦得其福用，是故我除  
 頭鬚被袈裟作沙門。王問野耆羅言：「有人白  
 衣有妻子，於家有妻子，行忠政，於今世得其  
 福不？後世亦得其福不？野耆羅言：「白衣於家  
 有妻子，有行忠政，於今世得福，於後世亦得  
 其福。」王言：「白衣於家有妻子，有行忠政，於今  
 世後世同得其福，卿無故而棄妻子，除頭鬚  
 被袈裟作沙門為野耆羅，便默然，無以報王。  
 傍臣白言：「是沙門大明健有智，迫促未及說  
 耳。」王傍臣舉手言：

...so we obtain happiness in this life as well as in the next life. Thus, we have shaved our hair and beard and become *sramanas* by donning the *kasaya* robes.”

“Is there any layman,” the king asked Ayupala, “who has wife and children and lives in accordance with righteousness, who could obtain happiness now here (705c) and hereafter?”

“Yes, any layman who has a wife and children and lives in accordance with righteousness, could also obtain happiness now here and hereafter.”

Then the king said, “If a layman who has a wife and children and lives in accordance with righteousness can also obtain happiness now here and hereafter, then what is the use of renouncing the world, Ayupala, having to abandon your wife and children, shave your hair and beard to become a *sramana* by donning the *kasaya* robe?”

Ayupala was silent and had not a word to say in reply to the king. Some ministers said, “This *sramana* is of great learning and wisdom, it is because of lack of time that he could not make rejoinder.” Therefore the king’s men raised their hands and cried,...

王得勝，王得勝。野羅便默然受負。王即左  
 右顧視諸優婆塞，亦難。慚者，獨復有明健沙  
 門，能與我相難者耳。王語沾彌利寧，復有明  
 慧沙門，能與共難經說道者。❀ 彌利寧復有明  
 十三、無時那先者，諸沙門師，常與諸沙門俱入  
 諸沙門，皆使說經。那先時，皆知諸經要難，能  
 說十二部經，說經而種種別異，章斷句解，已  
 知泥洹之道，無有能窮者，無有能得勝者，能  
 解諸疑，能明思者。所言智如江海。

...“The king is the winner, the king is the winner.” Ayupala admitted defeat by remaining silent.<sup>83</sup>

The king looked around to the *upasakas* and saw that there was no expression of shame on the faces of the *upasakas*. It occurred to the king himself, “These *upasakas* have no expression of shame on their faces. Is there another learned *sramana* who would be able to discuss the doctrine with me?”

So the king asked Devamantiya, “Is there any *sramana* who would be able to discuss the doctrine and the Path with me?” ❀

### 13. Nagasena’s Learning in the Dharma

At that time, Nagasena was the teacher of a group of *sramanas*, and always travelled together with them and preached to them at their request.

Nagasena knew the essence and difficulties of the sutras and was clever in explaining the twelve divisions<sup>84</sup> of the scripture. He was an expert in resolving the difficulties (in the scriptures) by making out chapters and sentences<sup>85</sup> and knew the Path to *nirvana*. No one could refute what he said and no one excelled him. He could expel all doubts and enlighten the speculators.<sup>86</sup> His wisdom was like that of an ocean,...

能伏九十六種道，為佛四輩弟子所敬，為諸  
 智者所歸仰，常以經道教授人。❀  
 十四、那先來到舍竭國，其所相隨弟子皆復高明，  
 那先如猛師子，沾彌利白王，有異沙門，字那  
 先，智慧深妙，明諸經要，能解諸疑，無所不通，  
 能與王共難經道。王問沾彌利審：能與我共  
 難經道不？沾彌利應：唯然，能與王共難經道。  
 尚能與第七梵天共難經道，何況於人王。即  
 勅沾彌利便行請那先來。

...and he could defeat the heretics of ninety-six varieties; he was well respected by the fourfold disciples (monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen) of the Buddha; a place of refuge and object of respect for wise men.<sup>87</sup> Nagasena often preached the doctrines and instructed people. ❀

#### 14. Menander's Invitation to Nagasena

Nagasena came to the country of Sagala with a great company of disciples who were also learned and wise. Nagasena was like a fierce lion (among his followers). Devamantiya told the king, "There is an extraordinary *sramana*, named Nagasena, who has a profound wisdom and knows the essence of all the sutras, and is also able to remove all doubts, nothing is not known to him. He will be able to discuss the doctrine with the king."

The king said to Devamantiya, "Examine whether he could discuss the doctrine with me?"

"Yes, of course, he could discuss the doctrine with the king" said Devamantiya, "He could even discuss the Dharma with the great Brahman of the seventh heaven, how much more than with a king of human beings."

He sent Devamantiya to invite Nagasena.

異，是那先即到前相問訊語言，竟，是，那先，到，前，相，問，訊，語，言，行，步，與，眾，人，絕，者，來，沾，彌，利，因，指，示，王，即，大，歡，喜，正，是，那，先，者，在，外，那，先，既，至，王，問，沾，彌，利，何，所，是，那，先，者，我，心，惶，惶，不，安，也，沾，彌，利，王，言，那，先，已，來，今，日，見，那，先，大，座，中，大，多，未，嘗，自，覺，恐，怖，如，人，眾，大，陰，入，大，座，中，大，多，未，嘗，自，覺，恐，怖，如，王，遙，見，那，先，是，那，先，中，被，服，行，步，與，人，絕，異，先，相，見，那，先，在，眾，人，中，說，言，我，前，後，所，見，先，即，與，諸，弟，子，相，隨，到，王，所，大，王，欲，相，見，那，沾，彌，利，即，往，到，那，先，所，白，言：大王，欲，相，見，那

Devamantiya went to where Nagasena dwelled and said, “The king, His Majesty, wants to meet you.” Nagasena accepted the invitation, and accompanied by his disciples,<sup>88</sup> went to the palace of the king.

Though the king had never seen Nagasena, yet when Nagasena came on foot with the other *sramanas*, his manner was quite different from the others, and the king knew he was Nagasena. The king said to himself, “I have seen so many people in the past, and I have been to assemblies of high ranking people many times, and I had never felt (706a) fear. Today I see Nagasena, (and I feel fear). Nagasena will certainly defeat me, because I am not as great as Nagasena,<sup>89</sup> my mind is filled with trepidation and perplexity and I feel uneasy.”

Then Devamantiya told the king, “Nagasena has already arrived. Now he is waiting outside.” The king asked Devamantiya which one was Nagasena. Devamantiya pointed out Nagasena to the king. The king greatly rejoiced saying, “It is exactly as I thought, that person is Nagasena.”

The king saw Nagasena wearing a robe, on foot, but with an extraordinary manner. Nagasena came forward and exchanged greetings and complements of friendship.<sup>90</sup>



王便問那先：「卿字何等？」那先言：「父母字我為  
 那先，便呼我為那先。有時父母呼我為維先，  
 有時父母呼我為首羅先，有時父母呼我為維  
 迦先用是故，人皆識知我。世間人皆有是字  
 耳。王問那先：「誰為那先者？」王復問：「頭為那  
 先耶？」那先言：「頭不為那先也。」  
 一、那先比丘經卷下  
 有所信最為大，泥洹道者最為大快。富人  
 言：人安隱最為大，利人知厭足最為大。富人  
 王便大歡喜，因共對坐。那先語王言：佛經說

The king was delighted and sat down opposite Nagasena.

Nagasena told the king, “*The Buddha’s doctrine proclaims: ‘Peace and security are the highest benefit, contentment is the highest wealth, faith is the highest blessing and nirvana is the highest happiness.’*”<sup>91</sup> ❀

## PART II: DIALOGUES

### 1. The Person and His Name

Then the king asked Nagasena, “Revered Sir, what is your name?” Nagasena replied, “My parents gave me the name Nagasena and called me Nagasena. Sometimes they called me Sihasena, sometimes they called me Surasena,<sup>92</sup> sometimes they called me Virasena. It is by all these names that people come to recognize me. People in the world are concerned with names only.”

The king asked, “Who is Nagasena?” He asked further, “Is the head Nagasena?”

“No,” answered Nagasena, “the head is not Nagasena.”



王復問：「眼耳鼻口為那先耶？」  
那先言：「不為那先。」  
王復問：「舌為那先耶？」  
那先言：「不為那先。」  
王復問：「心為那先耶？」  
那先言：「不為那先。」  
王復問：「肝、肺、心、脾、脈、腸、胃、那先耶？」  
那先言：「不為那先。」  
王復問：「色、苦、樂、善、惡、身、心、合是五事，寧為那先耶？」

“Is the eye, ear, nose, or tongue Nagasena?” asked the king.

“No,” answered Nagasena, “the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue – all of them – are not Nagasena.”

“Is the neck, nape, shoulder, arm, leg, or hand Nagasena?” asked the king.

“No, none of them is Nagasena,” answered Nagasena.

“Is the thigh or foot Nagasena?” asked the king.

“No, neither of them is Nagasena.”

“Is form<sup>93</sup> Nagasena?”

“No, it is not Nagasena.”

“Is feeling<sup>94</sup> Nagasena?”

“No, it is not Nagasena.”

“Is perception<sup>95</sup> Nagasena?”

“No, it is not Nagasena.”

“Is volition<sup>96</sup> Nagasena?”

“No, it is not Nagasena.”

“Are the liver, lungs, heart, spleen, arteries, intestines or stomach Nagasena?”

“No, none of them is Nagasena.”

“Is the combination of the five – form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness – Nagasena?”<sup>97</sup>

那先言：不為那先。王復問：假使無顏色、苦樂、善惡、身心，無是五事，寧為那先耶？那先言：不為那先。王復問：聲響、喘息為那先耶？那先言：不為那先。王復問：何所為那先者？那先問：王言：名車何所為車者？軸為車耶？王言：軸不為車。那先言：輞為車耶？王言：輞不為車。那先言：輻為車耶？王言：輻不為車。那先言：轆為車耶？王言：轆不為車。那先言：轆為車耶？王言：轆不為車。那先言：輗為車耶？王言：輗不為車。那先言：輗為車耶？王言：輗不為車。那先言：輗為車耶？王言：輗不為車。

“No, the combination of the five is not Nagasena either.”

“But is the non-coming together of the five things five – form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness – Nagasena?”

“No, Great King.”

“Then, is sound or breath Nagasena?”

And he still answered No.

“But then what is Nagasena?” asked the king.

Then Nagasena asked about the name of carriage, “What is a carriage? Is it the axle the carriage?”

“The axle is not the carriage,” the king said.

“Is the rim the carriage?” (706b) Nagasena asked.

“The rim is not the carriage,” the king said.

“Is the spoke the carriage?” Nagasena asked.

“The spoke is not the carriage,” the king said.

“Is the hub the carriage?” Nagasena asked.

“The hub is not the carriage,” the king said.

“Is the shaft the carriage?” Nagasena asked.

“The shaft is not the carriage,” the king said.

“Is the yoke the carriage?” Nagasena asked.

“The yoke is not the carriage,” the king said.



合聚頭面耳鼻口頸項肩臂骨肉手足肝肺  
心脾腎腸胃顏色聲響喘息苦樂善惡合聚  
二、名為人。王言善哉善哉。❀

王復問：那先能與我共難經說道不？那先言：  
如使王持智慧與我相問者，能相難。王持驕  
貴者，意不能相難。王問那先言：智者諸何等  
類？那先言：智者談極詰語，相解語，相上語，相  
下語，有勝有負，正語不正語，自知是非是。

It is on account of the coming together of all of those things: the head, the face, the ears, the mouth, the neck, the nape, the shoulder, the arms, the bones, the flesh, the hands, the feet, the livers, the lungs, the heart, the spleen, the kidney, the intestines, the stomach, the complexion, the voice, the breath, the feeling, the inclination, that the general term is understood. The designation in common usage is ‘person’.”

“Excellent, excellent, Nagasena.”<sup>99</sup> ❀

## 2. Methods of Discussion

The king asked, “Venerable Nagasena, will you discuss the doctrine with me?”

Nagasena said, “If your majesty would discuss with me as a wise man,<sup>100</sup> yes, I can. But if your majesty would discuss with me as a king,<sup>101</sup> no, I cannot.”

“What does it mean to ‘discuss as a wise man’?”

When the wise converse, they question one another, solve problems together, agree on and turn down a point together. Winners or losers, they know right and wrong, and they themselves know what is right and what is wrong.

為最智。智者不用作瞋怒。智者如是。王復問  
 那先言。王者語何等類。那先言。王者語自放  
 恣。有違戾不如王語者。王即強誅罰之。王者  
 語如是。王言。願用智者語。不用王者語。莫復  
 持對王者意。與我語。與我語。當如與諸沙門  
 語。當如與諸弟子語。當如與諸優婆塞語。當  
 以與眾沙門給使者語。無得懷恐怖極正心。  
 三、當相開悟。那先言。大善。

王言。我欲有所問。那先言。王便問。

That is the highest wisdom.<sup>102</sup> The wise would never have anger or hate. Thus do wise men discuss.”

“And how do kings debate?” asked the king.

“When a king, your majesty, discusses a matter, he speaks in an unbridled fashion. He advances a point and if anyone disagrees with him and is unwilling to do as the king wishes, then the king will punish or even kill that person. Thus your majesty, do kings discuss.”<sup>103</sup>

Then the king said, “I would like to talk as a wise man (*pandit*), not as a king. You should not talk to me as you would talk to a king, you should talk to me as if you are talking to those *sramanas*, your disciples, those *upasakas*, or even the attendants of those *sramanas*. You should also not have fear and be calm in your mind. Our talk should aim at enlightening each other.”

“Excellent, your majesty,” said Nagasena. ❀

### 3. Nagasena’s Wit in Answering Questions

“Revered sir, I have a question to ask you.” said the king.

“Please ask it, Sire,” said Nagasena.

王言：我已問。那先言：我已答。王言：答我何等語。那先言：王亦問我何等語。王言：我無所問。那先言：無所答。王內自思惟念：是沙門大高明慧，我甫始當多有所問。王意自念：日欲冥，當云何。明日，當請那先歸於宮中，善相難問。王告沾彌利語那先：今日迫冥，明日相請，歸於宮中，善相難問。沾彌利望群即白那先言：日欲冥，王當還宮，明日王欲請那先。那先言：大善。王即騎馬還宮。

“I have asked it already, your reverence.”

“I have already answered it.”

“What was your answer?” (706c)

“O King, what was your question?”

“I have asked nothing.”

“I made no reply.”

Then the king thought to himself, “This *sramana* is of great wisdom and intelligence. I have just started, and have a number of points on which to question him.” Again the king thought to himself, “However, the sun will soon set. It would be better to carry on the discussion tomorrow. I shall invite Nagasena to the palace<sup>104</sup> in order to have a thorough discussion.”

Then the king told Devamantiya to tell Nagasena that the sun is setting and the king would like to invite him to come to his palace tomorrow and have a good discussion. Devamantiya told Nagasena accordingly, “It is time for the king to go back to the palace, and the king wants to invite Your Reverence, Nagasena to the palace tomorrow.”

Nagasena said, “Very good.” And so saying, the king mounted his horse and returned to the palace. Whilst riding home he muttered, “Nagasena, Nagasena.”

於馬上，王續念那先字意，念欲言那先。於  
念至明日，明日沾彌利望群及傍臣白言：「那  
審當請那先，不王言當請之。沾彌利望群言：「  
請者當使與幾沙門俱來。王名慳，慳白王言：「  
幾沙門俱來耳。王主藏者名慳，慳白王言：「  
那先與沙門俱來耳。王主藏者名慳，慳白王言：「  
與沙門俱來耳。王主藏者名慳，慳白王言：「  
沙門俱來耳。王主藏者名慳，慳白王言：「  
門俱來耳。王主藏者名慳，慳白王言：「  
耳。王聞慳復白王：「令那先與沙門俱來耳。  
輩，汝字為慳，不望汝強惜王物，所汝真慳無

Thus he had Nagasena in his mind until the next morning.

The next day, Devamantiya and other ministers asked the king, “Should we invite His Reverence Nagasena to come today?”

“Yes, invite him.” said the king.

Then Devamantiya asked, “How many *sramanas* should we invite Nagasena to bring along with him?”

“As many *sramanas* as he likes,” replied the king.

The treasurer of the king named Sabbadinna said, “Invite him to bring ten *sramanas*.” But the king repeated, “Let him come with as many as he likes.” Sabbadinna said once again, “Let him come with ten *sramanas*.” The king repeated, “Let him come with as many as he likes.” But Sabbadinna also repeated again, “Let him come with ten *sramanas*.”

When the king heard Sabbadinna’s words for the third time, the king scolded him severely with anger and said, “You are really stingy. Your name is Sabbadinna (lit: stingy),<sup>105</sup> and it is not inappropriate. If you begrudge the imperial goods,...







那先問：「彌利群言：『我利望群。』」  
那先問：「彌利群言：『我利望群。』」  
彌利群言：『我利望群。』  
先問：「彌利群言：『我利望群。』」  
人寧復先言：『如人吹氣，一出，復入。』  
死也。那先言：『如人吹氣，一出，復入。』  
人持鍛金笛，吹火，氣一出，復入。如人吹氣，  
沾彌利群言：『不復入。』  
一出，復入。如人吹氣，沾彌利群言：『不復入。』  
入。那先言：『同氣出入，不復入。』  
死。那先言：『同氣出入，不復入。』  
我曹解說之。那先言：『喘息之間，我皆身中事。願為不還氣。』

Nagasena asked, “Devamantiya and Mankura, what do you think Nagasena is?” (707a)

“The inner breath which comes in and goes out, that we suppose is Nagasena.”

“But if that breath having gone forth should not return, or having returned and would not go forth, would the person be alive?”

“If the breath goes out and does not come back, the person would certainly die.”

“It is just like a person who blows the trumpet, once when the breath goes out, it does not return. Or just like a person that uses the goldsmith’s pipes to blow the fire, does his breath return to him again?”

“No, Sir, it does not.”

“Again it is like a person who blows the ground with a horn, does the breath return to him again?”<sup>107</sup>

“No Sir.”

“The same breath goes out and does not return, then why does he not die?” asked Nagasena.

“We are not capable of understanding such a matter as the breath going in and out, please Sir, explain this matter to us.” said Devamantiya and Mankura.

“These inhalations and exhalations are merely constituent powers of the bodily frame.”<sup>108</sup>

如人心有所念者，舌為之言，是為舌事，意有所疑，心念之是為心事，各有所主，分別視之，皆空無有那先也。沾彌利望群，心即開解，便受五戒為優婆塞。那先便前入宮，到王所上殿。王即為那先作禮而却，那先即坐，八十沙門皆共坐。王極作美飯食，王手自著那先前，飯眾沙門。飯食已竟，澡手畢訖，王即賜諸沙門人一張褻袈裟、革屨各一量，賜那先野憩。羅各三領袈裟，各一量革屨。王語那先野憩。羅言：留十人共止，遣餘人令去。

It is just like when a person thinks over some matter and puts the thoughts into words, it becomes verbal matter or language. When a person has some doubts in his mind and thinks it over, then it become a mind object or mind matter.<sup>109</sup> So each part of the body has its own function. But when we analyze or examine them separately, they are all changing (from moment to moment), any one of them cannot be considered Nagasena.”

(On hearing these words), Devamantiya and Mankura became enlightened and took the five precepts and became *upasaka*.

Nagasena then went to the king in the palace and the king came forward, worshipped Nagasena who with his eighty sramanas, sat down. The king had delicious food prepared and he himself with his own hands served Nagasena and the other *sramanas*. After eating, they washed their mouths and hands. The king presented each *sramana* with a suit of cotton garments and a pair of sandals, and to Nagasena and Ayupala three robes and a pair of sandals each.

Then the king said to Nagasena and Ayupala, “Please remain seated here together with ten brethren. Let the rest of the *sramanas* depart.”

那先即遣餘沙門令去，留十人共止。王勅後  
 宮諸貴人、妓女、悉於殿上聽我與那先  
 共難經道時，貴人、妓女、悉出殿上聽那  
 先說經時，王持座坐於那先前。❀ 帷中聽那  
 五、王言：「當說何等？」那先言：「王欲聽要言者，當說  
 要言。王言：「卿曹道何等最要者，用何等故作  
 沙門？那先言：「我曹欲棄世間勤苦，不欲更  
 世勤苦，用是故，我曹作沙門，我曹用是為最  
 要善。王言：「諸沙門皆不欲更今世後世勤苦  
 故作沙門耶？」

After Nagasena asked the other *sramanas* to depart and only ten were left, the king ordered, “Let all the honorable and noble women and female performers in the palace come to this hall, sit behind a curtain and listen to Nagasena and me discuss Dharma and the Path.”

At that time all the noble women and the female performers sat behind a curtain, listening to Nagasena’s preaching. The king took a seat and sat down in front of Nagasena. ❀

### 5. The Aim of Spiritual Life

The king asked, “What should we discuss?” Nagasena said, “Your majesty the king, if you want to listen to the truth or the *summon bonum*, we should discuss that.”

So the king asked, “What is the object, Sir, of your renunciation, what is the *summon bonum* at which you aim?”

“The aim of our renunciation is that this sorrow may pass away, and that no future sorrow may arise hereafter. That is why we become *sramanas*. This is our highest aim.”

“Sir, is this the reason that all the members of the *sangha* have joined?”

那先言：不悉用是故作沙門，沙門有四輩。王言：何等四？那先言：中有負債作沙門，中有畏縣官作沙門者，中有貧窮作沙門者，中有真欲棄滅今世後世勤苦故作沙門。那先言：我本至心求道故作沙門耳。王言：今卿用道故作沙門耶？那先言：我少小作沙門，有佛經道及弟子，諸沙門皆多高明。我從學經戒，入我心中，以是故棄今世後世勤苦故作沙門。王言：善哉。❀

“Certainly not Sire, Not all the members of the *sangha* have joined for the same reason. There are four categories of *sramanas*.”

“What are the four?” (707b) asked the king.<sup>110</sup>

Nagasena said, “Some joined because of the tyranny of a county magistrate;<sup>111</sup> some have joined due to poverty; some are harassed by debt; and some have genuinely renounced the world for the sole purpose of abandoning and eliminating sorrow and suffering here and hereafter.”<sup>112</sup> Nagasena continued, “What I refer to are those who sincerely search for the Path and become *sramanas*.”

The king asked, “Is it because of searching for the Path that you have become a *sramana*?”

“I became a *sramana* when I was merely a boy. Due to the Buddha’s Dharma and his disciples who are all wise *sramanas*, I have learned from the scriptures and disciplines, which have become deeply rooted in my heart. As a result, I understand that the reason for renunciation is to eradicate sorrow here and hereafter.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

六、王問言：寧有人死後不復生者不？那先言：中不復生者，那先言：中有王言：誰於後世生者？誰不復生者？那先言：人有恩愛貪欲者，後世不復生也。❀

七、王言：人以一心念正法善故，後世不復生耶？那先言：人以一心念正法善，後世不復生。事故，後世不復生。王言：人以一心念正法善與智慧，是二事其義寧同不？

## 6. Rebirth

The king asked, “Is there anyone after death who is not to be reborn again?”

“Some are to be reborn again, and some are not.” said Nagasena.

“Who will be reborn? Who will not be reborn?”<sup>113</sup>

“Those who have lustful desire or craving (*tanha*) will be reborn again hereafter, and those who do not have lustful craving will not be reborn.”



## 7. Consideration

“Revered Sir, of those who are not reborn, is it due to their whole-hearted consideration of *saddharma* and virtue?”<sup>114</sup>

“Your Majesty, by whole-hearted consideration of *saddharma*, virtue, wisdom<sup>115</sup> and other good qualities, one will not be reborn.”

“As for the whole-hearted consideration of *saddharma* and wisdom (*panna*), are the meanings of the two terms the same?”

那先言：其義各異不同。王問那先：牛馬六畜，頗有智無有智？那先言：牛馬六畜，各自有智，其心不同。那先言：王曾見穫麥者不？左手持麥，右手刈之。那先言：智慧之人，斷絕愛欲，譬如穫麥。王言：善哉。❀

八、王復問那先：何等為餘善事者？那先言：誠信、孝順、精進、念善、一心、智慧，是為善事。王言：何等為誠信者？

“Certainly not, their meanings are quite different.”

The king said, “Do the oxen, horses and the six kinds of domestic animals, have wisdom or not?”

“Oxen and horses, the six kinds of domestic animals have wisdom, but their minds are different.<sup>116</sup> Have you, your majesty, ever seen the reaper? With their left hands, they grasp the barley into a bunch, and taking the sickles into their right hands, they cut the barley with it. Wise men cut off their lustful craving, just like cutting off the barley.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 8. Faith (*saddha*)

The king asked Nagasena again, “When you said just now, ‘by other good qualities,’ to what did you refer?”

“Faith (*saddha*), filial obedience,<sup>117</sup> perseverance (*virīya*), reflection on good, meditation (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*panna*)<sup>118</sup> are the other good qualities.” said Nagasena.

“What is faith?” asked the king.

那先言：誠信者，無所復疑。信有佛，有佛經法，信有比丘僧，信有阿羅漢，信有今世，信有後世，信有孝順父母，信有作善得善，信有作惡得惡，得信是以後，心便清淨，即去離五惡。何等五惡？一者貪婬，二者瞋恚，三者睡眠，四者戲樂，五者所疑。人不去，是五惡。心意不定，去是五惡，意便清淨。那先言：譬如遮迦越王車馬，人從瀦渡水，令水濁惡。過渡以去，王渴欲得水飲。王有清水珠，置水中，水即為清。王便得清水飲之。

“Faith means belief without doubt, faith in the existence of the Buddha, of the Buddha’s Dharma and of the *bhikṣu sangha*; faith in the existence of arhats, of the present world, of the next world and of filial piety towards parents; faith in good remuneration for good action, bad remuneration for bad actions. If one has such faith, his mind is serene and clear and the five hindrances are eradicated.

What are the five? The first is lustful craving, the second is hatred, the third is mental sloth, the fourth is sports and enjoyment, the fifth is doubt.<sup>119</sup> If a person has not removed these five hindrances, his mind is not calm and tranquil.”

Nagasena continued, “A *cakkavattin*, with his chariots, horses and men, may cross over a small stream called Li,<sup>120</sup> (707c) and make the water fouled, turbid and muddy. When he is on the other side, the monarch is thirsty and wants to get some water for drinking. Now suppose, the monarch has a water-purifying-gem and had it thrown into the water, then at once, the water becomes clear and pure. So the monarch has pure water to drink.”



那先言：人心有惡，譬如濁水。佛諸弟子得度，死生之道，心以清淨如珠。清水人却諸惡，誠信清淨，譬如明月珠。王言：善哉，善哉。❀

九、王問言：人精進，誠信者云何？那先言：佛諸弟子，自相見輩中，脫諸惡心，中有得須陀洹者，中有得斯陀含者，中有得阿那含者，中有得阿羅漢者，中有因相效奉行，誠信者，皆亦得大度世道。那先言：譬如山上大雨，其水下流，廣大。

Continued Nagasena, “(In the same way), if there is an evil thought in the mind of people, it is just like the turbid water. All the disciples of the Buddha have gained the Path for crossing over the stream of *samsara*, because their mind is clear and pure, just as the water-purifying-gem purifies the turbid water. If people can remove all the mental evil and be faithful, clear, calm in the mind, it is just like the brilliant moon.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 9. Aspiration of faith

The king asked, “What is aspiration,<sup>121</sup> the mark of faith?”

Nagasena said, “Having seen those among their colleagues who have already eliminated the evil state of the mind,<sup>122</sup> some who have attained *srotapanna*, others *sakrdagamin*, *anagamin* and arhathood, the disciples of the Buddha aspire to pursue their way with faith. As a result, some have also crossed over the *samsara*.”

Then Nagasena said, “As if a mighty storm takes place on a mountain top and the rain water flows down in great quantity.



十、人皆從智慧成其道。王言：善哉善哉。佛諸弟子亦如是，見前人淨心得須陀洹。斯陀舍阿那含阿羅漢道，皆從善心精進所致也。佛經言：人有誠信之心，可自得度世，人能制止却五所欲，自知身苦者，乃能得度世。人皆從智慧成其道。王言：善哉善哉。

The people on both sides do not know the depth and breadth of the water and are fearful, and dare not cross it. And suppose a certain person comes from far away and having observed the water, knows exactly the depth and breadth and also knows exactly his own strength and power. He crosses over the water and reached the other shore. The people on both sides follow him by imitating his way and also cross over the stream.

So do the disciples of the Buddha, they have seen that those whose mind is pure have attained the Path of *srotapanna*, some the Path of *sakrdagamin*, some the Path of *anagamin* and some the Path of arhathood. All these are due to their wholesome state of mind and their perseverance.

Therefore the Buddha said, “*He who has faith, can save himself. If people of the world can control and overcome the five sense desires by themselves, and also know that the body is suffering, they can save themselves. People all obtain the Path by wisdom.*”<sup>123</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 10. The Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment

The king asked, “What is filial piety?”<sup>124</sup>

那先言：諸善者皆為孝順。凡三十七品經，皆由於孝順為本。王言：何等為三十七品經？那先言：有四意止，有四意斷，有四神足，有五根，有五力，有七覺意，有八種道行。王復問：那先言：何等為四意止者？那先報王言：佛說：一為身，身觀止，二為觀痛痒痛痒止，三為觀意，意止，四為觀法法止，是為四意止。王復言：何等為四意斷？那先言：佛說：已分別止四事，不復念，是為四意斷。

Nagasena answered, “All good qualities are filial piety. The thirty-seven factors of enlightenment<sup>125</sup> have filial piety as their basis.”

“What are the thirty-seven factors?”

“They are: the four abodes of mindfulness or subjects of reflection,<sup>126</sup> the four modes of spiritual exertion, the four bases of extraordinary powers, the five spiritual faculties of moral sense, the five mental powers, the seven factors of enlightenment,<sup>127</sup> and the noble eightfold path.”<sup>128</sup>

(a) “What are the four abodes of mindfulness?” asked the king.

“The first is to observe the body with consideration of the body; the second is to observe pain and itching with consideration of pain and itching; the third is to observe the mind with consideration of the mind; and the fourth is to observe the Dharma with consideration of the Dharma.”<sup>129</sup>

(b) “What are the four modes of spiritual exertion?”

“The Buddha has said, ‘Having analyzed the four states of mindfulness, one would not think further.’ These are the four modes of spiritual exertion.”<sup>130</sup>

以得四意斷，便自得四神足念。王復問：何等能為四神足念？那先言：一者，能聽三者，能知他人心中所念，四者，能行是為四神足念。王復問：何等能為四神足念？那先言：一者，能見好色，惡色，何等為根？那先言：一者，能聞好聲，惡聲，何等為根？那先言：一者，能聞香臭，意不貪著，是為根；四者，能聞苦辛，意不貪著，是為根；五者，能聞不喜，身得鹿堅，意不惡，是為根。王復問：何等能為五力者？那先言：一能制眼，二能制耳，三能制鼻。

When one has gained the four modes of spiritual exertion, one has also gained the four psychic powers.”

(c) “What are the four psychic powers?”

“They are: (1) The divine eye; (2) the divine ear; (708a) (3) the ability to know other’s mind; and (4) being able to fly with the physical body.”<sup>131</sup>

(d) “What are the five spiritual faculties of moral sense?”

“(1) When the eyes see pleasant of unpleasant forms, but there is no attachment of the mind to them; (2) when the ears hear pleasant, bad or abusive sounds, but there is no attachment of the mind to them; (3) when the nose smells pleasant or unpleasant odors, but there is no attachment of the mind to them; (4) when the mouth receives delicious, bitter or astringent tastes, but there is no attachment of the mind to them, (5) and when the body receives a soft or smooth touch, there is no attachment of the mind to them, or when the body receives a harsh and rough touch, there is no dislike. These are the five spiritual faculties of moral sense.”<sup>132</sup>

(e) “What are the five mental powers?”

“They are (1) to control the eyes; (2) to control the ears; (3) to control the nose;...

乃言成。本為四為六分復四  
 可譬世那八直八定別問能  
 起如間先種治八覺覺何制  
 城師五言道五道意意等口  
 匠穀凡行直行七三為五  
 圖樹人凡業那護精七能  
 作木負是六先意進覺制  
 大仰重三直言是覺意身  
 城天之遠七便直一為意者  
 當之草有品七見直七四那  
 先度皆所經直二直覺覺言  
 量由成皆意直念復五意為  
 作地立由八念復問猗覺意  
 基生皆由孝直三直何覺意  
 址那由順定直何覺意二  
 已先地為是語等意二王

...(4) to control the mouth; and (5) to control the body, so that the mind does not (fall into the evil states).<sup>133</sup>

(f) “What are the seven factors of enlightenment?”<sup>134</sup>

“They are: (1) mind, (2) discrimination, (3) exertion, (4) joy, (5) serenity, (6) concentration, and (7) protection.”

(g) “What is the noble eightfold path?”

“They are: right view, right thought, right speech, right livelihood, right action, right means, right mind and right concentration.<sup>135</sup> Thus the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment are based on filial piety (*sila*).”

Nagasena continued, “Just as a person carrying a heavy load<sup>136</sup> reaches a faraway (place) and makes his business successful. All these are due to the earth. In the world, the five kinds of grain, trees and other grass all grow up due to the earth.”

Then Nagasena went on to give a simile, “It is just like an architect who constructs a large city. First he should measure and lay the foundations, then he will be able to build a city. Again it is like a performer<sup>137</sup> who wants to give a performance. First he should clear the ground and make it even.

那先言：譬如伎人欲作，當先淨除地平，乃作佛弟子求道，當先行經戒念善，因知勤苦，便棄諸愛欲，便思念八種道行。王言：當用何等棄諸愛欲？那先言：一心念道，愛欲自滅。王言：善哉善哉。❀

十一、王復問言：何等為精進者？那先言：持善助善，是為精進。那先言：譬如垣牆欲倒，從邊拄之，舍欲傾壞，亦復拄之，是為精進。那先言：譬如國王遣兵有所攻擊，

(In the same way), the Buddha's disciples, in search of the Path, should first act according to the Dharma and perform good deeds.<sup>138</sup> They understand suffering and so they eliminate lustful craving by following the noble eightfold path.”

“How do they eliminate lustful cravings?” asked the king.

“When they completely absorb their mind into the Path, the lustful cravings naturally disappear.”<sup>139</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 11. Exertion

The king said, “What is the characteristic mark of exertion?”

“To hold fast to good qualities.<sup>140</sup> To support good qualities is the characteristic mark of exertion.”

Then Nagasena gave some similes, “It is just like the support given by a post to a wall that is going to collapse, or to a house that is going to fall. This is called exertion.”

Nagasena continued with other similes, “It is as if a king who sends out his army to fight...

兵弱欲不如，王復遣兵往助之，兵便得勝。人有諸惡，如兵少弱時，人持善心消滅惡心，譬如王增兵得勝。持五善心消五惡心，譬如戰鬥得勝，是為精進助善。如是那先言：精進所助致，人善道已，得度世道，無有還期。王言：善哉。  
 十二、  
 王復問：何等為意當念諸善事者？那先言：譬如人取異種華，以縷合連繫之，風吹不能散。

but finds his army too weak to fulfill his wishes. So the king sends out his reinforcements to help. As a result, the king wins the battle. If a person has bad qualities, he or she is just like the small and weak army. People eliminate all bad qualities by the support of the good qualities, just as the king wins the battle by the help of the reinforcements. With the help of the five good qualities, one destroys the five bad qualities.<sup>141</sup> It is just like the king who sends reinforcements to the weak army. (708b) This is called supporting good qualities by exertion.”

Thus Nagasena quoted from a sutra: “*With the help of exertion, people attain the meritorious Path and go beyond the worldly path without falling back again.*”<sup>142</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

## 12. Mindfulness

The king asked again, “Why should the mind think of meritorious deeds?”

Nagasena replied, “It is like a person who takes different kinds of flowers and strings them by the thread so that they cannot be scattered by the wind.”

內持敬門有所先可者也念珠那  
 意者知不王所言行也三玉先  
 亦知不王所敬者譬分別有十七  
 如是利王敬者知有守門思惟以  
 諸善者守門者知王者知王有便  
 善者當內之即不內那先不言人  
 諸不善者不當

Nagasena again gave a simile, “It is like the treasurer of the king, he knows how much gold, silver, gems, jade, colored glass and other treasures are in the state treasury. If the trainee wishes to obtain *nirvana*, he should be mindful of the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment.

This is just what we called crossing over the stream of *samsara* by way of consideration. With mindfulness, a person knows the meritorious and demeritorious, what should be practiced, what should not be practiced, and also distinguishes between the black ones and the white ones.<sup>143</sup> Having pondered, he then gives up the demeritorious and cultivates the meritorious.”

Nagasena gave more similes saying, “It is like the king’s guard. He knows the people to whom the king respects and the people to whom the king does not, those who are beneficial to the king and those who are not. He allows those who are beneficial to and respected by the king to come in and does not allow those who are not beneficial to and not respected by the king to come in. So is mindfulness, it lets all the wholesome thoughts come in and stops all the unwholesome thoughts.



守意制心譬亦如是。那先說經言：人當自堅  
 守護其意及身中六愛欲，持意堅守，自當有  
 十三、度世時。王言：善哉善哉。❀

王問那先言：何等為一其心者？那先言：諸善  
 中獨有一心最第一，人能一其心，諸善皆隨  
 之。那先言：譬如樓陛當有所倚，諸為善者皆  
 著一心。那先言：譬如王將四種兵出行戰鬪，  
 象兵、馬兵、車兵、步兵皆導引王前後。佛諸經  
 戒及餘善事皆隨一心，亦譬如兵。

In such a way, one should be able to guide his mind and control his thought.”

Then Nagasena quoted from a sutra: “*One should protect and check one’s mind and the six cravings in one’s own mind.*<sup>144</sup> *By strictly checking the mind and holding fast on to it, one can transcend the world.*”<sup>145</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena. ❀

### 13. Concentration

The king asked Nagasena, “What is the characteristic mark of concentration?”<sup>146</sup>

Nagasena replied, “All meritorious deeds have concentration as their chief. All meritorious actions will follow if a person can concentrate his mind.” Nagasena gave some similes, “Like the staircase which is supported by a main structure, all meritorious deeds depend on concentration. It is like a king where the whole army, elephants, horses, war chariots and infantry would incline to follow his lead when he goes down to battle with his fourfold army in array. All the Buddha’s teachings and other good qualities follow concentration, it is just as the army follows the king.”

Nagasena quoted from the Buddhist sutras:



那先說經言：諸善中一心為本，學道人眾多，皆當先歸一心。王身生死過去，如水下流，前後相從，無有住時。王言善哉。如先說已，人王復問：何等為智慧者？那先言：我前說已，人有智慧，能斷諸疑，明諸善事，是為智慧。那先言：譬如持燈入冥室，火適入室，便亡其冥。自明，明人有智慧，譬如火光，那先言：譬如人持利刀截木，人有智慧，能截斷諸惡，譬如利刀，那先言：人於世間智慧，最為第一，人有智慧，那先得度脫生死之苦。王言善哉。人有智

“It is said, ‘Concentration is the foundation of all good qualities. The trainee in the Dharma should first take refuge in concentration. The life of a person is just like the water flowing down the current in constant succession without interruption.’”<sup>147</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 14. Wisdom

The king asked, “What is the characteristic mark of wisdom?”<sup>148</sup>

Nagasena said, “I have already told you before, if a person has wisdom, he can cut off all the doubts, and can distinguish what is meritorious. This is wisdom.”

Nagasena gave a simile, “It is like a person entering a dark room with light in hand, as soon as the light enters the room, the darkness disappears. So a person is endowed with wisdom is like a bright light. The person who is endowed with wisdom can cut off all evils, just like a person who cuts down the trees with a sharp knife (708c). For worldlings, wisdom is of prime importance. A person endowed with wisdom is able to transcend the suffering of *samsara*.”<sup>149</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

十五、王言：那先前後所說經種種別異，但欲趣却一切惡耶？那先言：然，佛經所說種種諸善者，但欲却一切惡也。那先言：譬如王發四種兵，雖行戰鬥，初發行時意，但欲攻敵耳。佛所說經種種諸善，但欲共攻去一切惡耳。王言：善哉，善哉，那先說經甚快也。❀

十六、王復問那先：人死所趣善惡之道，續持故身，神行生耶？更貿他神行生耶？

### 15. All for the Same Purpose

The king asked, “Nagasena, all the qualities you have mentioned above are so different, are they all for the same purpose of eradicating all defilements?”

Nagasena said, “Yes, they are. Various kinds of good qualities are described in Buddhist sutras, but they are all for the same purpose of eradicating defilements.

Nagasena said, It is like the king who, although he sends his fourfold army to the battlefield, has one aim of defeating the opposing army. In the same way, the Buddha preached various kinds of good qualities in different sutras, but they serve the same purpose of eradicating different kinds of defilement.”

“Excellent, Nagasena, you quote the sutras readily.” ❀

### 16. The Same or Different; Those Who are Reborn

The king asked, “When a person dies, and he is reborn in a good or in a bad realm, does the body and spirit<sup>150</sup> remain the same as the old one or become another?”

那先言：亦非故身神，亦不離故身神。那先因問：王身小時，哺乳時，身至長大時，續故身非，王言：小時身異。那先言：人在母腹中，始隨精時，至精濁時，故精耶異也。堅為肌骨時，故精耶異也。初生時，至年數歲時，故精耶異也。如人學書時，傍人寧能代其工不？王言：不能代其工。那先言：如人犯法有罪，寧可取無罪之人代不？王言：不可。那先以精神罪法語王，王意不解，王因言：如人問那先，那先解之云何？

Nagasena replied, “It is neither the same old body and spirit, nor is it apart from the old one.”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “When you, the king, were a baby you were fed by your mother’s milk, and now you are a grown man, so are you the same or different?”

“The child is one, I am another.” said the king.

Then Nagasena said, “When a person is in the womb of his mother, is the embryo which is just formed, the same as the embryo which becomes a form?<sup>151</sup> Is it the same as the one that assumes skin and flesh, or when it is newly born, or when it is a few years old, (is it the same at all these stages of life)? Just as a person learns from a book, can another person do the work for him?”

“No, another person cannot do the work for him.”

Again Nagasena asked, “If a person violates the law and is to be punished, can an innocent one replace him?”<sup>152</sup>

“It cannot be,” said the king.

Nagasena spoke to the king in terms of spiritual effort and criminal law, but the king could not understand it and said to Nagasena, “How would you explain it if asked to do so?”

那先言：我故小時身耳，從小至大，續故身爾。大與小時，含為一身，養是命所養。那先問王言：譬如人然燈火，寧至天明不？王言：然燈油至明，那先言：燈中炷火，至一夜時，續故火光，不至夜半時，故火光不？王言：非故火光，那先言：然燈從一夜至夜半，復更然燈火耶？向晨時，復更然燈耶？王言：不，中夜起，更然火，續故一炷火，至明耳。那先言：人精神展轉相續，亦譬如是一者去，一者來，人從精神生至老死後。

Then Nagasena explained, “I would say that I am the same person as when I was a baby. The body of the grown man is a continuity of the original embryo and the baby. Therefore the life principle of the grown up man and the baby is fed within this same continuity — the body.”

Nagasena asked the king, “Suppose a person were to light a lamp, would it burn throughout the night?”

“It might do so,” replied the king.

“Now is it the same flame that burns in the first watch of the night, at midnight and at dawn?”

“No, it is not the same flame.”

“Then, is one lamp lit in the first watch of the night, and another lit at midnight and again another lit at dawn?”

“No, it is not. But the light continues burning from the same lamp (from first watch through) to midnight till dawn.”<sup>153</sup>

Nagasena said, “Just so is the continuity of a person from life to life. One passes away and another comes into being, and thus from the continuity, one is reborn, becomes old and dies. From the last phase of his self-consciousness,...

十 七 更 老 酬 人 人 酬 那 不 精  
 受 從 人 神 語 寧 先 離 神  
 一 老 人 神 乳 寧 可 言 故 更  
 身 至 亦 神 洵 可 取 譬 如 精 趣  
 譬 死 如 是 乳 不 醞 醞 如 神 所  
 如 死 是 從 洵 王 與 醞 乳 人 向  
 兩 後 從 精 成 言 酪 化 死 生  
 主 神 精 酪 其 上 作 酪 後 展  
 更 更 神 酪 人 肥 酪 精 轉  
 相 復 生 從 人 語 還 取 神 相  
 然 受 從 酪 復 酪 乃 是 續  
 王 生 一 至 肥 可 名 上 有 非  
 言 善 身 長 從 肥 那 乳 煎 趣 故  
 哉 死 當 長 成 先 洵 成 向 精  
 善 當 復 至 醞 其 醞 生 神 亦  
 哉 復 至 醞 其 醞 生 神 亦

...one is reborn into a new life and (709a) goes on continuously. In this flux, it is neither the same personality nor one different from the old. After death, the personality goes on to be reborn again.”<sup>154</sup>

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “It is like the milk that turns into curds, and from curds to butter, then from butter to ghee.<sup>155</sup> Can the butter and ghee be called milk?”

“No, it cannot be called milk.”

“The consciousness of a person is like the milk, milk can turn into curds, then from curds to butter, and from butter to ghee. The spirit of a person is the same, from the spirit, a person is reborn, grows up, and becomes old. From old age comes death, and after death, the consciousness is again reborn. When this body comes to an end, it takes another body. It is like the interchange of two wicks (of a lamp).”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

## 17. Knowledge of Having Rebirth

王復問那先：「人有不復於後世生者，其人寧能自知不？」那先言：「其人自然，有能自知者。王言：『用何知之？』那先言：『其人自知無恩愛，無貪欲，無諸惡用，是故自知後世不復生。』那先問王：『譬如田家，耕犁種穀，多收斂著囤中，至後歲不復耕，不復種，但仰囤中穀食，其田家寧復望得新穀不？』王言：『其田無所復望。』那先言：『其田家用，知不復得穀。』王言：『其田家不復耕，不復種，故無所望。』那先言：『得道亦如是，自知已棄捐恩愛。』」

The king asked Nagasena, "Is the enlightened person aware of the fact that he is not to be reborn again hereafter?"

Nagasena replied, "Yes, he knows."

"How does he know?" asked the king.

Nagasena replied, "When he knows that he has no craving, no sense desire, and no defilement (in his mind), then he knows that he will not be born again hereafter.

It is just like the farmer who has ploughed and sown rice and fills his granary with much grain. Then for a period, the farmer would neither plough nor sow, but live on the stored-up grain. Is there any hope of getting new grain in this farming family?"

"There should be none."

"How does the farming family know that there is no hope of getting new grain again?" asked Nagasena.

"Because the farming family knows that they have neither ploughed nor sown, therefore there is no hope."<sup>156</sup>

"Just so, the person who obtains the Path is the same. When he knows for himself that he has already eradicated craving and suffering,...

苦樂無有貪心，是故自知後世不復生。❀  
十八、王復言：其人於後世不復生者，於今寧有智  
異於人，不那先言然，有智異於人。王言：寧能  
有明不那先言然，有明。王言：智與明有異同  
乎？那先言：智與明等耳。王言：有智明者，寧悉  
知萬事不寧有所不及。王言：何等為智有所及，有  
所及，那先言：人前所不學前所不及，知，人前  
所學前所及，知。

...and his mind is devoid of desire, then he knows that he will not be born again hereafter.” ❀

### 18. Wisdom of the Liberated and that of Ordinary People

The king asked, “Is the wisdom possessed by the person who is not to be born again different from that of the ordinary person?”

“Yes,” Nagasena said, “it is different from the ordinary person.”

“Has the ordinary man intelligence?”<sup>157</sup>

“Yes, he has.”<sup>158</sup>

“What is the difference between wisdom and intelligence?”

“They are both the same.”

“Would he, with his intelligence and wisdom, know everything?”<sup>159</sup> Is there anything he does not know?”

“In regard to some things, he knows, in regard to others, he does not know.”

“With his intelligence, what does he know and what does he not know?”

“He knows the things that he has learned, and he does not know the things that he has not learned.



智者所見人及萬物皆當過去歸空，不得自在。人心所貪樂皆種苦本，從是致苦。慧者知非常成敗之事，是智為異於人。王問言：人有智慧，癡愚所在？那先言：人有智慧，諸愚癡皆自消滅。那先言：譬如人持燈火入冥室，室中皆明，冥即消滅。智如是。人有智慧，諸癡愚皆悉消滅。王言：人智今為所在？那先言：人行智以後，智便消滅。智所作者故作。那先言：譬如人夜於火下書，火滅字續在。

The person endowed with wisdom knows that men and phenomena are impermanent and not independent, and that all will finally pass away. Craving is the source of all suffering and it will lead to suffering. The person endowed with wisdom knows impermanence, the rise and fall of all matters. This is the difference between the person who is wise and those who are not.”<sup>160</sup>

(a) “If a person is endowed with wisdom could he still have ignorance?” (709b)

“If a person is endowed with wisdom, all his delusions will disappear.”

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “It is like a person entering a dark room while holding a lamp, the room will be lit and the darkness will disappear. Wisdom is like this. If a person has wisdom, all his delusions will disappear.”

(b) “Then what has his wisdom become?” asked the king.

“When wisdom of reasoning has done its work, then this wisdom of reasoning disappears, but its work, its effect<sup>161</sup> remains.”

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “It is just as a person writes during the night under a lamp.



智者如是有所成已智便消滅其所作續在。王言：智有所成已便自滅是何等語。那先言：譬如人備火，豫作戒火五瓶水，如有失火者，其人持五瓶水，水滴滅火，火滅以後，其救火人寧復望得完瓶歸家用不？王言：其人不復望，瓶破火滅，豈復望瓶耶？那先言：道人持五善心，消滅諸惡，亦譬如瓶水滅火。王言：何等為五善。

When the lamp has been extinguished, the writing will still be there. It is the same with regard to the wise. When the wise have accomplished the work, their wisdom ceases, but their work still remains there.”

“What do you mean, by ‘when the wise have accomplished their work, their wisdom ceases to be?’”

Nagasena again gave a simile, “It is just like a person who prepares five pots of water in case that there might be a fire. If a fire breaks out the person could take the five pots of water to extinguish the fire. After the fire has been extinguished, does the person still wish to take the pots back home to use them?”

“The person would not wish to take back the pots, because the pots are broken, the fire has been extinguished, what would be the use of getting them back again?”

“A trainee in the Dharma, with the five kinds of virtues,<sup>162</sup> eliminates all the evils. It is also like putting out the fire using the pots of water.”

“What are the five kinds of virtues?” asked the king.

那先言：一者信善有惡，二者不毀經戒，三者  
 精進，四者有慧念善，五者一心念道，為是五  
 善。人能奉行是五善者，便得智慧，便知身及  
 萬物非常，便知苦不得自在，便知空無所有。  
 那先言：譬如醫師持五種藥詣病者家，以藥  
 飲病人，病者飲藥得愈，醫寧復望得故藥？復  
 行治人，不王言，不復望得故藥。那先言：五種  
 藥者，如五善智，其醫者，如求道人，其病者，如  
 諸惡、愚癡者，如病人，得道度世者，如病得愈  
 人。

“(1) Faith in goodness and in the existence of evil;<sup>163</sup> (2) not infringing the precepts; (3) energy; (4) being endowed with wisdom and mindful of goodness; and (5) concentration on the Dharma. These are the five virtues and good qualities. If a person acts according to these five good qualities, then he gains wisdom, knowing that the body and all other things in the world are impermanent, and knows suffering, that everything is not in his command, and also knows that everything is without self.”

It is just like a physician who goes to a sick man's home with the five kinds of drugs<sup>164</sup> and gives them to the sick man to drink, thereby curing the sick man of his illness. Would the physician in that case think of using the same medicine on the sick man again?”

“No, certainly he would not use the same medicine on the sick man again.”

“The five kinds of medicines are like the five good qualities or virtues, the physician is like the trainee in the Dharma. The sickness is like evil (*klesa*), the ignorant (*prthagjana*) are like the sick man and...

王言：如人得道，後世不復生者，  
 十九 從善智得成度世道者，常在  
 不滅。善智即生人，持五善心滅却諸惡，諸惡皆滅。善智道人，得道如健鬪，得勝敵家。諸惡道人，復望箭。那先言：五箭者，人五智也。智人從智，箭射敵得勝。其人寧復望箭歸不？王言：不先言。譬如健鬪人把弓持箭，前行向敵，以五復望箭。那先言：其人寧復望箭歸不？王言：不從善智得成度世道者，常在  
 不滅。善智即生人，持五善心滅却諸惡，諸惡皆滅。善智道人，得道如健鬪，得勝敵家。諸惡道人，復望箭。那先言：五箭者，人五智也。智人從智，箭射敵得勝。其人寧復望箭歸不？王言：不先言。譬如健鬪人把弓持箭，前行向敵，以五

...the one who has crossed over to the other shore is like the sick man who has recovered from illness. By the wisdom of reasoning, one crosses to the other shore, when one has crossed to the other shore, this wisdom ceases to be.”

Then Nagasena gave more similes, “It is like a warrior who takes his bow and arrows and goes to battle to fight the foe. With five arrows, he defeats the foe. Does the warrior want to get back his arrows?”

“No, he does not want them back.”

“The five arrows are like the five wisdoms, and the wise who attain the Path with this wisdom are like the warrior who defeats the foe. Evil is like the foe, and a trainee on the Path eliminates all evils with five good qualities. When all evils are removed, pure wisdom arises. A person, by this wisdom, has crossed out of this world, and his attainment will last forever.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 19. The Bodily Pain of an Emancipated One

The king asked, “If a person has crossed over to the other shore, (709c) and will not be reborn hereafter...

後寧復更苦不。那先言：「或有更苦者，或有不更苦者。」王言：「更苦不更苦云何？」那先言：「身更苦，心意不更苦耳。」心，意不更苦。王言：「身更苦，心意不更苦云何？」那先言：「身更苦者，其身在故更苦。心意棄捐諸惡，無有諸欲，是故不復更苦。」王言：「假令得道人，不能得離身苦者，是為未得泥洹道耶？」王言：「人得道已，無所愛身苦，意安何用為得道？」王言：「假令人得道已成，當復何留？」那先言：「譬如果物，未熟不強熟也，已熟亦無所復待。」

...does he still feel any painful sensation?"

Nagasena replied, "Some he feels and some not."

"Which painful sensation does he feel and which not?"

"He may feel bodily pain, but not mental pain."<sup>165</sup>

"What do you mean by the expression that he feels bodily pain but not mental pain?"

"He is liable to suffer bodily pain, because the body still exists,<sup>166</sup> he is not liable to mental pain, because the mind has got rid of all evil, and is without any desire."

The king said, "If a person who has crossed over to the other shore still cannot get rid of the bodily pain, then he has not attained the Path of *nirvana*." Again the king said, "If a person who has attained the Path has no sense desire, and while his mind is in peace, yet bodily pain still exists, then what is the use of attaining *nirvana*? If a person has attained *nirvana*, why does he not die?"

"It is like the unripe fruit, we need not force it to ripen, but when it is ripe, we need not wait again."

那先言：王屬所道者，舍犁曰所說。舍犁曰在  
時言：我亦不求死，我亦不求生，我但須時，可  
時至便去。王言：善哉善哉。❀  
二十、  
王問：人更樂者，為善耶？不善也。人更苦為善  
耶？為不善也。那先言：佛得無，不說有樂或有  
苦。王言：如使有為無有苦？那先問王言：如人  
燒鐵著手中，寧燒人手不？復取冰著手中，其  
冰寧復燒人手不？王言：然。兩手皆威也。

Nagasena continued, “There is a thera by the name of Sariputra who has attained the Path. The following was said by Sariputra when he was alive:

“I do not seek for death, I do not seek for birth; I abide my time, when my time comes, I shall go.”<sup>167</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.”

[Here ends the first chapter]



## 20. Different Kinds of Feelings

The king asked, “If a person is happy, is it wholesome or unwholesome? If a person is unhappy, is it wholesome or unwholesome?”

Nagasena replied,<sup>168</sup> “As the Buddha has attained non-activity,<sup>169</sup> he does not speak of suffering or happiness.”

“If so,” the king asked, “is it as if there is no suffering in conditioned *dharmas*?”<sup>170</sup>

Nagasena asked the king, “Now, what do you think, suppose a man were to hold in one hand a red-hot ball of iron, and in the other hand, a lump of ice. Would they both burn him?”

“Yes, both hands will get hurt.”

那先問王言：如是兩手中物皆熱耶？王言：不兩熱。那先言：兩冷耶？王言：不兩冷也。那先言：兩手中皆燒，那先言：我重問王，王前後兩熱，當言兩熱，兩冷當言兩冷，何緣一冷一熱，能同言燒人手乎？王言：智慮甚淺，近不能及，是難也。願那先為我解之。那先言：佛經說之，凡有六事，令人內喜，有六事，令人內愁；復有六事，令人不喜，亦不愁，外復有六事，令人愁。王問：何等為六事，令人內喜？那先言：一者，目有所視，復有所望，是故令人內喜。

“But, Great King, are the iron and the ice both hot in his two hands?”

“Certainly not, both are not hot.”

“But, are they both cold?”

“No, both are not cold.”

“But, are both hands burnt? I ask you again, if the heat hurts, both hands should be hot. If the cold hurts, both hands should be cold. How then can they both be burnt, since they are not both hot, nor both cold?”

“I am not intelligent enough to argue with you. Be so good, Nagasena, (710a) as to explain how the matter stands?”

Nagasena said, “In a the Buddhist sutras<sup>171</sup> it is said, *‘There are six things arousing internal joyful feelings<sup>172</sup> in men, six things arousing internal sorrowful feelings<sup>173</sup> in men, six things arousing neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings in men, and six external things arousing sorrowful feelings in men.’*”<sup>174</sup>

(a) The king asked, “What are the six things arousing internal joyful feelings in men?”

“They are (1) when the eyes see (pleasant) forms which causes hope to see them again, thus arousing internal joyful feelings in men;

二者，耳聞好聲復有所望，是故令人內喜。三者，鼻聞好香復有所望，是故令人內喜。四者，舌得美味復有所望，是故令人內喜。五者，身得細滑復有所望，是故令人內喜。六者，心得樂受復有所望，是故令人內喜。如是六事令人內喜。王復問：何等為外六事令人喜？那先言：一者，眼見好色，念之不可常得；皆當棄捐，便自思惟，審然無常，是故令人外喜。二者，耳聞好聲，念之不可常得。

(2) when the ears hear pleasant sounds which causes hope to hear them again, thus arousing internal joyful feelings in men;

(3) when the nose smells pleasant odors which causes hope to smell them again, thus arousing internal joyful feelings in men;

(4) when the tongue tastes nice flavors which causes hope to taste them again, thus arousing internal joyful feelings in men;

(5) when the body touches smoothness and softness which causes hope to touch them again, thus arousing internal joyful feelings in men;

(6) and when the mind obtains pleasant thoughts<sup>175</sup> which causes hope to obtain them again, thus arousing internal joyful feelings in men. These six things arouse internal pleasant feelings.”<sup>176</sup>

(b) “What are the six external things arousing joyful feelings in men?”

“They are (1) when the eyes see pleasant material forms, one thinks of them as not easily to be obtained and therefore they should be discarded. Thus having pondered and analyzed impermanence, there arouses external joyful feelings;

(2) when the ears hear good sounds, one thinks of them as not easily to be obtained...



皆當棄捐，是故令人外喜。三者，鼻聞好香，念之不可常得，皆當棄捐，是故令人外喜。四者，口得美味，念之不可常得，皆當棄捐，是故令人外喜。五者，身得細滑，念之不可常得，皆當棄捐，是故令人外喜。六者，心念愛欲，思惟念之，是皆無常，皆當棄捐，念之，是以後更喜。是為六事，令人外喜。王復問：何等為內六事，令人內愁？那先言：一者，令人內愁者，目所不喜而見之，令人內愁。

...and therefore they should be discarded, thus there arouses external joyful feelings;

(3) when the nose smells good scents, one thinks of them as not easily to be obtained and therefore they should be discarded, there arouses external joyful feelings;

(4) when the tongue tastes nice flavors, one thinks of them as not easily to be obtained and therefore they should be discarded, there arouses external joyful feelings;

(5) when the body touches smoothness and softness, one thinks of them as not easily to be obtained and therefore they should be discarded, there arouses external joyful feelings;

(6) and when the mind indulges in lustful craving, one ponders it over that all things are impermanent and therefore they should be discarded, thinking thus, there arouses external joyful feelings. These are the six external things arousing pleasant feelings.<sup>177</sup>

(c) “What are the six internal things arousing internal sorrowful feelings in men?” asked again the king.

“They are (1) when we see what our eyes dislike to see, there arises internal sorrowful feelings;



二者，耳不欲所聞而聞之，令人內愁。三者，鼻不欲所臭而嗅之，令人內愁。四者，口不欲所得而得之，令人內愁。五者，身不欲所著而著之，令人內愁。六者，心不可所喜而有之，令人內愁。是為六事，令人內愁。王復問：何等為外六事，令人不喜？那先言：一者，目見惡色，令人不喜；二者，耳聞惡聲，令人不喜；三者，鼻聞臭腥，令人不喜；四者，舌得苦辛，令人不喜；五者，身著麤堅，令人不喜；六者，心有憎，令人不喜。是為外六事，令人不喜。

(2) when we hear what our ears dislike to hear, there arises internal sorrowful feelings;

(3) when we smell what our nose dislikes to smell, there arises internal sorrowful feelings;

(4) when we taste what our tongue dislikes to taste, there arises internal sorrowful feelings;

(5) when we touch what our body dislikes to touch, there arises internal sorrowful feelings;

(6) and when we think what the mind dislikes to think, there arises internal sorrowful feelings.”<sup>178</sup>

(d) “What are the six external things arousing sad feelings in men?”

“They are (1) when the eyes see evil material forms, this arouses sad feelings in men;

(2) when the ears hear unpleasant sounds, this arouses sad feelings in men;

(3) when the nose smells bad odors, this arouses sad feelings in men;

(4) when the tongue tastes bitter taste, this arouses (710b) sad feelings in men;

(5) when the body touches the roughness and hardness, this arouses sad feelings in men;

(6) and when the mind hates something, this arouses sad feelings in men. These are the six external things arousing sad feelings in men.”

王復問：何等為六事令人不愁亦不喜？那先言：一者目有所見亦不喜不愁，二者耳有所聞音亦不喜亦不愁，三者鼻有所嗅亦不喜亦不愁，四者口有所得亦不喜亦不愁，五者身有所觸亦不喜亦不愁，六者心有所念亦不喜亦不愁，是為內六事令人不喜不愁。王復問：何等為外六事令人愁者？那先言：一者目所見死者，因自念身及萬物無常，其人自念言：我有是念，何以不得道，因外愁。

(e) The king asked, “What are the six things arousing neither sorrowful nor joyful feelings in people?”

“They are (1) when the eyes see things, this arouses neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings;

(2) when the ears hear sounds, this arouses neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings;

(3) when the nose smells odors, this arouses neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings;

(4) when the tongue tastes something, this arouses neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings;

(5) when the body touches something, this arouses neither pleasant feelings nor unpleasant feelings;

(6) and when the mind thinks over something, this arouses neither pleasant feelings nor unpleasant feelings. These are the six internal things that arouse neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings.”

(f) “What are the six external things which arouse sorrowful feelings in people?”

“They are (1) when the eyes see a dead body and one ponders over the impermanence of the body and of all external matters, then he thinks to himself, ‘Having pondered over this, why have I not attained emancipation?’ Thus there arise external sorrowful feelings in him.

二者耳不樂好音，其人自念言：我有是念，何以不得道？因外愁。三者鼻不喜臭香，其人自念言：我有是念，何以不得道？因外愁。四者口不味苦甜，其人自念：我有是念，何以不得道？因外愁。五者身不好細滑，亦不得道，因外愁。六者自念言：我有是念，何以不得道？因外愁。六者心不喜愛欲，其人自念言：我有是念，何以不得道？因外愁。是為六事令人外愁。王言：善哉。善哉。❀

(2) When one does not like to hear the good sounds, he thinks to himself, ‘If I have such a thought, why have I not attained emancipation?’ Thus there arise external sorrowful feelings.

(3) When the nose dislikes to smell both good and bad odors, he thinks to himself, ‘If I have such a thought, why have I not attained emancipation?’ Thus there arise external sorrowful feelings.

(4) When tongue tastes bitterness and sweetness indifferently, he thinks himself, ‘If I have such a thought, why have I not attained emancipation?’ Thus there arise external sorrowful feelings.

(5) When body touches neither smoothness and softness nor roughness and hardness, then he thinks himself, ‘If I have such a thought, why have I not attained emancipation?’ Thus there arise external sorrowful feelings.

(6) When the mind dislikes craving, he thinks himself, ‘If I have such a thought, why I have not attained emancipation.’ Thus there arise external sorrowful feelings. These are the six things arousing external sorrowful feelings.”<sup>179</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

二一、  
 王復問那先：人以死後誰於後世生者？那先  
 言：名與身於後世生。王問那先：故人名身行  
 生耶？那先言：不也，非故名亦非故身，持是名  
 身於今世作善惡，乃於後世生耳。王言：如使  
 今世用是名身作善惡，於後世身不復生者，  
 極可作善惡，徑可得脫，不復更諸苦耶？那先  
 言：於今世作善，後世不復生者，便可得脫，無  
 耶。人作善惡不止，當後生耳，是故不得脫。

## 21. Name-and-Form and Rebirth

The king asked Nagasena, “What is reborn after death?”

Nagasena replied, “Name-and-form (*namarupa*) is reborn in the next life.”

“Is it the former name-and-form that is reborn?”

“No, it is neither the former name, nor the former form, but by this name-and-form, good and evil deeds are done in this life and (from these deeds), another name-and-form is reborn in the next life.”

“If that be so, by this name-and-form, good and evil deeds are done in this life and this (name and) form is not to be reborn in the next life. Can one be released from the results of his good or bad deeds done (in this life) so that one does not suffer hereafter?”

“If one does good deeds in this life, and is not to be reborn in the next life, then he is released. But people perform good and bad *karma* continuously without stopping, surely they will reconnect again and therefore they are not released.”

那先言：譬如人盜他人果，其主得盜果者，將至王前白言：是人盜我果，其盜者言：我不盜，是人果，是人所種小栽耳，本不種果也。我自取果，我何用為盜？我不盜，是人果，我不應有罪過。那先問王言：如是兩人共爭誰為直者？誰不直者？王言：種栽家為直，本造所種盜者，無狀應為有罪。那先言：盜何用為有罪？王言：所以盜者有罪，本種栽家所種，從栽根生，故上有果耳。那先言：人生亦譬如人，今世用是名身作善惡。

[(1) *Simile of the fruit*]

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “Suppose someone were to steal a fruit<sup>180</sup> from another man, and the owner of the fruit were to seize the man and bring him before the king, saying, ‘This man has stolen my fruit.’ Then if the thief were to say, ‘Your Majesty, I have not taken away this man’s fruit. (710c) This man has only planted the small fruit tree but not the fruit. I take the fruit to be mine, why do I need to steal? So I have not stolen this man’s fruit, I am not guilty.’” Nagasena said to the king: “Thus the two persons argue with each other as to who is right who is wrong.”

The king said, “The person who has planted the fruit tree is correct, because the fruit comes from that plant. The thief’s argument does not stand up, he is guilty.”

“Why is the thief guilty?” asked Nagasena.

“The thief is guilty because it was the owner of the fruit tree who had planted it, allowed the tree to grow roots and thus bear fruits.”

Then Nagasena said, “So it is in the life of a person. If a person, by this name-and-form, does good and evil deeds in this life...

者是其本也。用是名身作善惡，乃生於後世，今世作善惡。無緣何有穉，那先言：人生亦譬如是人，今世為不直，王言：是種禾者為本，有種禾者為直，盜者為不直。那先言：何以知盜禾穉者前白如是，誰為直者，誰為不直，王言：種禾穀禾，我自取穉，我何用為犯盜，兩人相牽至王，盜我禾穉，為盜者言：我不盜，卿禾穉，卿自種，譬如人盜他人禾穉，其主得盜，便牽問之，汝乃生於後世，今世作善惡者是本也。那先言：

...and then is reborn in the next life, the good and evil deeds done in this life are the causes and conditions (for birth).”

[(2) *Simile of the crops*]

Nagasena gave another simile, “Suppose a man were to steal another man’s crop of ripened grains<sup>181</sup> and the owner were to seize the thief and says, ‘You have stolen my crops.’ The thief argues, ‘I have not stolen your crops, you have sown the cereal grass, but I take the crops, so how can you say that I commit theft?’ The two persons argued with each other and went before the king to tell the king about their dispute. Who is right and who is wrong?”

“The man who has sown the crops is correct, the thief is wrong.” said the king.

“How can you know that the one who steals the crops is wrong?”

“Sowing the paddy is the root cause. If there is no sowing of cereal grass, there is no root cause, thus how can there be crops?”

“So it is in the life of a person. A person, by this name-and-form, does good and evil deeds in this life, and he is reborn in the next life. The good and evil deeds done in this life are the root causes and conditions.”

那先言：譬如人，冬寒於一舍中，然火，欲自溫。炙其人，棄火而去。稍稍然及壁土，燒屋連及樓舍。舍主因言：起火者牽至王前，白言：是人起火，延及燒我樓舍。然火者言：我然小火，自溫炙耳，我不燒樓舍。那先問：王誰為直者？王言：本然火者為不直，本所生也。那先言：人生亦爾，譬如人今世用是名身作善惡，乃生於後世，今世作善惡者是本也。

[(3) *Simile of fire*]

Nagasena gave a simile, “It is like a man who feels cold in the winter and therefore lights a fire in the house to warm himself up. Then he leaves the fire still burning and goes away. After sometime, the fire burns the walls, rooms and the house.<sup>182</sup> Then if the owner of the house were to seize that man and take him before the king, saying, ‘This man lit a fire and that fire has burned my house.’ Then the man who lights the fire says, ‘I lit a small fire in order to warm myself, I did not intend to burn the house.’”

Nagasena asked, “who is right, who is wrong?”

The king said, “The person who lit the fire is wrong, because the fire serves as a cause or condition (for the burning of the house).”

Nagasena said, “So it is in the life of a person. It is like a person who, by this name-and-form, does good and evil deeds in this life, and thus is to be reborn in the next life. The good and evil deeds done in this life serve as causes and conditions.”



那先言：譬如人夜然燭火著壁，欲用自照飯食，燭稍却及壁上及竹木材，便燒一舍，火大熾延及燒一城中。舉城中人民共語言：汝何為燒一城中？如是。然火者言：我但然小燭火，以自照飯食耳，是自然大火非我也。如是便共爭訟相牽至王前。那先問王言：如是誰為直者？誰為不直者？王言：然火者為不直。那先言：何以知？王言：本是一城所生也，汝飯食已，不當滅火也，而今令火燒一城中。那先言：人生亦譬如是人，今世用是名身作善惡。

[(4) Simile of the candle fire]

Nagasena gave another simile, “Suppose a man were to light a candle<sup>183</sup> and put it on the wall, and by that light he takes his meal. After some time, if the flame of the candle were to set the wall on fire, then the bamboo and other wood until at last all the houses were on fire. The fire spreads and at last burns the whole city. Then the people of the whole city were to ask the man, ‘You fellow, what have you set the whole of our city on fire for?’ And then the man would say, ‘I just lit a small candle in order to take my meal by the light. Therefore this big fire is different from that small flame which I lit.’ Now, if they, thus disputing, (711a) should go before the king, who is right who is wrong?”

“The person who lit the fire is wrong and guilty.”

“But why?”

“Because, Sir, the cause comes from the fire. After he has had his meal, he did not put out the fire and therefore the whole city caught fire.”

Nagasena said, “Just so is the life of a person. A person, by this name-and-form,...



乃生於後世，今世作善惡者是其本也。人用不知作善惡，故不能得度脫。那先言：譬如人以錢娉求人家小女，以後女長大，他人復更求娉，求女得女以為婦。前所娉家來自說言：汝反取婦為後家言：汝自小時娉女，我自大時娉婦，我何用為嬰汝婦耶？便相牽詣王前。那先言：王如是誰為直者？誰為不直者？王言：前娉家為直。那先言：王何以知？王言：是女本小，今稍長大，是故知為直也。是前娉家婦也。

...does good and evil deeds in this life, and is reborn in the next life. The good and evil deeds done in this life are the causes and conditions. Because of ignorance (*avidya*), a person does good and evil deeds, therefore he is not released (from suffering).”

[(5) *Simile of the marriage*]

Nagasena again gave a simile, “Suppose, a man were to choose a young girl in marriage and give a price for her. After some years, she, in due course, grows up to a mature age and another man paid a price to marry her. Then the first man would come and say, ‘You fellow, why have you married my wife?’ Then if the other were to say, ‘You have chosen the young girl for marriage and paid a price for her, but I have chosen the grown up girl for marriage and paid a price for her, how can you say that I have married your wife?’ Thus disputing, should the two men go before the king, who is right, who is wrong?”

“The first one is right.”

“But why?”

“Because, Sir, the grown up girl would have been derived from the young girl. Therefore she is the wife of the first one. So the first one is right.”

那先言：人生亦譬如人，今世用是名身作善惡，乃生於後世。今世作善惡者，是其本也。那先言：譬如人持瓶，從牧牛家買乳，湏得湏已，復還寄其主。言：我今還不久，其人須與來還。取瓶，湏湏以轉作酪，買湏家言：我持湏寄卿。今反持酪還我，牧牛者言：是汝故乳。今自轉為酪。兩人因共爭訟，相牽詣王前。那先問王言：如是誰為直者？王言：牧牛家為直。那先言：王何以知？王言：汝自買湏，停置地，自轉成酪。牧牛家當有何過？

“Just so is the life of a person. If a person, by this name-and-form, does good and evil deeds in this life, and then should he be reborn in the next life, the good and evil deeds done in this life are the causes and conditions of the next life.”

[(6) *Simile of the milk*]

Nagasena gave another simile, “Suppose a man were to take a bottle and buy milk from a herdsman. Then he leaves the bottle in the herdsman’s charge and says, ‘I will come back for it later.’ After some time, the man comes back to take his bottle of milk, but that bottle of milk has turned into curds already. Then the man, the buyer, says to the herdsman, ‘I have bought milk not curds. But now you give me curds.’ And then if the other were to reply, ‘It is your milk that has turned into curds.’ If they thus disputing with each other, should go before the king, who is right and who is wrong?”

“The herdsman is right.”

“But why?”

“Because, the man bought milk and left it at the herdsman’s house. The milk itself turned into curds, where is the guilt of the herdsman?”

那先言：人生亦譬如是人，今世作善惡者，是其本身作。善惡，乃生於後世。今世作善惡者，是其本身作。王復問：今那先當復於後世生耶？那先報：後世言：用是為問，我前說已，如使我有恩愛者，後世當復生，如使我無恩愛者，不復生。那先言：譬如人竭盡力事王，當知其善使，賜其財物。其如人得物極自施用，衣被飲食，歡樂自樂，其如人得物極自施用，衣被飲食，歡樂自樂，其如人得物極自施用，衣被飲食，歡樂自樂。人論議言：我有功於王，未曾有賞賜，我也。那先問：王如彼人得賞賜，反言未曾得。

Nagasena said, “Just so is the life of a person. If a person, by this name-and-form, does good and evil deeds in this life, and then is reborn in the next life, the good and evil deeds done in this life are the causes and conditions of that.”<sup>184</sup> ❀

## 22. Will Nagasena be Reborn?

The king asked, “Will you, Nagasena, be reborn in the next life?”

Nagasena replied, “Great king, what is the use of asking that question again? Have I not already told you that if I have craving in my heart when I die, I shall be reborn. If I have no craving, I shall not be reborn. It is like a man who renders his service to the king exhaustively. The king knows that the man is good and so bestows on him money and (711b) materials. Having got the money and materials, the man, having used them to buy clothes and food and drinks for himself, enjoys all the pleasures of the senses, should then publicly declare, ‘I have done great service to the king, but the king pays me naught.’”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “If a man has received rewards, but says that he has received none,...

其人語寧可用不。王言：其人語不可用。那先言：是故我語。王言：如使我有恩愛者，不復於後世生。王後世生，如使我無恩愛者，不復於後世生。王言：善哉，善哉。❀

二、三、

王問那先：卿前所說人名與身，何等為名。何等為身者？那先言：今見在為身，心所念者為名。王復問：人何故有名？行於後世生而身不行，那先言：人身以名前行，後相連，譬如鷄子，中汁及與上皮，乃成鷄子，人名與身相連，如是不分也。王言：善哉。❀

...are the man's words reliable?"

"No, not reliable." replied the king.

"Thus I have told you, great king, if I have craving in my heart, I will be reborn in the next life. If I have no craving in my heart, I will not be reborn in the next life."

"Excellent, Nagasena." ❀

### 23. Inter-dependence of Name and Form

The king asked, "You were talking just now of name-and-form, what does name mean, what does form mean?"

Nagasena replied, "What is currently existing is the form (i.e. the body), what the mind thinks is name."<sup>185</sup>

"Why is it, Nagasena, that name is not reborn separately from its form?"

"The name and form of a person are connected one with another and spring into being together. It is like an egg that consists of the yoke and the egg-shell. Just so, the name is not separate from its form."

"Excellent, Nagasena." ❀

二四、王復問：那先何等為久者？那先言：以過去事為久，當來事亦為久，見在事為無有久。王言：善哉。王復問：那先言：或久，或無有久。王復言：何等為有久，何等為無有久？那先言：其道當復更死生者為有久，泥洹者為無久，未得孝於父母，於當來世當得其福。王言：善哉，善哉。

## 24. Question on Time

The king asked, “Venerable Nagasena, what is meant by ‘time’?”<sup>186</sup>

Nagasena replied, “Concerning the past things we speak in reference to time, concerning the future things we also speak in reference to time, but concerning the present things we speak without referring to time.”<sup>187</sup>

“Very good Nagasena.”

The king said, “In consideration, is there time which exists?”

Nagasena replied, “There is time which exists, there is time which does not exist.”

“Which time exists, which does not?”

“Regarding the person who has attained *nirvana*, time does not exist, but regarding the person who has not attained the Path and is still subject to birth and death, time exists. {If a person in this life delights in giving and is filial to his parents, then, he will get happiness in the next life.}<sup>188</sup>”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

## 25. The Root of Past, Present and Future *Dharmas*

王復問那先言：諸以過去事、當來事、今見在事，是三事何所為本者？那先言：已過去事、當來事、今見在事，愚癡者是其本也。愚癡生即生神，神生身，身生名，名生色，色生六知：一為眼知，二為耳知，三為鼻知，四為口知，五為身知，六為心知，是為六知，是六事皆外向。何等為外向？眼向色、耳向聲、鼻向香、口向味、身向滑、心向貪欲，是為六外。向名為沛，沛者合、沛者知苦知樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲。

The king asked, “What is the root<sup>189</sup> cause, Nagasena, of past things, of present things and of future things?”

Nagasena replied, “Ignorance is the root cause of past, future and present things. Because of ignorance, the spirit<sup>190</sup> comes into being; conditioned by spirit, {the body<sup>191</sup> comes into being; conditioned by body,} name comes into being; conditioned by name, form comes into being; conditioned by form, the six sense awarenesses<sup>193</sup> come into being: (1) the eye awareness, (2) the ear awareness, (3) the nose awareness, (4) the tongue awareness, (5) the body awareness, and (6) the mind awareness. These are the six sense awarenesses. These six sense organs are all open to the outside (world). How do they open to the outside world? The eyes see forms, the ears listen to sounds, the nose smells odors, the tongue tastes flavors, the body feels the touch of smoothness, and the mind inclines towards craving. These are the six outside things. Going towards the object is called flowing. When these (flowings) are joined together, one is able to know suffering and happiness. From suffering and happiness, there comes craving,<sup>194</sup> from craving, comes lustful desire;<sup>195</sup> ...

從貪欲生有致，便生因老，從老因病，從病因死，從死因哭，從哭因憂，從憂因內心痛，凡合是諸勤苦，合名為人。人以是故，生死無有絕時。人故本身不可得也。那先言：譬如人種五穀，生根，從根生莖葉實，至後得穀已，後年復種得穀甚多。那先問王：如人種穀，歲歲種穀，寧有絕不生時不？王言：歲歲種穀，無有絕不生時也。那先言：人生亦如是，展轉相生，無有絕時。

...from lustful desire, comes becoming;<sup>196</sup> from becoming, comes birth; from birth, comes old age; from old age, comes disease or sickness; from disease or sickness, comes death; from death, comes lamentation; from lamentation, comes grief; from grief, comes inner despair.<sup>197</sup> All these sufferings of life coming together is called a person. Because of all these (worries and sufferings), the person is subject to birth and death without an end. Therefore, the same old body of a person cannot be obtained.<sup>198</sup>

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “It is just like sowing grain. A man sows the five kinds of grains,<sup>199</sup> from the grains come the roots, then comes stalks, leaves and fruits. After all these comes grain. Then the next year, he sows grain again and also gets much grain.”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “It is like a man who sows grain every year. Is there an end or a stop to the production of grain?”

“If he sows grain every year, there will be no end to its production.”

“Just so is the life of a person. There is no end to this cycle of birth and death.”



那先言：譬如鷄生卵，卵生鷄，從卵生卵，從鷄生鷄。人生死亦如是，無有絕時。那先便畫地作車輪，問王言：今是輪寧有角無？王言：正圓無有角。那先言：佛經說：人生死如車輪展轉相生，無有絕時。那先言：人從眼萬物色識，即覺知，是三事合，從合生苦樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲，從貪欲生因，有致，從有致因，從生因作善惡，從善惡便生。

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “Just like a hen that lays an egg. From the egg comes a hen, from the hen comes another egg. So it is in a person. The cycle of birth and death continues without end.”

Then the Elder Nagasena drew a cycle of the wheel on the ground and asked the king, “Are there angles<sup>200</sup> to this wheel?”

“This is a complete cycle. There is no angle to it,” said the king.

Then Nagasena said, “In a sutras, the Buddha says, ‘*The cycle of birth and death of a person is like the wheel of a chariot rolling on continuously without an end.*’”<sup>201</sup>

Nagasena continued,

(a) “When the eyes make contact with various forms, then the eye consciousness arises. When these three (the eye, the form and the eye-consciousness) come together, happiness or suffering arise; from happiness and suffering, craving or attachment arises; from craving, lustful desire arises; from lustful desire, becoming arises; from becoming, there arises birth; from birth, there arise good and bad activities; then there again arises birth.”<sup>202</sup>



耳聞聲識即覺知，三事合，從合生苦樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲，從貪欲生因有致，從有因生，從生因作善惡，從善惡便生。口得味識即覺知，三事合，從合生苦樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲，從貪欲生因有致，從有因生，從生因作善惡，從善惡便生。鼻聞香識即覺知，三事合，從合生苦樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲，從貪欲生因有致，從有因生，從生因作善惡，從善惡便生。鼻

(b) “When the ears hear good sounds, ear-consciousness arises, then these three come together. With the contact of these three, happiness and suffering arise; from happiness and suffering, craving arises; from craving, lustful desire arises; from lustful desire, becoming arises; from becoming, birth arises; from birth, good and bad activities arise; from these good and bad activities, birth again arises.”

(c) “When the nose smells good odors, nose-consciousness arises; from the contact of these three, happiness and suffering arise; from happiness and suffering, craving arises; from craving, lustful desire arises; from lustful desire, becoming arises; from becoming, birth arises; from birth, good and bad activities arise; from good and bad activities, birth again arises.”

(d) “When the tongue tastes a flavor, then tongue-consciousness arises; from the contact of these three, happiness and suffering arise; from happiness and suffering, craving arises; from craving, lustful desire arises; from lustful desire, becoming arises; from becoming, birth arises; from birth, good and bad activities arise; from good and bad activities, birth again arises.”

身得細滑，識即覺知，三事合，從合生苦樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲，從貪欲生因有。致，從有致因生，從生因作善惡，從善惡便生。意有所念，識即覺知，三事合，從合生苦樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲，從貪欲生因有。致，從有致因生，從生因作善惡，從善惡便生。致，從有致因生，從生因作善惡，從善惡便生。那先言：人展轉相生無有絕。王言：善哉。 ✽

二六、

王復問那先：卿言人生死不可得。

(e) “When the body touches smoothness and softness, then body-consciousness arises; from the contact of these three, happiness and suffering arise; from happiness and suffering, craving arises; from craving, lustful desire arises; from lustful desire, becoming arises; from becoming, birth arises; from birth, good and bad activities arise; from good and bad activities, birth again arises.”

(f) “When the mind thinks over something, mind-consciousness arises; from the contact of these three, happiness and suffering arise; from happiness and suffering, craving arises; from craving, lustful desire arises; from lustful desire, becoming arises; from becoming, birth arises; from birth, good and bad activities arise; from good and bad activities, birth again arises.” (712a)

Nagasena continued, “Thus, a person is subject to birth and death like a wheel without an end.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ✽

## 26. The Endlessness of Birth and Death

The king asked Nagasena, “Revered Sir, you said that the birth and death of a person are empty,...

本不可得。本意云何？那先言：無本者當不復生。有本者當復過去。用是為本。王言：無本者當不復生。見有本者當過去。如是本為未絕耶。那先言：然皆當過去。王復問那先：人生死寧有從旁增益者不？那先問王言：世間人及蚊行蠕動之類，寧有從旁增益者不？王言：我不問那先。世間人及蚊行蠕動之類，我但欲問卿。人生死本耳。那先言：樹木生以栽為本，五穀生以穀為本。

...the root cause<sup>203</sup> of it is also empty. Here what is the root cause?"<sup>204</sup>

Nagasena replied, "When there is no<sup>205</sup> root-cause, one will not be born again. But when there is a root-cause, once more one will pass onto another existence on account of this root-cause."

"If there is no root-cause, one will not be born again. When there is root-cause, once more one will pass onto another existence. Thus there is no end to this root cause," said the king.

"Yes, all have to pass on."

[(1) *Other factors in the rebirth of a person*]

The king asked Nagasena again, "Are there other factors<sup>206</sup> which would help to continue one's birth and death?"

Nagasena said, "Are there other factors which help continue the birth and death of all birds and animals<sup>207</sup> in the world?"<sup>208</sup>

"I did not ask you the question with regard to birds<sup>209</sup> and animals in the world. I just ask you, Sir, the root cause of the birth and death of a person."

Then Nagasena replied, "With reference to trees, they can grow and the seedling is their root cause. With reference to the five kinds of grain,...

天下萬物皆各以其類本生，人從六情恩愛為本。那先言：人有眼有色有識，有耳有聲有識，有鼻有香有識，有舌有味有識，有身有細滑有識，有念有法有識。從是生苦樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲，從貪欲生合，是諸苦乃成為人耳、眼、耳、鼻、口、身、神、識。念使有致，并合為沛，從沛生苦樂，從苦樂生恩愛，從恩愛生貪欲，從貪欲因生有致。

...they can grow and the grain is their root cause. Everything on the earth grows or rises, owing to its root cause. With regard to person, the six passions<sup>210</sup> and craving are the root causes.”

“With regard to a person, there are eyes and also forms, there is eye-consciousness; there are ears and sounds, there is also ear-consciousness; there is the nose and smell, there is also nose-consciousness; there is the tongue and flavors, there is also tongue-consciousness; there is the body and softness and smoothness, then there is also body-consciousness; there is the mind and mind objects (*dharmas*), then there is mind-consciousness also.<sup>211</sup>

{Then from all these things, happiness and suffering arise; from happiness and suffering, craving arises; from craving, lustful desire arises; from lustful desire, arise the aggregates of suffering which constitute a human being. The eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, the mind, the consciousness and the mindfulness cause becoming to arise.}<sup>212</sup> The coming together of all those things is called touch; from touch, painful or pleasant feelings arise; from painful and pleasant feelings, craving arises; from craving, lustful desire arises; from lustful desire, becoming arises;...

從有致因生，從生因老因病，從病因死因憂，  
從憂因哭，從哭因內心痛，人生如是。那先言：  
無眼不見色，不覺不知，從不覺不知無有合，  
無有合無有苦樂，無有苦樂便不生，無有合，  
恩愛不生，貪欲無，貪欲無有苦樂，無有苦樂，  
不老，不生，不老，不病，不死，不病，不死，不  
哭，不愁，不哭，不內心痛，無是諸苦，便度脫，得  
泥洹道。無耳無所聞，無鼻無所嗅，無口無所  
味。

...from becoming, birth arises; from birth, old age and sickness arise; from sickness, comes death; from death, arises grief; from grief, arises lamentation; from lamentation, arises pain in the heart. Thus is human life.”<sup>213</sup>

[(2) *The conditions for arising and cessation*]

Then Nagasena continued, “Where there are no eyes, no material forms to be seen, there is also no consciousness.<sup>214</sup> Due to non-consciousness, there is no coming together, due to non-coming together, there are no painful, or pleasant feelings; due to no painful or pleasant feelings, there is no craving; due to no craving, there is no lustful desire; due to no lustful desire, there is no becoming; due to no becoming, there is no birth, no old age; due to no birth, there is no old age, due to no old age, there is no sickness and death; due to no sickness and death, there is no grief and lamentation; due to no grief and lamentation, there is no suffering in the inner heart; due to no such sufferings, one is emancipated and obtains the Path of *nirvana*.

If there is no ear, there is also no hearing of sounds; if there is no nose, there is also no smelling of odors; if there is no tongue, there is also no tasting of flavor;...

無身無細滑，無識無所念，無所念無沛，無沛無苦樂，無苦樂無恩愛，無恩愛無貪欲，無貪欲無胞胎，無所胞胎無所生，不生不老，不病，不病不死，不死不愁，不愁不哭，不哭不內心痛，捐棄諸苦，便得泥洹道。王言：善哉。❀

二七、

王復問那先言：世間寧有自然生物無？那先言：無有自然生物，皆當有所因。

...If there is no body, there is also no touch of softness and smoothness; if there is no mind, there is also no thinking of mind objects. Due to no thinking of mind objects, there is no contact or touch; due to no contact, there is no painful or pleasant feelings; due to no painful or pleasant feelings, there is no craving; due to no craving, there is no lustful desire; due to no lustful desire, there is no embryo; due to no embryo, there is no birth; due to no birth, there is no old age; due to no old age, there is no sickness; due to no sickness, there is no death; due to no death, there is no grief; (712b) due to no grief, there is no lamentation; due to no lamentation, there is no suffering in the inner heart. So abandoning all such sufferings, one obtains the Path of *nirvana*.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

## 27. The Origin of Things

The king asked Nagasena, “Is there anything in the world arising spontaneously?”<sup>215</sup>

Then Nagasena replied, “There is nothing in this world that arises spontaneously. All things originate through causes and conditions.”

壹那先因問王。今王所坐殿，有人功夫作之耶？自然生乎？王言：人功作之，材椽出於樹木，垣牆泥土出於地。那先言：人生亦如是，界如和合乃成為人，是故無自然生物也，皆有所因。貳那先言：譬如窯家作器，取土水和以為泥，燒作雜器物，其泥不能自成，為器會當須人工，有薪火乃成為器耳。世間無有自然生者也。參那先語王言：譬如筌篲。

[(1) *Simile of the hall*]

Then Nagasena asked the king, “What do you think, did this great hall in which you are sitting come spontaneously into being or come into being owing to the endeavor of men?”

“It is due to the moil and toil of men. The woods come from forest, the clay and mud come from earth.”

Nagasena said, “It is the same with regard to a person. The combination of eighteen *dhatus* or twelve *ayatanas* is called a person. Therefore there is nothing that arises spontaneously. There must be causes and conditions for a thing to arise.”

[(2) *Simile of earthen ware pot*]

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “It is just like a potter who makes earthen-wares. He takes water and earth, makes them into mud, shapes them into various forms and fires them into various earthen-wares. The mud itself cannot become earthen-ware. There must be man’s effort and the burning of wood before it becomes earthen-ware. There is nothing that arises spontaneously in this world.”

[(3) *Simile of music*]

Nagasena again gave a simile and said to the king, “It is like a lute (*vina*).



無絃無柱無人鼓者，寧能作聲不？王言：不能自作聲。那先言：如使箜篌有絃有柱，有人工鼓者，其聲寧出不？王言：有聲。那先言：如是天下無自然生物，皆當有所因。肆那先問王：如鑽火燧，無兩木，無人鑽者，寧能得火不？王言：不能得火。那先言：設有兩木，有人鑽之，寧能生火不？王言：然。即生火。那先言：天下無有自然生物，皆當有所因。伍那先問王言：譬如陽燧鉤，無人持之，亦無日，

If there is no string, no frame, no one to play it, can it produce any sounds?"

"Certainly not Sir." said the king.

"Then, if there is a lute with string, frame and there is also a man to play it, can it produce sounds?"

"Yes, it can."

"Thus, there is nothing that arises spontaneously in this world. There must be causes and conditions for a thing to arise."

[(4) *Simile of making fire*]

Nagasena said to the king, "It is like making fire by rubbing two sticks together. If there are no sticks, no human effort or exertion, could there be fire?"

"Certainly not."

"If there are two sticks and also human effort or exertion, could there be fire?"

"Yes, there could be fire."

"Thus there is nothing that arises spontaneously in this world. There must be causes and conditions for a thing to arise."

[(5) *Simile of fire*]

Nagasena asked the king, "It is like a lens<sup>216</sup> without a person holding it, and without the sun,...



二八  
無天寧能得火。那先言：如陽燧有人持之，有  
天有日，寧能得火不？王言：得火。那先言：天下  
無有自然生物，皆當有因。陸那先問王言：若  
人無鏡，無明人欲自照，寧能自見其形不？王  
言：不能自見。那先言：如有有鏡，有明有人自  
照，寧能自見形不？王言：然。即能自見。那先言：  
天下無有自然生物，皆有所因。王言：善哉。❀

...or a clear sky, could it produce fire?"

"Certainly not."

"Then if there is a person holding the lens, and there is the sun and clear sky, can it produce fire?"

"Yes, it can produce fire."

"Thus, there is nothing in this world that arises spontaneously. There must be causes and conditions for a thing to arise."

[(6) *Simile of the image*]

Nagasena asked the king again, "Suppose a man has no mirror, and there is also no light, but he wants to see himself in the mirror. Can he see his own image?"

"No, he cannot see his own image."

"But, if there is a mirror, light and also a person looking at the mirror, can he see his own image?"

"Yes, he can see his own image."

"Thus, there is nothing in this world that arises spontaneously. There must be causes and conditions for a thing to arise."<sup>217</sup>

"Excellent, Nagasena." ❀

## 28. Is There a Soul?

王復問那先：世間人寧為有人無？那先言：世  
 間不能審有人也。適當呼誰為人？王言：身中  
 命即為人。那先問王：人身中命能用眼視  
 色不？能用耳聽音聲不？能用鼻聞香不？能用  
 舌知味不？能用身知細滑不？能用意有所知  
 不？王言：能。那先言：今我與王，其於殿上，四面  
 有窓，自在欲從何窓者？寧能見不？王言：得見。  
 那先言：設令人命在身中，自在欲從何孔視  
 耳能，以眼視色不？能用耳視色不？能用鼻孔視  
 色不？

The king further asked Nagasena saying, “Is there a soul in an ordinary person?”<sup>218</sup>

Nagasena replied, “By analysis and examination, there is no soul in an ordinary person. What can we call a soul?”

“Is the life or living principle<sup>219</sup> in the body of a person called a soul?” asked the king.

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Can the living principle in a person see the material forms through eyes, hear sounds through the ears, (712c) smell odors through nose, taste flavors through tongue, feel smoothness and softness through body, and think over some objects with mind?”

“Yes it could.”

Then Nagasena said, “Now you and I are sitting in this palace with windows open to the four directions. Is it possible for us to see what we want to see through any window we like?”

“Yes, we can.”

Nagasena said, (a) “Suppose, the living principle in the body of a person can see through any orifice<sup>220</sup> of the body freely, can it see the material forms through the eyes? Can it see the material forms through the ears? Can it see the material forms through the nose?...

能不用口視色不能。王言：不能。那先言：設令命在鼻，能以耳有能聞不能。以耳有所見不能。以耳知香臭不能。所念不，那先言：設令命在鼻，能以耳有不能。以鼻聞音聲不能。以鼻知味不能。以鼻知細滑不能。以口知味不能。以口聞臭香不能。以口知滑不能。以口有所念不能。

...Can it see the material forms through the mouth?  
Can it see the material forms through the body?  
Can it see the material forms through the mind?”

“No, it cannot.”

(b) “Suppose, the living principle is in the ear, then can it hear sounds through the ears? Can it see material forms through the ears? Can it smell odors both good and bad through the ears? Can it taste flavors with the ears? Can it feel softness and smoothness with the ears? Can it think over something using the ears?”

(c) “Suppose, the living principle is in the nose, then can it smell both good and bad odors through the nose? Can it see material forms through the nose?<sup>221</sup> Can it hear sounds through the nose? Can it taste flavors with the nose? Can it feel smoothness and softness with the nose? Can it think over something with the nose?”

(d) “Suppose, the living principle is in the mouth, then can it taste flavors through the mouth? Can it see the material forms through the mouth? Can it hear sounds with the mouth? Can it smell good and bad odors with the mouth? Can it feel smoothness and softness through the mouth? Can it think over something with the mouth?”

那先言：設令命在身中，能以身知，細滑不能，  
 以身有所見，不能以身聽音聲，不能以身知，  
 臭香，不能以身知味，不能以身有所念，不能以  
 先言：設令命在識，能以識有所念，不能以識  
 聽音聲，不能以識知臭香，不能以識知味，不  
 能以識知細滑，不能以識知臭香，不能以識知味，  
 所語前後不相副。那先言：如我與王共在殿  
 上坐，徹壞四愁者，視寧廣遠，不王言：然廣遠  
 那先言：設令命在身中，捌眼去之，其視寧廣  
 遠，不決耳令大，其聽寧能遠不？

(e) “Suppose, the living principle is in the body, then can it feel smoothness and softness through the body? Can it see the material forms through the body? Can it hear sounds through the body? Can it smell both good and bad odors through the body? Can it taste flavors through the body? Can it think over something with the body?”

(f) “Suppose the living principle is in the mind, then can it think over something with the mind? Can it see material forms through the mind? Can it hear sounds with the mind? Can it smell good and bad odors with the mind? Can it taste flavors with the mind? Can it feel smoothness and softness with the mind?”

“No, it cannot,” replied the king.

Then Nagasena said, “What you, great king, have said now and previous do not agree. Now, great king, you and I are sitting here in the palace. If the windows of the four directions are to be removed, then can our eyesight reach far and wide?”

“Yes, it can reach far and wide.”

“Suppose, the living principle is in the body, can it see far and wide when the doors (*dvara*) of eye are removed? Can it hear distant sounds when the doors of ear are cut off and enlarged?

決鼻令大，聞香寧能遠不？決口令大，知味寧能多不？副剝皮膚，知細滑寧多不？決判去意，其令寧大不？王言不也。那先言：王亦語前後不相副。那先問王言：王持藏人來，入在王前住，王寧覺知在前住不？王言：知在前。那先言：持藏者即入王室，寧知入室不？王言：知入室也。那先言：設令人命在手中，人持味著口中，能知甜醋酸鹹辛苦。王言：知之。

Can it smell distant odors when the nose is cut off and enlarged? Can it taste more flavors when the mouth is removed and enlarged? Can it feel softness and smoothness when the skin of the body is cut off? Is it able to (know the Dharma) more extensively when the mind is removed?"

"No, it cannot," replied the king.

"What you, great king, have said now and previous do not agree."

Then Nagasena asked the king, "If your treasurer or storekeeper comes and stands (713a) in front of you, can you know that he stands in front of you?"

"Yes, I know."

"If the treasurer comes into the king's palace, does he know that he has entered the king's palace?"

"Yes, of course, he knows."

"Then, suppose, the living principle is in the body of a person, can it know sweetness, or sourness, or acidity, or saltiness, or pungency, or astringency when anything possessing flavor is laid upon the tongue?"

"Yes, it would know it."

那先言：王所語前後不相副也。那先言：如人沽美酒著大器中，急塞一人口，倒置酒中，令嘗酒，其人寧知酒味不？王言：其人不知。那先言：何以故不知味？王言：未入口到舌上，故不知味。那先言：王所語前後不相副。王言：我愚癡，智未及是難，願相解之。那先言：人從眼見色，神動，神動即生苦樂，意念合耳、鼻、口、身、意皆同合，為意有所念，神動。

“What you, great king, have said now and previous do not agree.”

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “It is like a man drinking wine, if the man were to be put upside down into a big jar full of wine to taste the flavor of the wine, could the man know the flavor of the wine?”

“No, he could not.”

“But why does he not know the flavor?”

“Because the wine could not get into his mouth, to the tongue, so he could not know the flavor of the wine.”

“What you, great king, have said now and previous do not agree.”

Then the king said, “I am not capable of discussing such reasoning. Please, explain to me how the matter stands.”

Nagasena said, “When a person sees the material forms with his own eyes, then the eye-consciousness<sup>222</sup> arises. Due to the arising of eye-consciousness, there arise painful or pleasant feelings.<sup>223</sup> Then the mind<sup>224</sup> and thoughts<sup>225</sup> come into contact. It is the same with regard to ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. When the mind comes in contact with mind-objects,...

神動即生苦樂，從苦樂生意，從生念展轉相  
 成，適無常主。王言：善哉。❀  
 二九  
 王復問那先：人生眼時，眼與神俱生耶？那先  
 言：然。同時俱生。王復問：眼居前生耶？神居前  
 生耶？那先言：眼居前生，神居後生。王言：眼語  
 神言：我所行生處，汝當隨我後生，相語言兩  
 耶？神語：眼言：汝所生處，我當隨汝後生，兩相  
 語不。那先言：兩不相與語。王言：卿不言同時  
 俱生，何以故不相語。

...then mind-consciousness arises; then due to the arising of mind-consciousness, there arise painful and pleasant feelings. From painful and pleasant feelings, there arise thoughts; from thoughts, there arises mindfulness. Thus it continues without a soul.”<sup>226</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

## 29. Visual-consciousness and Mental-consciousness

The king said, “When visual-consciousness arises, does mental-consciousness<sup>227</sup> also arise at the same time?”

“Yes, they arise together.”

“Which consciousness arises first?”

“The visual-consciousness arises first, then mental-consciousness second.”

“If so, does the visual-consciousness speak to the mental-consciousness: ‘Where I arise, you likewise arise,’ or does the mental-consciousness speak to the eye-consciousness: ‘Where you arise, I will likewise arise?’

“No, they do not thus speak to each other.”

“You have said that they arise at the same time, why is there no communication between the one and the other?”



那先言有四事俱不相語。那先自言何等四，  
 一為下行，二為向門，三為行轍，四者為數，是  
 四事俱不相語。王復問：「何等為下行者？」那先  
 報王言：「高山上天雨，其水隨流當如何行？」王  
 言：「下行。」那先言：「後復天雨，其水流當復如何  
 行？」王言：「當隨前流水處行。」那先問王言：「前水  
 寧語後水言：『汝當隨我後來，後水寧語前水  
 言：『我當隨汝處流行。』前水後水相語言：『爾不  
 王言：『水流各自行，前後不相語也。』那先言：『眼  
 亦如水。」

“There are four circumstances under which there is not communication. What are the four circumstances? They are (1) following on,<sup>228</sup> (2) the existence of a door, (3) walking along the rut, (4) arithmetic. There is no communication under these four circumstances.”

(1) Then the king asked, “What is ‘following on’?”

Nagasena said to the king, “When it rains at the top of a mountain, where will the rain water flow?”

“It will flow downwards.”

“After that, if it were to rain again, where will this rain water flow?”

“It will flow in the same way as the first water had gone.”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Would the first rain water speak to the second, ‘You should follow me,’ and the second then speak to the first, ‘I will follow wherever you go.’”

The king replied, “The two waters each goes their own way, the former does not speak to the latter (and the latter also does not speak to the former).”

“The visual-consciousness is just like the water.



眼不語神言。汝當隨我後生，神亦不語眼言。我當隨汝後行，生也。眼與神俱不相語也。是名為下行耳。目、鼻、口、身、意亦爾。王復問：何等為向門者？那先言：譬如大城都有一門，其中有一人欲出，當從何向？王言：當從門出耳。那先言：後復有一人欲出，當復從何向？王言：故當從前一人門出耳。那先問王：前出人寧語後人言？汝當隨我後出，後人寧語前人言？我當隨卿所從門出。兩人寧相語言爾不？王言：前人後人俱不相語也。

The visual-consciousness does not speak to the mental-consciousness, ‘You should follow (713b) me to arise.’ The mental-consciousness also does not speak to the visual-consciousness, ‘I will follow you to arise.’ The visual-consciousness and mental-consciousness do not speak to each other. This is called sloping down. It is the same with regard to ears, nose, tongue, body and mind.”

(2) “What is ‘existence of a door’?”<sup>229</sup> the king asked again.

“It is like a great city<sup>230</sup> with only one gate and a person in the city wants to go out. From where can he go out?”

“He can go out through the only gate.”

“And if another man also wants to go out, how could he go out?”

“Certainly he should go out from the only gate by which the first man has gone out.”

Then Nagasena said, “Would the first man say to the second man, ‘You should follow me,’ or would the second man speak to the first man, ‘I will go out from the gate by which you go out.’ Would the two men speak to one another thus?”

“They would not speak to each other thus.”

那先言：眼亦如門，眼不語神言。汝當隨我後。生神亦不語眼言。我今當隨汝後。生眼與神俱不相語也。是為向門耳。鼻口身意亦爾。王復問那先言：何等為轍行者？那先問王言：前車行有轍，後車行當從何所行？王言：後車當從前車轍中行。那先言：前車輪寧語後輪言：汝當隨我處。從後來，後車輪寧語前輪：我當隨汝處行。寧相語言爾不？王言：俱不相語也。那先言：人亦如是。

“The consciousness is like the door. The visual-consciousness does not speak to the mental-consciousness, ‘You should follow me to arise,’ and the mental-consciousness also does not speak to the visual-consciousness, ‘I will follow you to arise.’ The visual-consciousness and mental-consciousness do not speak to one another. This is called the existence of a door. It is the same with regard to ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.”

(3) The king asked Nagasena, ‘What is ‘walking along the rut’?’<sup>231</sup>

Then Nagasena again asked the king, “Suppose, the first cart would go and leave a rut, then how should the second cart go?”

“The second cart should follow the rut left by the first cart.”

“Would the first cart tell the second, ‘You should follow my rut, or would the second cart tell the first, ‘I will follow your rut.’ Do the two carts speak to one another thus?”

“No, they do not speak to one another thus.” said the king.

“It is the same with regard to people.

眼不語神。我所生處。汝當隨我生。神亦不語。眼。我當隨卿後生。那先言。耳。鼻。口。身。神俱不相語。王復問那先。何等為數。那先言。數者校計也。書疏學問。是為數。耳。目。鼻。口。身。神稍稍習知。共合。是六事。乃為有所知。不從一事有所知也。王言。善哉。❀

三十、

王復問那先。人目生時。與苦樂俱生不。那先言。目與苦樂俱生。皆根從合生。

The visual-consciousness does not speak to the mental-consciousness, ‘Where I arise, you likewise arise,’ and the mental-consciousness also does not speak to the visual-consciousness, ‘Where you arise, I will likewise arise.’ It is the same with regard to ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. They do not speak to one another thus.”

(4) The king said to Nagasena, “What is ‘arithmetic’?”

Nagasena replied, “Here arithmetic means valuation. The sciences, writing, etc. are included in arithmetic.<sup>232</sup> When the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth, the body and the mind work little by little, one knows. So due to the coming together of the six things, there arises awareness. Awareness cannot arise from only one of the six things.”

“Excellent Nagasena.” ❀

### 30. The Characteristics of Contact

The king said to Nagasena, “Does feeling as painful or pleasant arise together with visual perception?”<sup>233</sup>

Nagasena replied, “The eyes and feeling as painful or pleasant feelings arise together due to contact.”<sup>234</sup>

王復言：何等為合者？那先言：兩相觸為合，合者譬如兩羊相抵，是為合。一羊如目，一羊如色，合為名。沛譬如一手為目，一手為色，兩手合為沛。譬如兩石，一石為目，一石為色，兩石合為沛。耳、目、鼻、身、神皆同合為沛。譬如兩石，一石如神，一石如志，兩石合為沛。神志合如是，是名為沛。王言：善哉。❀

三一、

王復問那先：樂何等類？

“What is contact?” the king asked.

“When two things touch each other, that is called contact. It is like two rams butting together, one ram is like the eye, the other is like the material form. So contact is called ‘union.’ Suppose one hand is the eye, the other is the material form, (713c) the contact or coming together of the two hands<sup>235</sup> is called union. It is also like two stones,<sup>236</sup> one is like the eye, the other is like the material form, the contact or coming together of the two stones is called union. It is the same with regard to eyes, ears, nose, tongue,<sup>237</sup> body and mind, the contact or coming together is called union. It is also like two<sup>238</sup> stones, one is like the mind, the other is like the mind-object,<sup>239</sup> the coming together of the two stones is called union. It is the same with regard to the coming together of mind and mind-object. This is called union or coming together.”

“Excellent Nagasena.” ❀

### 31. The Characteristics of Feeling

The king said to Nagasena again, “What is the characteristic of feeling?”<sup>240</sup>

那先言：自覺知為樂。那先言：譬若人事國王，其人賢善，王賜與財物，其人得之，用自快樂，在所欲為，其人自念：我事王得賞賜，今得樂樂如是。那先言：譬如人心念善，口言善，身行善，行善如是，死後得生天上，其人於天上極意自娛樂，自念言：我在世間時，心念善，口言善，身行善，是故我自致生此間，得樂甚樂，是為覺。王言：善哉。❀

Nagasena replied, “To experience it by oneself is feeling.”

Nagasena said, “It is like a man who renders a service to the king. The man is intelligent and good, so the king bestows money and material things on him. Then the man, having obtained such things, uses them for his own happiness and does whatever he pleases to do. The man thinks to himself, ‘I have rendered a service to the king and received a reward. Now, I have obtained happiness and happiness is such.’”

Nagasena again gave a simile, “It is just like in the case of a person who does meritorious deeds by mind, by word of mouth and by bodily action. Thus having done good deeds, the person is reborn into the heaven of bliss on the dissolution of the body after death. While living in heaven in full possession and enjoyment of all the pleasures of sense, he will think to himself, ‘Formerly in the world, I have done good deeds by mind, by word of mouth and by bodily action, as a result, now I have been reborn here experiencing pleasures and enjoyment to the utmost.’ This is called being experienced.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

三二、王復問那先何等為覺者。那先言：從知為覺，  
 譬如王有持藏者，入藏室中，自視室中，自知  
 有若干錢、金、銀、珠、玉、繒、帛、雜香、色，皆知雜處，  
 是為覺知。王言：善哉。✽  
 三三、王復問那先：何人所念何等類？那先言：人  
 有所念，因有所作，譬如人和毒藥，自飲亦復  
 行飲人，身自苦亦復苦他人，身那先言：譬如  
 人作惡死，後當入泥犁中，諸所教者皆入泥  
 犁中，惡人有所念所作言如是。

### 32. The Characteristics of Perception

The king asked Nagasena, “What is perception?”<sup>241</sup>

Nagasena replied, “Knowing is perception.”<sup>242</sup>

It is like the storekeeper or the treasurer of the king. When he enters into the storehouse, he sees and knows himself how much there is in the store — coins, gold, silver, gems, silken fabrics, cotton, mixed scents, mixed colors.<sup>243</sup> He also knows where the things are put. This is called perception.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ✽

### 33. The Characteristics of Thought

The king asked Nagasena, “What is thought?”<sup>244</sup>

Nagasena replied, “When a thought occurs to a person, that is because he has done something.”<sup>245</sup> It is like a person who prepares poison and also drinks it himself, and then makes others drink it. He himself would suffer bodily pain and others also would. It is also like a person who does evil deeds and after the dissolution of the body, he will be reborn in the hells. And those who follow his advice or teaching would also be reborn in the hells. The evil person thus thinks and speaks.<sup>246</sup>

王言：善哉。❀  
三、四、王復問那先言：何等為內動者？那先言：志念內便動。王言：動行時云何？那先言：譬如銅鎚銅釜，有人往燒之，其器有聲，舉乎有餘音。而行人如是志動念因行。那先言：燒時為動，有餘音為行。王言：善哉。❀  
三五、王復問那先言：能合取分別之，不是為合，是為智，是為念，是為意，是為動。

“Excellent, Nagasena.”<sup>247</sup> ❀

### 34. The Sustained Thought

The king asked Nagasena again, “What is reflection?”<sup>248</sup>

Nagasena replied, “When the mind gives rise to thought,<sup>249</sup> then there is a reflection.”

“How does reflection give rise to investigation?”

“It is like a copper vessel or bronze plate when beaten<sup>250</sup> by a man, it makes a sound. When it is raised up, it still gives out lingering sound.<sup>251</sup> The man is also the same, when the mind is active, then thought arises. When the plate is beaten, it is called reflection, when it gives sound, it is called investigation.”<sup>252</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 35. Inseparability of *Dharmas*

The king asked Nagasena, “When those conditions come together, can they be separated again, as this is union,<sup>253</sup> this is wisdom,<sup>254</sup> this is thought,<sup>255</sup> this is mind,<sup>256</sup> and this is motion?”<sup>257</sup>

那先言：假令以合不可復分別也。那先言：王使宰人作羹，中有水、肉、葱、蒜、薑、有鹽、豉、糯、王勅厨下人言：所作羹如前取羹中水味來，次取葱味來，次取薑味來，與王不取糯味來，合以後，不能一一別味也。那先言：諸事亦如是，是一合不可別也。是為苦樂，是為智，是為動，是為念。王言：善哉。善哉。❀

王復問那先言：人持目視鹽味，寧可別知不？

Then Nagasena said, “If they come together, they cannot be separated again. Suppose the king were to ask his cook to make delicious soup in which there was water, meat, onion, garlic, ginger, salt and glutinous rice.<sup>258</sup> Then the king were to ask his cook, ‘Pick out for me as before cooking, the flavors of water and then of the meat,<sup>259</sup> of the onion, of the ginger, (714a) of the salt and of the glutinous rice from the delicious soup that you have made.’ But the soup has already been made, could the cook pick out the flavors one by one and give them to the king?”

“No, once the soup has been made with all these flavors, they could not be separated one from the other.”<sup>260</sup>

Then Nagasena said to the king, “All these things are also the same. Once they have been united together, they cannot be separated, as this is painful and pleasant feelings, this is wisdom, this is motion and this is thought.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 36. The Taste of Salt

The king again asked Nagasena, “Can a man know the taste of salt with his eyes?”



那先言：王知乃如是耶？能持目視知鹽味。王言：目不知鹽味耶？那先言：人持舌能知鹽味。王言：目不能以目知鹽味也。王復言：人用舌知味。那先言：人皆用舌別知味。王言：諸鹽味皆當用舌別知耶？那先言：然。諸鹽味皆當用舌別知耳。王復問：那先言：車載鹽、牛軛鹽、車牛寧能別知鹽味不？那先言：車牛不能別知鹽味也。王問：那先言：鹽味寧可稱不？那先言：王智乃爾能稱鹽味。王問：那先言：鹽味不可稱也。其輕重可稱耳。

Nagasena said, “Great king, you know whether one can know the taste of the salt with his eyes.”

Then the king said, “The eyes do not know the taste of the salt.”

Nagasena said, “A man knows the taste of salt by his tongue, not by his eyes.”

“Do all people know the taste by their tongue?”

“People all distinguish different tastes by their tongues”

The king asked, “Is the taste of all salt to be known and distinguished only by the tongue?”

“Yes, the taste of all salt is to be known and distinguished by the tongue.”

“There is salt brought by chariots and there is also salt brought by cows, can the chariots and cows know the taste of salt?”

“The chariot and the cow cannot know the taste of the salt.”

“Can the taste of salt be weighed?” asked the king.

“Is it the king’s knowledge to weigh the taste of salt?”

Then the king replied, “The taste of salt cannot be weighed, but the weight of salt can be weighed.”

王言：善哉。  
 王復問那先：凡人身中，五知作眾事所成耶，  
 作一事成也。譬如地五穀當生時，各自生，  
 事所成也。譬如地五穀當生時，各自生，  
 動，類人身中，五事皆用眾事各所生。王言：善哉。  
 三、善哉。  
 王復問那先：世人頭鬚髮膚面目耳鼻口  
 身體四支手足皆完具，何故中有壽命長者，  
 中有短命者，有多病者，有少病者？

“Excellent, Nagasena.”<sup>261</sup> ❀

### 37. The Five Awarenesses Produced by Different Karma

The king again asked Nagasena, “Are the five awarenesses (*ayatanas*)<sup>262</sup> of a person produced by<sup>263</sup> various actions or by one action?

Nagasena replied, “They are produced by various actions, not by one action. It is just like when five kinds of seeds have been sown in a field, they would grow each according to its own kind. So are the five awarenesses of a person, they are produced by various actions.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 38. Causes of Inequality in Humanity

The king asked Nagasena, “In this world, all men are complete with head, beard, hair, skin, face, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, body, and the four limbs of arms and legs, but why among them, are some of long life, others of short life; some have many diseases, others have few diseases;...



中有小士者，中有端正者，中有醜者，中有語用者，中有語不用者，中有明者，中有愚者。那先言：是故佛所言：隨其人作善惡，自當得之。中有豪貴者，中有貧窮者，皆是前世宿命世作善惡，各自隨其德得之。王言：善哉，善哉。❀

三九、王復問那先言：人有欲作善者，當前作之耶，當後作之乎？那先言：當居前作之，在後作之不能益人也。居前作者有益於人。那先問王言：王渴欲飲時，使人掘地作井，能赴王渴不？

...others are from small families; some are handsome, others are ugly; some speak words of confidence, others speak useless words; some are intelligent, and others are stupid.”

Then Nagasena said, “That is why the Buddha said: *In accordance with one’s own good and bad actions, one will reap the results. Among them, some are rich, others are poor; all are due to their actions, good and bad done in the past. They will reap the results respectively according to their virtue.*”<sup>267</sup>

“Excellent, Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 39. The Benefits of Previous Endeavour

The king asked Nagasena again, “Suppose a man were to do good deeds, should he have done it previously, or should he do it after now?”

“He should have done it before, because the good deeds done after now are not beneficial to him, but the good deeds done previous are beneficial to him.”<sup>268</sup>

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Suppose, great king, when you are thirsty and want to drink, and you ask your men to have a well dug out, could that meet the king’s thirst?”

王言：不赴渴也。當居前作井耳。那先言：人亦如是。人所居皆當居前，在後作者無益也。那先問王：王飢時，乃使人耕地糞地種穀，飢寧用飯耶？當豫有儲。王言：不也。當先有儲貯。那先言：人亦如是。當先作善，有急乃作善者無益身也。那先問王：譬如王有怨，當臨時出戰鬪，王能使人教馬、教象、教人作戰鬪具乎？王言：不也。當宿有儲貯。

“Certainly not, it cannot meet the immediate thirst of the king. The well should be dug beforehand.”

“It is the same with regard to a person, if a person were to do good deeds, he should have done it early. If he does it late, it is not so beneficial to him.”

Nagasena again asked the king, “Suppose, when the king feels hungry, then he asks his men to plough the field, to manure it and to sow crops.<sup>269</sup> Could his belly be filled by doing so?”

“Certainly not, there should be a savings of grain.”

“It is the same with regard to a person, he should have done good deeds in advance. If he does good deeds only when he is in danger, it is not beneficial to him.”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Suppose, the king has an opponent who he suddenly confronts in battle without preparation, could the king order people to train horses, elephants and men in warfare and also to make weapons?”<sup>270</sup>

The king replied, “No, those things should have been prepared in advance. Then the king could go out to the battle at any moment.

臨時便可戰鬪。臨時教馬、教象、教人無益也。那先言：佛經說言：人當先自念身作善，在後作善無益也。那先言：王莫棄大道就邪道，無效愚人棄善作惡，後坐啼哭無所益也。人家棄捐忠正，就於不正，臨死時悔在後。王言：善哉，善哉。❀

四、十、善哉。❀

王復問那先：卿曹諸沙門言：世間火不如泥犁中火熱也。卿曹復言：極取大石著泥犁火中，至暮不消也。卿曹復言：極取大石著世間火中，即消盡，是故我不信也。

If the war has broken out already, it is useless for the king to ask his people to train horses, elephants and men.”<sup>271</sup>

Nagasena said, “Thus the Buddha has said in the sutras: ‘*People should strive to perform bodily good actions before (disaster strikes), as good actions performed afterwards are not useful or beneficial. One*<sup>272</sup> *should not give up the right path and adopt the wrong path, do not follow the ignorant ones who discard good and performs evil and who have to lament and wail afterwards, it is of no use. People who discard righteousness and adopt crookedness*<sup>273</sup> *are going to repent on their death-bed.*”<sup>274</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 40. The Force of Karma

The king asked Nagasena again, “Your *sramanas* say that the worldly fire is not as hot as the fire in the hells. Your *sramanas* also say if a small stone is put into ordinary fire, even if it remained there until the evening, it could not melt away. But, a large stone could be put into the fires of the hells and could melt immediately. This is a statement that I cannot believe. (714c)

卿曹復言：人作惡死在泥犁中，數千萬歲，其人不消死，是故我重不信是語也。那先問王：王寧聞見水中有雌蟒、雌蛟、雌鼈、雌蟹，懷子以沙石為食不？王言：然，皆以是為食。那先問王：沙石在腹中寧消不？王言：然，皆消。那先言：其腹中懷子寧復消不？王言：不消也。那先言：何以故不消？王言：相祿獨當，然故不消。那先言：泥犁中人亦如是，數千萬歲不消死者，其人所作罪過未盡，故不消死。

Your *sramanas* also say if a person has done demeritorious deeds and is reborn in the hells, that for thousands of years he cannot be burned to death. This, too, is a statement that I cannot believe.”

(a) Nagasena then asked the king, “Have you heard, great king, that in the sea when female-serpents, female dragons, female tortoises, and female crabs<sup>275</sup> are pregnant, they eat sand and stones as food?”

“Yes, they take them as food.”

“Can the sand and stones be consumed in their stomach?”

“Yes, they can be consumed.”

“But can the embryos in the womb, too, be consumed?”

“No, they cannot be consumed.”

“Why can they not be consumed?”

“It is due to the superior potency<sup>276</sup> of their former deeds that they are not consumed.”

Nagasena said, “So does the person in the hells, he is not to be burned to death for thousands of years, because the demeritorious deeds he has done are not exhausted.”<sup>277</sup>



那先問王言：雌師子、雌虎、雌狗、雌貓、懷子、皆肉食，噉骨入腹中，時寧消不？王言：皆消盡。那先問王言：其腹懷子，寧復消不？王言：不消也。那先言：用何故不消？王言：獨用祿相，故不消也。那先言：泥犁中人，亦如是，數千萬歲，不消死者，泥犁中所作過惡，未解，故不消死。那先問王言：雌牛、雌馬、雌驢、雌麋、雌鹿、懷子，皆食草，芻為餐，不？王言：然，皆是為食。那先言：其芻草，寧於腹中消盡不？王言：皆消盡。那先言：其腹中子，寧消盡不？王言：不消盡也。

(b) Nagasena again asked the king, “When lionesses, tigresses, female dogs, and female cats<sup>278</sup> all eat meat and swallow bones in their stomach, are the bones consumed?”

“Yes, they are all consumed.”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Are the embryos in their belly to be consumed also?”

“No, they cannot be consumed.”

“Why can they not be consumed?”

“It is due to the superior potency of their former deeds that they are not consumed.”

Nagasena said, “People in the hells are the same. They are not to be burned to death for hundreds and thousands of years, because the demeritorious deeds done by them are not exhausted.”<sup>279</sup>

(c) Nagasena asked the king again, “When cows, mares, she-donkeys, tailed deer, and doe<sup>280</sup> are pregnant, do they all eat grass and hay as food?”

“Yes, they eat grass and hay as food.”

“Are the grass and hay all consumed in their belly?”

“Yes, they all are consumed.”

“Are the embryos in their belly all consumed?”

“No, they cannot be consumed.”



那先言：何故不消盡？王言：獨以相祿當然，故使不消盡。那先言：泥犁中人亦如是，是罪過未盡，故不消死。那先問王言：夫人及長者富家女，飲食皆美恣意食，食於腹中，寧消不？王言：皆消。那先問王言：腹中懷子，寧消不？王言：不消也。那先言：何以故不消？王言：獨相祿，故使不消也。那先言：泥犁中人亦如是，所以數千歲不消死。用先世作惡，故未解，故不消死。那先言：人在泥犁中，長在泥犁中，老過，乃當死。

“Why can't they be consumed?”

“It is due to the superior potency of their former deeds that they are not consumed.”

Then Nagasena said, “People in the hells are the same. Because their demeritorious deeds are not exhausted, they are not burned to death.”<sup>281</sup>

(d) Nagasena asked the king again, “When women of high rank and ladies of rich families<sup>282</sup> all eat delicious and nice food, is the food all digested in their bellies?”

“Yes, it is all digested.”

“But when they are pregnant, are the embryos in their belly consumed also?”

“No, they cannot be.”

“Why can they not be consumed?”

“It is due to the superior potency of their former deeds that they are not consumed.”

Nagasena said, “People in the hells are the same. They are not to be consumed for thousands of years, because the demeritorious deeds done by them in previous births have not been exhausted.” Nagasena continued, “If a person is born in the hells, there does he grow up, there he grows old, and he does not die until his demeritorious deeds are exhausted.”<sup>283</sup>

王言：善哉。❀  
 四一、王復問那先：卿曹諸沙門言：天下地皆在水上，水在風上，風在空上，我不信是也。那先便前取王書水，適以三指撮舉之，問王言：是中水為風所持不？王言：然。為風所持。那先言：風持水亦如是。王言：善哉。❀  
 四二、王復問那先：泥洹道皆過去無所復有耶，那先言：泥洹道無所復有也。那先言：愚癡之人徑來索內外身愛。

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 41. Earth Resting on Water

The king asked Nagasena again, “Your people say that the earth rests on water, that water (715a) rests on air, and that air rests on space.<sup>284</sup> These words, I cannot believe.”

Then the elder Nagasena took the writing ink(?)<sup>285</sup> of the king and held the pot of writing ink upside down with three fingers and asked the king, “Is the water in this pot supported by atmosphere?”

The king said, “Yes, it is supported by the atmosphere.”<sup>286</sup>

“So is the water supported by air.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 42. On Nirvana

The king asked Nagasena, “What is *nirvana*? Is it that all having gone past, there will be no more becoming?”

Nagasena replied, “*Nirvana* is that in which there is no more becoming.<sup>287</sup> Ignorant people come yearning for and craving for (the sense pleasures of) the inner and outer bodies.<sup>288</sup>

坐是故不能得脫於老病死。那先言：智者學道人內外身不著也。人無有恩愛者無貪欲無貪欲者無有胞胎。不哭不生不老不生不老不病不死。王言：善哉。不憂不哭不內心痛，便得泥洹道。王復問那先言：諸學道者悉能得泥洹道不？那先言：不能悉得泥洹道也。正向善道者學，知正事，當所奉行者奉行之，不當奉行者遠棄之，當所念者念，不當所念者棄之。

Therefore they are not set free from old age, sickness and death.”<sup>289</sup>

Nagasena continued, “Wise men, those who have learned the Dharma, do not cling to the internal and external pleasures of the body, and also have no craving. Having no craving, they have no sense desire. Having no sense desire, they have no pregnancy. Having no pregnancy, there is no birth and no old age. Having no birth and no old age, there is no sickness and no death. Having no sickness (and no death), they have no grief, no lamentation; having no grief and no lamentation, they have no inner pain, they thus obtain *nirvana*.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 43. Right Practice Leading to *Nirvana*

The king asked Nagasena again, “Can all the learners of the Dharma attain *nirvana*?”

Nagasena replied, “Not all the learners of the Dharma can attain *nirvana*.”

Those who rightly endeavor to the meritorious Path, learn and know the right things, practice what should be practiced and give up what should not be practiced, think what should be thought, eradicate what should not be thought,...

人如是者得泥洹道。王言：善哉。❀  
王復問那先：人不得泥洹道者，寧知泥洹道為快不？那先言：然。雖未得泥洹道，由知泥洹道為快也。那先言：人未得泥洹道者，何以知為快耶？那先問王言：人生未嘗截手足，為知痛處，王言：人雖未嘗更截手足，由知為痛也。那先言：何用知為痛也？王言：其人截手足時，呻吟用是知為痛。那先言：人亦如是，前得泥洹道者，

...will attain *nirvana*.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 44. On *Nirvana* as Happiness

The king asked Nagasena, “Does he who has not attained the Path of *nirvana* know that *nirvana* is the ultimate happiness?”

Nagasena replied, “Yes, he knows it. Though he has not attained *nirvana*, he still knows that *nirvana* is happiness.”

“But how can he know that *nirvana* is happiness without attaining it?”

Nagasena asked the king, “Do those whose not have their hands and feet cut off know how painful it would be to have them cut off?”<sup>290</sup>

“Yes, though they have not had their hands and feet cut off, they still know the painfulness of cutting off their hands and feet.”

“But how do they know it is painful?”

“Well, they know it by hearing the sounds of the lamentation of those whose hands and feet have been cut off.”

“Just so (with regard to *nirvana*), it is by hearing the joyous words of those who have attained *nirvana*,...

轉相語泥洹道快用是故信之。王言：善哉。❀  
四五、王復問那先：那先寧曾見佛不？那先言：未曾見也。王言：那先諸師寧曾見佛不？那先言：諸師亦不見佛也。王言：如使那先及諸師不見佛者，定為無有佛也。那先問王言：王見五百水所合聚處不？王言：我不見也。那先言：王父及太父皆見是水不？王言：皆不見也。那先言：王父及太父皆不見此五百水合聚處。

...that they who have not attained *nirvana* know that *nirvana* is the ultimate happiness. Because of this they believe it.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 45. Existence of the Buddha

The king asked Nagasena again, “Have you, Nagasena, seen the Buddha?”

Nagasena replied, “No, I have not.”

“Then have your teachers seen the Buddha?”

“No, my teachers also have not seen the Buddha.”

“Then Nagasena, since you and your teachers all have not seen the Buddha, there is certainly no Buddha.”

“But great king, have you seen the place where the five hundred waters come joining together?”

“No, I have not seen it.”

“Then have your father and grandfather seen the water?” (715b)

“No, none of them have seen it.”

“Then, since you, your father and grandfather all have not seen the place where the five hundred waters come joining together,...

天。下。定。為。無。此。五。百。水。所。聚。處。耶。王。言。雖。我。父。及。太。父。皆。不。見。佛。者。其。實。有。佛。王。言。善。哉。雖。我。雖。我。諸。師。不。見。佛。者。其。實。有。佛。王。言。善。哉。雖。我。四。六。我。諸。師。不。見。佛。者。其。實。有。佛。王。言。善。哉。雖。我。王。復。問。言。無。有。復。勝。佛。者。耶。那。先。言。然。無。有。勝。佛。者。王。復。問。何。以。知。為。無。有。勝。佛。者。那。先。問。王。言。如。人。未。曾。入。大。海。中。寧。知。海。水。為。大。不。有。五。河。有。五。百。小。河。流。入。大。河。一。者。名。恒。二。者。名。信。他。三。者。名。私。他。四。者。名。譯。叉。五。者。名。施。披。夷。爾。五。河。水。晝。夜。流。入。海。水。亦。不。增。不。減。

...there is certainly no such a place in the world where five hundred waters come joining together.”

“Though, my father, grandfather and I have not seen such waters, there are definitely such waters.”

“Though my teachers and I have not seen the Buddha, definitely the Buddha existed.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.”

[Here ends the second chapter]



#### 46. Incomparability of the Buddha

The king asked, “Is the Buddha incomparable?”

Nagasena replied, “Yes, the Buddha is incomparable.”

“But how do you know that the Buddha is incomparable?”

Nagasena asked the king, “Would those who have never seen the great ocean, know that the ocean is great? There are five great rivers, and to each of them, there are also five hundred small tributaries. The five great rivers are: (1) the Ganges, (2) the Sindhu, (3) the Sita, (4) the Oxus and (5) the Sarasvati.<sup>291</sup> The waters of these five great rivers flow to the ocean day and night, but the water in the ocean neither increases nor decreases.”

那先言：王寧能聞知不？王言：實知。那先言：以得道人共道說，無有能勝佛者，是故我信之。王言：善哉。❀

四七

王復問那先：何用知無有能勝佛者？那先問王：造作書師者為誰？王言：造書師者名質。那先言：王寧曾見質不？王言：質以死久遠未曾見。那先言：王未曾見質，何用知質為造書師？王言：持古時書字，轉相教告。

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Great king, do you know about this?”

“Certainly, I know,” said the king.

“Because those who have attained enlightenment have spoken of the incomparability of the Buddha. So I believe it.” said Nagasena.

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 47. On How to Know the Buddha's Incomparability

The king asked Nagasena, “How do you know, Nagasena, that the Buddha is incomparable?”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Who is the master in writing books?”

“The master who wrote books is called Tissa.”

“Have you, great king, ever seen the master Tissa?”

“Tissa died long, long ago. I have never seen him.”

“Great king, if you have never seen Tissa, then how do you know that Tissa is the master in writing books?”

“Because the ancient books and writings are handed down to us.

用是故我知名為質。那先言：用是故我甚深快。人  
 佛經戒，如見佛無異。佛所說經道甚深快。人  
 知佛經戒已後，便轉相教。用是故我知為無  
 有能勝佛者。王復問那先：自見佛經道可久  
 行之。那先言：佛所施教禁經戒甚快，當奉行  
 之。至老。王言：善哉。 ❀

四八、

王復問那先：人死已後身不隨後世生耶？那  
 先言：人死已後更受新身，故身不隨。那先言：  
 譬如燈中炷更相然。

By that I know he is called Tissa.”

Then Nagasena said, “In the same way, he who sees the scriptures and disciplines,<sup>292</sup> sees the Buddha. The sutras and the Path preached by the Buddha are very profound and would lead to happiness. Those who have learned the Buddhist scriptures and discipline, in turn, teach others. Therefore I know that the Buddha is incomparable.”

The king asked Nagasena, “Have you seen for yourself the Buddha’s teachings which should be practiced for a long time?”

Nagasena replied, “The teachings and the discipline explained by the Buddha are so excellent<sup>293</sup> that (715c) I should practice them up to my old age.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.”<sup>294</sup> ❀

#### 48. Rebirth

The king asked Nagasena, “Is the old body not reborn when a person dies?”

Nagasena replied, “When a person dies, he receives a new body, the old body is not reborn.”

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “It is just like the interchange of two wicks of a lamp,...



故炷續在新炷更然，人身如是，故身不行，更受新身。那先問王：王小時從師學書讀經，不王言：然我續念之。那先問王：王所從師受經書，師寧復知本經書耶？悉舊得其本經書，王言：不也。師續自知本經書耳。那先言：人身如此，置故更受新身。王言：善哉。 ❀

四九

王復問那先：審為有智無？那先言：無有智。那先言：譬如人盜他人果蓏，盜者寧有過無？王言：有過。

...the old wick still remains, and the new one is lit. It is the same with regard to the body of a person. The old body does not transmigrate, but he receives a new body.”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Have you, great king, learned the ancient scriptures from a teacher when you were a boy?”

“Yes,” said the king.

“Great king, when you learned the scriptures from your teacher, did your teacher still have the knowledge of these scriptures when he comes across these scriptures?”<sup>295</sup>

“Yes, my teacher still has the knowledge of these scriptures.”

“So is the body of a human being. It gives up the old body and takes the new one.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 49. Deeds remain

The king asked Nagasena again, “Is there a spirit?”<sup>296</sup>

Nagasena replied, “There is no spirit.”<sup>297</sup>

Then Nagasena gave a simile, “Suppose a man were to steal another man’s fruit. Is the thief guilty?”

“Yes, he is guilty,” said the king.

那先言：初種栽時，上無果，何緣盜者當有過？王言：設不種栽，何緣有果？是故盜者無狀。那先言：人亦如是，用今世作善惡，生於後世，更受新身。王言：人用是故，身行作善惡，更新善惡所在。那先言：人諸所作善惡，隨人如影隨身。人死但亡其身，不亡其行，譬如然火夜書，火滅其字續在，火至復成之，今世所作行後世成，如受之如是。王言：善哉。❀

五十、

“When the fruit tree is planted, there is no fruit on it. Then how can you say that the thief is guilty?”

“Suppose, if the trees were not planted, then how can there be fruit? Therefore the thief is guilty.”<sup>298</sup>

“So it is for people. By performing good and bad deeds with this body in the present life, he will be born in the next life and obtain a new body.”

“Where are the good and bad deeds done by this old body<sup>299</sup> when he is reborn with a new body?” asked the king.

Then Nagasena said, “The good and bad deeds done by a person always follow him, just like the shadow follows the body. When a person dies, only his body is dissolved, but his deeds remain. It is just as when a person writes under a lamp at night, when the fire is extinguished, the writing still remains. When the fire is lit again, the writing can be seen again. Thus, the deeds done in this life lead to the formation in the next life and then the doer receives the result accordingly.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

## 50. Whereabouts of Karma

王言：「那先，寧能分別指視善惡所在不耶？那先言：「不可。豫知善惡所在，王言：「善哉。」  
王復問：「人當於後世生者，寧能自知不？那先言：「如其當生者，自知。王言：「何用知之？那先言：「譬如田家耕種，天雨時節，其人寧豫知當得穀多，那先言：「人亦如是。人當於後世生豫自知。」

The king asked Nagasena, “Could anyone point out where these good and bad deeds are?”

Nagasena replied, “No one can point out where these good and bad deeds are.”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Is it possible to point out which branch will bear fruit when the fruit tree has not yet borne fruit? Could anyone foretell it?”

“Certainly not,” the king said.

“So, a person who has not yet attained the Path cannot foretell where the good and bad deeds are.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 51. Knowledge of Rebirth

The king asked, “Does he who is about to be reborn know that he will be reborn?”

Nagasena replied, “Yes, he who is to be reborn knows it.”

“But how can he know it?”

“It is like a farming family who sows seeds, and it rains in time. Does the farming family know that there will be plenty of grain?”

“Yes, they know that there will be plenty of grain.”

Then Nagasena said, “So does a person. He who is about to be reborn knows that he will be reborn.”

王復問那先沙門寧自愛其身不？  
 王復問那先審有泥洹無？那先言：審有。王言：  
 王復問那先能指示某處不？那先言：審有。王言：  
 那先能指示某處，佛以般泥洹去，不可得指示。  
 指示佛在某處，譬如人然大火，以即滅其  
 火，寧可見處？那先言：譬如人在然大火，以即滅其  
 那先言：佛以般泥洹去，不可得指示。  
 哉。那先言：佛以般泥洹去，不可得指示。  
 王復問那先沙門寧自愛其身不？

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 52. The Buddha’s Whereabouts after Parinirvana

The king asked Nagasena again, “Is there *nirvana*?”(716a)

Nagasena replied, “Yes, there is *nirvana*.”

“Can you, Nagasena, point out where the Buddha is?”

“No, I cannot point out where the Buddha is since the Buddha has already attained *parinirvana*.<sup>300</sup> It is impossible to show where the Buddha is.”

Then Nagasena gave a simile, ‘Suppose, a man has lit a fire. When the fire has been extinguished, can anyone point out where the fire has gone?’

“No one can,” said the king.

Nagasena said, “The Buddha has attained *parinirvana* and it cannot be pointed out where the Buddha has gone.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 53. The Function of a Sramana’s Body

The king asked Nagasena again, “Is the body dear to *sramanas*?”

那先言：沙門不自愛其身。王言：如令沙門不自愛其身者，何以故？自消息臥，欲得安溫軟，飲食欲得美善，自護視，何以故？那先問王言：寧曾入戰鬪中不？王言：然，我曾入戰鬪中。那先言：在戰鬪中曾為刀、箭所中不？王言：我曾頗為刀、刃所中。那先問王：刀、刃、矛、箭、瘡、柰何？王言：我以膏藥、綿絮裹耳。那先問王言：王為愛瘡，故以膏藥、綿絮裹耶？王言：我不愛瘡。那先言：殊不愛瘡者，何以持膏藥、綿絮裹以護之？

Nagasena replied, “No, the body is not dear to the recluses.”

“If the recluses do not love their bodies, then why do they, when taking rest or sleeping, want to be comfortable; or when eating want palatable and delicious food. They take good care of themselves?”

“But, have you ever been to the middle of a battlefield?”

“Yes, I have been to the battlefield.”

“Have you ever been wounded by knife, spear or arrow?”

“Yes, I have been wounded by knife.”

“Then, how did you treat the wound which was caused by knife, by spear, or by arrow?”

“I treated the wound by anointing it with balm and bandaging it with cotton and wool.”

“Then, great king, it is because the wound is dear to you that you treated it by anointing it with balm and bandaging it with cotton and wool?”

“No, it is not dear to me.”

“If the wound is not dear to you, then why do you treat it so carefully by anointing it with balm and bandaging it with cotton and wool?”

王言：我欲使疾愈耳，不愛其瘡。那先言：沙門亦如是，不愛其身，雖飲食心不樂，不用作美，不用作好，不用作肌色，趣欲支身體，奉行佛經戒耳。佛經說言：人有九孔，為九矛瘡，諸孔皆臭處不淨。王言：善哉。❀

五四

王復問那先：佛為審有三十二相，八十種好，身皆金色，有光影耶？那先言：佛審有三十二相，八十種好。

“I only want the wound to get cured quickly. I do not love the wound.”

Then Nagasena said, “So are the recluses. They do not love their body. Although they have to eat, have to drink, yet their mind does not cling to it, they do not want their food to be delicious, to be well prepared or for the beauty of the skin. They just want to keep the body going, so as to follow the Buddha’s teachings and precepts. In the Buddhist sutras, it says, ‘*There are nine apertures on a person’s body, and they are like nine wounds caused by a spear. The nine apertures are ill-smelling and impure.*’<sup>301</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 54. The Thirty-two Marks of the Buddha

The king again asked Nagasena, “Is it true that the Buddha was endowed with the thirty-two bodily marks and graced with the eighty subsidiary characteristics?<sup>302</sup> Was his body golden in color with a glorious halo?”

Nagasena replied, ‘Yes, it is true that the Buddha was endowed with the thirty-two bodily marks and graced with the eighty subsidiary characteristics.

皆有金色，有光影。王言：佛父母寧復有三十  
二相，八十種好，身皆金色，有光影耶？那先言：  
佛父母無是相。王言：如使父母無是相者，佛  
亦無是相。王復言：人生子像其種類，父母無  
有是相者，佛定無是相。那先言：佛父母雖無  
是三十二相，八十種好，身金色者，佛審有是  
相。那先問王：王曾見蓮華不？王言：我見之。那  
先言：此蓮華生於地，長於泥水之中。

His body was golden in color with a glorious halo.”

“But were his parents also endowed with the thirty-two bodily marks and the eighty subsidiary characteristics. Were their bodies golden in color with a glorious halo?”

“No, the parents of the Buddha had not such characteristics.”

“If the parents of the Buddha had no such characteristics, the Buddha also had no such characteristics.” The king continued, “People give birth to children who have similar features to their parents. If the parents of the Buddha had no such characteristics, the Buddha surely had no such characteristics.”

Then Nagasena said, “Although the parents of the Buddha had not the thirty-two bodily marks and the eighty subsidiary characteristics, with golden color and a glorious halo, yet the Buddha surely had such characteristics.”

Nagasena asked the king, “Have you, great king, seen a lotus flower?” (716b)

“Yes, I have seen them.”

“The lotus flower is born of the earth, grows up in mud and water,...

色甚香好，寧復像類泥水色不？王言：不像類地泥水色。那先言：雖佛父母無是諸相者，佛審有是諸相，佛生於世間，長於世間，而不像世間之事。王言：善哉。❀

五五、

王復問那先：佛審如第七天王梵所行，不與婦女交會不？那先言：然，審離於婦女，淨潔無瑕穢。王言：假令佛如第七天王所行者，佛為第七天王梵弟子。

...it is beautiful and fragrant. But does the lotus flower resemble the mud and the water of the lake, either in color or in smell?"

"No, it does not resemble the earth, the mud and the water, either in color or in smell."

Nagasena then said, "Although the parents of the Buddha had no such characteristics, the Buddha had all such marks and characteristics. The Buddha was born in the world, grew up in the world, but not similar to the worldly people."

"Excellent, Nagasena." ❀

#### 55. Relation Between the Buddha and Brahman

The king asked Nagasena again, "Is the Buddha's conduct similar to the Brahman, the king of the seventh heaven, having no intercourse with women (*brahmacariya*)?"

Nagasena replied, "Yes, the Buddha keeps away from women, so he is pure without any defilement."

"If the Buddha's conduct is the same as that of the conduct of the Brahman, the king of the seventh heaven, then the Buddha is a follower of Brahman, the king of the seventh heaven."



那先問王：第七天王者有念無念？王言：第七天王梵有念。那先言：是故第七天王梵及上諸天皆為佛弟子。那先問王言：鳥鳴聲何等類？王言：鳥鳴聲如鴈聲。那先言：如是鳥為是鴈，弟子各自異類。佛亦如是，非第七天王梵弟子。王言：善哉。❀

五六、

王復問那先：佛寧悉學知奉行經戒不？那先言：佛悉學知奉行經戒。

“But does Brahman, the king of the seventh heaven, have thoughts [*buddhi*]?”

“Yes Brahman, the king of the seventh heaven, has thoughts.”

“Then Brahman, the king of the seventh heaven, and the higher heavens all should be the followers of the Buddha.” Nagasena asked the king, “What is the cry of a bird<sup>303</sup> like?”

“A bird’s cry is like the cry of a wild goose.”

Then Nagasena said, “If so, birds are the disciples of wild geese. But in fact, they are of two different kinds. It is the same with regard to the Buddha, he is not the disciple of Brahman king of the seventh heaven.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 56. The Buddha’s Teacher

The king asked Nagasena again, “Did the Buddha learn, know, and practice the Dharma and precepts?”<sup>304</sup>

Nagasena replied, “The Buddha did learn, know, and practice the Dharma and precepts.”

“Then from what teacher did the Buddha receive the Dharma and precepts?”

王言：佛從誰師受經戒，那先言：佛無師，佛得  
 道時，便悉自知諸經道，佛不如諸弟子學，知  
 佛所教，諸弟子皆當奉行，至老，王言：善哉。❀  
 五七、王復問那先：人父母死時，悲啼哭淚出，人有  
 聞佛經，亦復悲啼淚出，俱感思愛，念愁憂  
 那先言：人有父母啼泣，皆感思愛，念愁憂  
 苦痛，此曹憂者，愚癡憂耳，其有聞佛經道，淚  
 出者，皆有慈哀之心，念世間勤苦，是故淚出，  
 其得福甚大，王言：善哉。❀  
 五八、

“The Buddha had no teacher. When the Buddha attained enlightenment, he knew by himself the Dharma, the Path, unlike his disciples who had to learn and know the teaching from the Buddha. They needed to practice it until old age.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 57. Two Kinds of Tears

The king asked Nagasena, “A man cries and sheds tears on the death of his parents, another man also laments and sheds tears while listening to the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>305</sup> In these two cases, are they different?”

Nagasena replied, “He who weeps for his parents is due to his attachment, his thinking of his grief, sorrow and suffering. This kind of sorrow is the sorrow of the ignorant people. He who weeps while listening to the sermon of the Buddha is full of compassion. As he thinks of the sufferings in the world, so his tears come out. He would obtain the great merit.

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 58. The Emancipated Versus the Non-emancipated

王復問那先：「以人為度，脫者未得度脫者，有貪欲之心，何人得度脫者？無有貪欲之心，但欲趣得飯食，支命耳。王言：『我見世間人，皆欲快身，欲得美食，無有厭足。』那先言：『人未得度脫者，飯食不用，作榮樂好，人得度脫者，雖飯食不以為甘趣，欲支命。』王言：『善哉。』」

王復問那先：「人家有所作，念久遠之事，王言：『用何等先言：人愁憂時，皆念久遠之事。』王言：『用何等念之，用志念耶？』」

The king asked Nagasena again, “What is the difference between one who is emancipated and one who is not emancipated?”<sup>306</sup>

Nagasena replied, “He who is not emancipated has attachment and desire in his heart. He who is emancipated is without attachment and desire in his heart and he eats food only for the sake of keeping alive.”

“I see people in the world craving for bodily pleasure, delicious food, and who are never satisfied.”

“He who is not emancipated wants to take delicious food for his fame, his happiness and good taste. But he who is emancipated takes food (716c) not for his pleasure, nor for its delicious taste, but only for the sake of keeping the body alive.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.”<sup>307</sup> ❀

### 59. Memory and Mindfulness

The king again asked Nagasena, “Why does one recollect what is past and done long ago?”

Nagasena replied, “When a man is sorrowful, he recollects the things that took place in the distant past.”<sup>308</sup>

“How does he recollect it, by the mind<sup>309</sup> or by the memory?”<sup>310</sup>

那先問王言：寧曾有學知以後忽忘之？先王是時無忘耶而忘之乎？王言：我時妄念，那先言：可差王為有所象，今復問那先：人有所作，皆念如甫始有所作，今見在所作，皆用念知耶？那先言：已去之事，皆用念知之。今見在之事，亦用念知之。王言：假令新者，但念去事，不能復念新事。那先言：王言：假令新者，有所作，不可念者，亦如是。王言：人新學書者，有念，故令弟子學者，有知，是故有念耳。王言：善哉。❀

“Do you recollect business that you have done in the past?”

“Yes, I have learned something, but later I forgot it.”

“At that time, great king, were you without a mind<sup>311</sup> and thus have forgotten?”

“At that time, I was without mindfulness.”

“So then, great king, you have mindfulness.”<sup>312</sup> said Nagasena.

The king again asked Nagasena, “Is there mindfulness when a man does something, be it in the past or present? Are all things known by mindfulness?”

“The past things are remembered by memory, and the present things are also remembered by memory.”<sup>313</sup>

“Thus people only remember past things, but can’t they remember new things?”

“If things newly done cannot be remembered, then there is no mindfulness.”

“Do people who newly learn books and crafts remember?”<sup>314</sup>

“People who newly learn books and arts have memory. So the disciples who have learned would know. Therefore there is memory.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.”<sup>315</sup> ❀

六十、  
王復問那先：人用幾事生念耶？那先言：人凡  
有所學，生念三者。若久遠所作生念，二者新  
生念，五者曾所更苦生念，六者自思惟生念，  
七者曾雜所作生念，八者教人生念，九者像  
生念，十者曾有所忘生念，十一者因識生念，  
十二者校計生念，十三者負債生念，十四者  
一心生念，十五者讀書生念。

## 60. The Sixteen Ways of Memory

The king asked Nagasena again, "In how many ways does memory arise?"

Nagasena replied, "Memory arises in sixteen ways:

(1) From things done in the distant past, memory arises;

(2) From newly learned things, memory arises;

(3) From great events, memory arises;

(4) From thinking of good, memory arises;

(5) From thinking of what one suffered, memory arises;

(6) From thinking personal (things), memory arises;

(7) From diverse acts committed in the past, memory arises;

(8) From teaching somebody, memory arises;

(9) From the specific mark, memory arises;

(10) From remembering, memory arises;

(11) From consciousness,<sup>316</sup> memory arises;

(12) From calculating, memory arises;

(13) From incurring debt,<sup>317</sup> memory arises;

(14) From concentration, memory arises;

(15) From reading books,<sup>318</sup> memory arises;

十六者曾有所寄更見生念，為十六事。一、王復問那先：「何等為念久者？」那先言：「佛弟子阿難、女弟子優婆夷鳩離單罷，念億世宿念時事，及餘道人皆能念去世之事，如阿難、女弟輩甚眾多，念此以便生念。二、王復問：「何等為新所學生念者？」那先言：「如人曾學知校計，後復忘之，見人校計便更生念。三、王復問：「那先，何等為大事生念者？」那先言：「譬如太子立為王，自念為王豪貴，是為大事生念。」

(16) From seeing again something entrusted to others, memory arises.

These are the sixteen ways that memory arises.

(1) The king asked Nagasena, “How does memory arise from things that had taken place in the distant past?”

“The Buddha’s disciple Ananda and the *upasika* Jiuchoudanba<sup>319</sup> have the power to remember the things that happened in their previous births. Other disciples have the power to remember the things that happened in their former births. Ananda has so many women devotees. By remembering this, memory arises.”<sup>320</sup>

(2) “How does memory arise from newly learned things?”<sup>321</sup>

“Just as a man who has learned accounting but later forgets it. When he sees another person doing accounts, memory arises.”

(3) “How does (717a) memory arise from great events?”

“Suppose, a prince is crowned as king, he remembers the greatness and the magnificence (of the ceremony). This is memory arising from great events.”

四、王復問那先：「何等為善意思善生念者？那先言：譬如為人請呼善意待人，是為善念。昔日為某所請，呼善意待人，是為善念。五、王復問那先：「何等為善意思善生念者？那先言：譬如為人請呼善意待人，是為善念。六、王復問那先：「何等為善意思善生念者？那先言：譬如為人請呼善意待人，是為善念。七、王復問那先：「何等為善意思善生念者？那先言：譬如為人請呼善意待人，是為善念。八、王復問那先：「何等為善意思善生念者？那先言：譬如為人請呼善意待人，是為善念。」

(4) “How does memory arise from thinking of good things?”

“Suppose, a man has been received heartily as a guest and he thinks to himself thus, ‘I was once received warmly and heartily’. This memory arises from thinking of good things.”

(5) “How does memory arise from thinking of what one has suffered?”

“When one remembers that one was beaten or was thrown into prison, memory arises.”

(6) “How does memory arise from thinking personal things?”

“If one sees a similar person or animal, he remembers his parents, family, relatives, or his domestic animals. This is memory arising from thinking.”<sup>322</sup>

(7) “How does memory arise from diverse acts committed in the past?”

“When one remembers the names of people, various things in the world, different kinds of letters, material forms, good or bad smells, sweetness, or bitterness, then memory arises.”

(8) “How does memory arise from teaching somebody?”



那先言：人自喜忘邊人，或有者或忘者，忘為  
教人生念。九、王復問那先言：何等為像生念  
者？那先言：人牛馬各自有像類，是為像生念。  
十、王復問那先：何等為曾所忘生念者？那先  
言：譬如人卒有所忘，數數獨念得之，是為曾  
所忘生念。十一、王復問那先：何等為因識生  
念者？那先言：學書者能求其字，是為因識生  
念。十二、王復問那先：何等為校計生念者？那  
先言：如人共校計成就，悉知策術分明，是為  
校計生念。

“When a person is happy, he forgets people living in fringe areas, or he remembers some and forgets others. When he remembers the people he has forgotten, memory arises.”

(9) “How does memory arise from a specific mark?”

“People remember men, cows, and horses by their specific marks.<sup>323</sup> This is memory arising from a specific mark.”

(10) “How does memory arise from remembering?”

“Just like people who suddenly forget what they have done, then by recalling it again and again, memory arises.”

(11) “How does memory arise from consciousness?”

“Those who have learned books by heart, know and remember words. This is memory arising from consciousness.”

(12) “How does memory arise from accounting?”

“One who is trained in accounting knows the method very well. This is memory arising from accounting.”



十三、王復問那先：何等為負債生念者？那先言：譬如顧鼓所當債歸，是為負債生念者。十四、王復問那先：何等為一心生念者？那先言：沙門一其心，自念所從來生千億世時，是我為一其心生念。十五、王復問那先：何等為讀書生念者？那先言：帝王有久古之書，念言：某帝某年時書也，是為讀書生念。十六、王復問那先：何等為曾有所寄更眼見之便生念，是為所寄生念？王言：善哉。❀

(13) “How does memory arise from incurring debt?”

“As when one has seen goods deposited nearby as a security, one remembers one’s indebtedness.<sup>324</sup> This is memory arising from incurring debt.”

(14) “How does memory arise from concentration?”

“A monk with concentration of the mind can recall the things experienced by himself in the past thousands of lives. This is memory arising from concentration of the mind.”

(15) “How does memory arise from reading books?”

“The kings have very old books, when reading those books, he would refer to such a king of such a period. This is memory arising from reading books.”<sup>325</sup>

(16) “How does memory arise from seeing again something entrusted to others?” (717b)

“If one has entrusted something to somebody, when he sees it again, his memory arises. This is memory arises from seeing something again after it has been entrusted to others.”<sup>326</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

六一、  
 王復問那先佛寧悉知去事，甫始當來事耶？  
 那先言：然，佛悉知之。王言：假令佛稍稍教之，那  
 者何故不一時教諸弟子，何故稍稍教之？那  
 先問王：國中寧有醫師無？王言：有醫師。那先  
 言：寧能悉知天下諸藥不？王言：能悉識知諸  
 藥。那先問王：其醫師治病，為一時與藥，稍稍  
 與之？王言：人未病，不可豫與藥，應病乃與藥  
 耳。那先言：佛雖悉知去來見在之事，亦不可  
 一時悉教天下人。

## 61. All-knowing of the Buddha

The king asked Nagasena again, “Does the Buddha know the things in the past, present and future?”

“Yes, the Buddha knows all.”<sup>327</sup>

“If the Buddha knows everything, then why does he not teach all he knows to his disciples? Why does he teach them little by little?”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Are there physicians in the country?”

“Yes, there are.”

“Do they know all medicines in the world?”

“Yes, they know all the medicines in the world.”

“But when they treat a patient, do they give him the medicine all at once or little by little?”

“If a man is not sick, the physician cannot give him the medicine in advance. It is only when there is sickness, then the physician gives him the appropriate medicine.”

Nagasena said, “Although the Buddha knows things in the past, present and future, he cannot teach all that he knows to people in the world. So he taught his disciples the Dharma and precepts<sup>328</sup> little by little...”

當稍授經戒，令奉行之耳。王言：善哉。✽  
六二、王復問那先：「卿曹沙門言：人在世間作惡，至  
百歲臨欲死時，念佛、死後者，皆得生天上。我  
不信是語。復言：殺一生，死即當入泥犁中。我  
不信是語。那先問王：如人持小石置水上，石  
浮耶？沒耶？」王言：「其石沒。那先言：如令持百枚  
大石置船上，其船寧沒不？」王言：「不沒。那先言：  
船中百枚大石，因船故不得沒。人雖有本惡，  
一時念佛。」

...and asked them to follow and practice accordingly.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ✽

## 62. The Power of Single Mindfulness of the Buddha

The king asked Nagasena again, “Your monks say, ‘If anyone who does evil deeds in the world for a hundred years, at the time of dying, he will be reborn in heaven after death if he has even one thought of the Buddha.’<sup>329</sup> These words I cannot believe. Again they say, ‘He who should take the life of a living being would fall into the hells. These words I cannot believe either.’”

Nagasena asked the king, “Suppose a man were to put a small stone into the water. Would the small stone float on the surface of the water or sink into the water?”

“The small stone would sink.”

“If a hundred large stones were put into a boat, would the boat sink?”

“No, it would not sink.”

Then Nagasena said, “As a hundred large stones in a boat would not sink, a man with one thought of the Buddha<sup>330</sup> will not fall into the hells,...

用是故不入泥犁中，便得生天上。其小石沒者，如人作惡，不知佛經，死後便入泥犁中。王言善哉。 六三、王復問那先：「卿曹用何等故行學道作沙門？」那先言：「我以過去苦，現在苦，當來苦，欲棄是諸苦，不欲復受更苦，故行學道作沙門。王復問那先：「王苦，乃在後世，何為豫學道作沙門？」那先問王：「寧有敵國怨家，常欲相攻擊也？」那先問王：「敵國怨家，常欲相攻擊也？」那先問王：「敵國怨家，常欲相攻擊也？」

...but be born in the heavens even though he had done evil deeds in the past. The small stone that sinks is like people who do evil, but do not know the Dharma of the Buddha. When they die they will fall into the hells.”<sup>331</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 63. Aim of Sramanahood

The king asked Nagasena again. “For what purpose do your people learn the Dharma and become monks?”

Nagasena replied, “For the purpose of eradicating past suffering, present suffering, and not wanting to experience it again in the future, I learned the Dharma and become a monk.”

“Future suffering has not yet happened, so why do you prepare to learn the Dharma and become a monk?”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Are there, great king, rival countries and opponents who might rise up against you?”

“Yes, there are rival countries and opponents who frequently rise up to fight with me.”

“Then, is it when the enemies are coming, that you,...

王乃作鬪具備守掘塹耶。當豫作之乎？王言：當豫備敵來無時故。那先問王：用何等故豫作儲待？王言：備敵來無時故。那先問王：敵尚未來何故豫備之？那先復問王：飢乃田種，渴乃掘井。耶。王言：皆當豫作之。那先言：尚未飢渴，何故豫作調度？王言：善哉。 ❀

六四、王復問那先：第七梵天去是幾所？那先言：甚遠，令石大如王殿，從第七梵天上墮之，六月日乃墮此間地耳。

...great king, set to work to have weapons prepared, watch towers erected, and moats dug, or are they all prepared earlier?"

"All these had been prepared beforehand."

"But why had they been prepared beforehand?"

"Because the enemies might come at any time." (717c)

"The enemy has not come yet, why do you prepare?"

Nagasena again asked the king, "Is it when you are hungry, that you then sow, or when you are thirsty, that you then dig a well?"

The king said, "It should be done beforehand."

Then Nagasena said, "For a man who is not thirsty, why should he prepare beforehand?"<sup>332</sup>

"Excellent, Nagasena." ❀

#### 64. An Arhat's Ability to Travel

The king asked Nagasena again, "How far is it from here to the seventh heaven of Brahman?"

Nagasena said, "It is very far. Suppose a rock as large as the palace of the king were to fall from the seventh heaven of Brahman, it would take six months<sup>333</sup> to reach the earth."

王言：卿曹諸沙門言：得羅漢道，如人屈伸臂，頃以飛上第七梵天上。王言：我不信是行數，千萬億里，何以疾乃爾耶？那先問王：本生何國？王言：我本生大秦國，名阿荔散。那先問王：阿荔散去二千由旬，合八萬里。那先問王：頗曾於此遙念本國中事不？王言：然。恒念本國中事耳。那先言：王試復更念本國中事，曾有所作，復何以疾？王言：即善哉。那先言：王行八萬里，反復何以疾？王言：

六  
 五  
 善哉。

❀

“Your *sramanas* say that a person who has attained arhathood flies to the seventh heaven of Brahman as quickly as one could extend forth his bent arm or have it bend back again. These words I could not believe. How could he go thousands and thousands of *li*<sup>334</sup> so fast.”

Nagasena asked the king: “Great king, in which country were you born?”

“I was born in the kingdom of Yonaka, in a country named Alasanda.”<sup>335</sup>

“How many *li* is it from here to Alasanda?”

“It is about two thousand *yojana*,<sup>336</sup> equal to eight thousand *li*.”

“Do you think of your country which is far away from here?”

“Yes, I always think of things in my country.”

“Great king, try to recollect any business you once did in your country...have you done so?”

“Yes, I have done so.”

“So quick it is, great king, that you have gone and returned a distance of about eighty thousand *li*.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

## 65. Duration of Taking Rebirth

王復問那先：「若有兩人於此俱時死，一人上  
 生第七梵天，一人生罽賓，去是七百二十里，  
 誰為先到者？」那先言：「兩人俱時到耳。」王言：「相  
 去遠近，大多何以俱至？」那先問王：「試念罽  
 國。王言：『我已念之。』」那先復言：「王試復念罽  
 王言：『我已念之。』」那先問王：「念是兩國何所疾  
 者？」王言：「俱等耳。」那先言：「兩人俱死，一人生第  
 七梵天上，一人生罽賓，亦等耳。」那先問王：「若  
 有一雙飛鳥，一鳥於大樹上止，一鳥於小卑  
 樹上止，

The king asked Nagasena again, "Suppose, two men were to die here simultaneously, one were to be born in the seventh heaven of Brahman, another were to be born in Kashmir, about seven hundred and twenty *li* from here. Which of the two arrive first?"<sup>337</sup>

Then Nagasena asked, "Both would arrive at their own place simultaneously."

"How can they arrive simultaneously, since the two distances are so different?"<sup>338</sup>

Nagasena said: "Then try to think of the country of Alasanda again."

"Yes, I have done so."

"Then, great king, try to think of Kashmir again."

"Yes, I have done so."

"Well which one of the two countries did you think of quicker?"

"The two are equal."

"Just so, if two men were to die simultaneously, and one were to be born in the seventh heaven of Brahman, while the other were to be born in Kashmir, the two men would arrive simultaneously."

Then Nagasena asked the king, "Suppose, two birds were flying, one were to alight on a tall tree, the other on a small shrub.



兩鳥俱止，誰影先在地者？王言：其影俱到地耳。那先言：兩人俱死，一人生第七梵天上，一人生屬寶，亦俱時至耳。王言：善哉。

六六、王復問那先：人用幾事學知道？那先言：用七事學知道。何等為七？一者念善惡之事，二者精進，三者樂道，四者伏意為善，五者念道，六者一心，七者適遇無所憎愛。王復問那先：人用此七事學知道耶？那先言：不悉用七事學知道，智者持智別知善惡，用是一事別知耳。

If they were to settle down simultaneously, whose shadow would first fall on the ground?"

"The two shadows would fall on the ground simultaneously."

"Just so, if two men were to die simultaneously, and one were to be born in the seventh heaven of Brahman, while the other were to be born in Kashmir, they would also arrive simultaneously."

"Excellent, Nagasena." ❀

### 66. Seven Kinds of Wisdom

The king asked Nagasena again, "By how many ways does one need to learn the Path?"

Nagasena replied, "One needs to learn the Path in seven ways. What are the seven? They are: (1) thinking of good and evil things, (2) exertion or energy, (3) taking delight in the Dharma, (4) to subdue (718a) the mind to do good, (5) thinking of the Path, (6) concentration of the mind, and (7) to take things without attachment or hatred."<sup>339</sup>

"Is it to know the Path that all these seven ways are practiced?"

"No, not by all these seven ways does one learn. The wise who can distinguish good and evil learn the Path only by one way."



王復問那先假令用一事知者何為說七事，  
那先問王如人持刀著鞘中倚壁，那先言：人  
有所割截不，王言：不能有所割截，那先言：人  
心雖明，會當得是六事共成智耳。王言：善哉。  
六、  
王復問那先：人作善得福大耶？作惡得殃  
大耶？那先言：人作善得福大，作惡得殃  
家作惡日自悔過，是故得福大。那先言：昔者佛  
日夜自念歡喜，是故得福大。那先言：昔者佛  
在時，

“Then if one can know the Path by just one way, why are the seven ways all preached?”

Nagasena asked the king, “Suppose a man were to put a sword in its sheath and place it against a wall, could it cut off anything by itself?”

“No, it could not cut anything by itself.”

“Even so, a person though intelligence can achieve wisdom only with the help of the other six ways.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 67. Merit and Demerit

The king asked Nagasena again, “Does a person who performs good deeds obtain more merit, or does a person who performs evil deeds obtain more demerit?”<sup>340</sup>

Nagasena replied, “The person who does good deeds obtains more merit, and the person who does evil deeds obtains less demerit. Because when a person does evil, he repents it himself daily, therefore his offence diminishes daily. But when a person does good, he rejoices it day and night, so he obtains even more merit.”

Then Nagasena said, “Formerly in the country where the Buddha was living,...

其國中有人机無手足，而取蓮華持上佛，佛  
 即告諸比丘言：「此机手足兒，却後九十一劫，佛  
 不復墮入泥犁中，畜生、薜荔道中，得生天上。  
 天上壽終復還作人，是故我知，人作小善得  
 福大，作惡其人自悔過，日消滅而盡，是故我  
 知，人作過其殃小。王言：善哉。」  
 六八、王復問那先智者作惡，愚人作惡，此兩人殃  
 咎誰得多者？那先言：愚人作惡得殃大，智人  
 作惡得殃小。王言：如那先言，我國治法，  
 大臣有過則罪之重。

...there was a man without hands and feet. He took some lotuses and offered them to the Buddha. The Buddha then told the monks thus, 'This man without hands and feet will not fall into the hells, the animal kingdom, nor the kingdom of hungry ghosts in ninety-one kalpas.<sup>341</sup> He will be born in heaven, then after his merit is exhausted in the heaven, he will be reborn as a human again.' That is why I know that if people do little good deeds, they will obtain great merit, if they do evil, they will repent and their offence will diminish and be extinguished. Thus I know that when people do evil, their demerit is small."

"Excellent, Nagasena." ❀

### 68. Doing Evil Knowingly and Unknowingly

The king asked Nagasena again, "Who gets greater demerit, a wise person who does evil, or an ignorant person who does evil?"

Nagasena said, "The wise who does evil obtains less demerit, but the ignorant who does evil obtains more demerit."<sup>342</sup>

"I do not think so." said the king, "In my country, according to the law, if a minister commits offence, he will be punished gravely,..."

愚民有過則罪之輕，是故智者作惡得殃大，  
 愚者作惡得殃小。那先問王：譬如燒鐵在地，  
 一人知為燒鐵，一人不知，兩人俱前取燒鐵，  
 誰爛手大者耶？王言：不知者爛手大。那先言：  
 愚者作惡不能自悔，故其殃大；智者作惡知  
 不當所為，日自悔過，故其殃少。王言：善哉。❀  
 六九  
 王復問那先：人有能持此身飛行上至第七  
 梵天上，及至鬱單越地，及所欲至處者，那  
 先言：能。

...but if an ignorant person commits an offence, he will be punished lightly. Thus, the wise who do evil get greater demerit, and the ignorant who do evil get less demerit.”

Nagasena gave a simile, “Suppose, a very hot metal were lying on the ground, and one man knows that it is a hot metal, while the other man does not know. If the two men were both to take hold of the hot metal, whose hands would be burnt more?”

“The hands of the man who does not know it, would be burnt more.”

“Like this, ignorant people who do evils without knowing it will not repent it. Therefore their demerit is greater. But the wise people who do evil know that it should not be done, so they repent their offence daily. Therefore their demerit becomes less.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 69. The Supernormal Power of Arhats

The king asked Nagasena again, “Is there anyone who, with his physical body, could go to the seventh heaven of Brahman or to Uttarakuru,<sup>343</sup> or any other place as he wishes to go?”

“Yes,” said Nagasena.

然有中何王七十  
 有等大身復問十  
 是我魚骨那先  
 曹名乃先卿曹  
 聞質長四諸沙  
 之身千里門言  
 長二那先有骨  
 萬八千問王曾  
 里者不聞大長  
 言王言海四里  
 七  
 梵天  
 上及  
 至  
 欝單  
 越地  
 者亦  
 爾王  
 言善  
 哉  
 跳一丈餘地  
 跳戲一丈地  
 及所欲至處乎  
 王言那先問王  
 寧自念少小時  
 及所欲至處乎  
 王言那先問王  
 寧自念少小時  
 王言奈何持此  
 身上第七梵天  
 及欝單越地

“Then how (718b) could a person with his physical body go to the seventh heaven of Brahman, or to Uttarakuru, or any other place as he wishes to go?”

Then Nagasena asked the king, “Do you remember, great king, that you have ever jumped one *zhang* in playing when you were small?”

“Yes, when I was young, if I wished to jump, I could jump more than a *zhang*.”<sup>344</sup>

“In the same way, he who has attained the Path could go to the seventh heaven of Brahman or to Uttarakuru with his physical body if he wishes.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 70. Long Bone

The king asked Nagasena again, “Your *sramanas* say that there are bones as long as four thousand *li*.<sup>345</sup> What kind of animal would have bones four thousand *li* long?”

Nagasena said, “Have you, O great king, heard that in the sea, there is a kind of large fish called a *zhi*,<sup>346</sup> whose body is 28,000 *li* long?”<sup>347</sup>

“Yes, I have heard of such fish.”

那先言：如是一萬八千里魚，其脇骨長四千里。王問那先：卿曹諸沙門說言：我能斷喘息之事。王言：奈何斷喘息氣耶？那先問王：寧曾聞志不？王言：我聞之。那先言：王以為志在人身上耶？王言：我以為志在人身中。那先言：王以為愚人不能制其身口者，不能制其身口，亦不能制其身口。那先言：其學道人，能復喘息耳。

“Yes, if there is a kind of fish whose body is about 28,000 *li* long, then its ribs are four thousand *li* long. Are you, great king, still surprised?”

[“Excellent, Nagasena.”]<sup>348</sup> ❀

### 71. On Stopping Breathe

The king asked Nagasena again, “Your *sramanas* say, ‘I can stop my breathing’. How can they stop their breathing?”

“Then have you ever heard of ‘*zhi*’ — life principle?”<sup>349</sup>

“Yes, I have heard of it.”

“Is the life principle inside the body frame of a person?”

“Yes, I consider that the life principle is inside the body frame of a person.”

Then Nagasena said, “Great king, the ignorant person cannot control his body and speech, cannot follow the Dharma and precepts. Such a person does not love his own body.”<sup>350</sup> Nagasena continued, “People who learn the Dharma can control their body and speech, follow the Dharma and precepts, and can obtain one-pointedness of the mind. Thus they attain the fourth *dhyana* state. So can they stop their breathing.”

王言善哉。王問那先。王復問那先。事不復問那先。王三耳。王言善哉。以久遠及魚鼈蟲多共清便水中是故令海悉如鹽味。那先言。所以海水鹹者。淡畜鹽參各半。是故為海耳。王復問那先。何以故他事。故言海。那先言。人所以呼為海者。水與王問那先。為呼言海。海為是。水名為海耶。用

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 72. Ocean

The king asked Nagasena again, “There is the expression ‘ocean’. Is it because of the water or other reasons that it is called the ‘ocean’?”

Nagasena replied, “It is called ocean by men, because there is just as much salt as water, and just as much water as salt.”

“Why is the ocean all of one taste, the taste of salt?”

“The water in the ocean is so salty because it has been so for a very long time, and because fishes, turtles and other insects make it dirty.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 73. Power of Wisdom

The king asked Nagasena again, “Could one who has attained the Path, ponder over all the subtle, deep, and complicated matters?”

那先言：然人得道以能悉思惟深奧之事。那先言：佛經最深奧知眾事不可稱量眾事皆智乎？斷之。王言：善哉。❀

七四、

王復問那先：人神、智、自然，此三事寧同各異？那先言：人神者主覺，智者曉道，自然者虛空，無有人。王復問那先言：得人何等為得人者？眼視色、耳聽聲、鼻聞香、口知味、身知麤軟、意知善惡之事，何所為得人者？那先問王：如令人能目自視，脫瞳子去之，視寧廣遠不？

Nagasena replied, “Yes, one who has attained the Path can ponder over all subtle, abstruse, and profound matters. The Buddha’s Dharma is the most abstruse and profound teaching which contains all aspects of knowledge. All those things can be analyzed by wisdom.”

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

#### 74. Consciousness, wisdom and life principle

The king asked Nagasena again, “Is the consciousness<sup>351</sup> of a person, his wisdom,<sup>352</sup> and his life principle<sup>353</sup> all the same or different?”

Nagasena said, “The consciousness of a person knows,<sup>354</sup> his wisdom realizes the Path,<sup>355</sup> and his life principle is empty without a permanent entity.”<sup>356</sup>

“If there is no life principle, then who (718c) sees material forms with eyes; hears sounds with ears; smells odors with nose; tastes flavor with mouth; feels coarseness and smoothness with body and knows good and evil with the mind?”

Then Nagasena asked, “If the life principle can see with eyes, then when pupils are plucked out, can it see farther and wider?”



裂大其耳聽聲，寧廣遠不，決鼻令大，其聞香  
 寧多不，開口令大，知味寧多不，剝割肌膚，寧  
 令信知，鹿軟不拔去其志，盛念寧多不，王言  
 不也。 ❀  
 七五、  
 那先言：佛在所作甚難，佛所如甚妙。王復問  
 那先：所作何等甚難，何等甚妙？那先言：佛言  
 能知人腹中，目所見事，悉能解之，能解目事，  
 能解耳事，能解鼻事，能解口事，能解身事，能  
 解敗事，能解疑事，能解所念事，能解神事。

When ears are torn open and enlarged, can they hear farther and wider? When the nose is dug out to make it bigger, can it smell odors farther and wider? When the mouth is wide open, can it know taste farther and wider? When the skin is cut and peeled off, can it feel coarseness and smoothness? When the mind is removed, can thoughts become numerous?"

"No," said the king. ❀

#### 75. The Buddha Could Comprehend Difficult Things

Nagasena said to the king, "What is difficult to do was done by the Buddha. What the Buddha knew is very subtle."

The king asked Nagasena again, "What was done by the Buddha that is difficult to do? What are the things that the Buddha knew that are subtle?"

"The Buddha said that he knew and could explain what is inside the body of a person, which cannot be seen by the eyes. He understood things concerning the eyes, things concerning the ears, things concerning the nose, things concerning the mouth, and things concerning the body; he understood destruction, doubts, things concerning the mind<sup>357</sup> and things concerning consciousness."<sup>358</sup>



那先言：夜已半，我欲去。

七、佛悉知分別解之。王言：善哉。❀

向心念至身知苦樂寒溫麁堅。從心念至口知味。

從心念至身知苦樂寒溫麁堅。從心念至口知味。

耳所聽，從心念至鼻所嗅，從心念至目所見，從心念至

言是故，佛解之，從心念至目所見，從心念至

知今人神不見，人身中有六事不可見。那先

是諸水味，今海水見目前之事，王尚不能別

一、難各別知。那先言：佛所作為難，皆能別知

泉水，是某流水，是某河水，王言：眾水皆合為

那先言：人取海水含之，寧能別知口中水是

“Suppose a man were to take some water from the ocean into his mouth, would he know that such portion of it is the water from such a spring, such portion is the water from such a stream, and such portion is the water from such a river?”

The king said, “All the waters have mingled into one, it is very difficult to distinguish them.”

“What the Buddha has done is very difficult. He knew the taste of different waters. Now of the ocean water which is before the eye, the king still could not know, (how much less so when it comes to) the spirit which cannot be seen and the six things which are inside the body.”

“That is why the Buddha understood all things from the position of the mind<sup>359</sup> – to what is seen by the eyes, heard by the ears, smelled by the nose, tasted by the mouth, and felt by the body, and all that is pleasant, unpleasant, cold, hot, course, and smooth. From the mind to physical factors to everything that is alike, the Buddha knows and analyses them all.”<sup>360</sup>

“Excellent, Nagasena.” ❀

### 76. The King makes offerings

Nagasena said, “It is past midnight, I have to go back.”

王即勅傍臣取四端氎布搵置麻油中持以  
 為炬當送那先歸。恭事那先如事我身。傍臣  
 皆言受教。王言得師如那先作弟子如我。可  
 得道疾。王諸所問那先輒事事答之。王大歡  
 喜。王即出中藏好衣直十萬已上。那先王語  
 那先。從今已去。願那先日與八百沙門共於  
 宮中飯食。及欲所得。皆從王取之。那先報王  
 我為道人。略無所欲。王言那先當自護。亦當  
 護我身。那先言何等當自護及護王身。王報  
 言。恐人論議。

Then the king ordered his attendants to have four rolls of cloth<sup>361</sup> dipped in oil to serve as torches and sent Nagasena to his temple saying, “You all should respect and attend to Nagasena as if attending me.” The attendants replied, “We understand.”

The king said, “To have such a teacher as Nagasena and such a pupil like me, the realization of Dharma will be quick.”

As all the king’s questions were given suitable answers by Nagasena, thus the king rejoiced. So the king ordered clothes worth ten-thousand coins to be offered to Nagasena from the treasury.

The king said to Nagasena, “From now on, you together with eight hundred *sramanas*, will be invited daily to my palace for meals and will also be provided with whatever you desire.”

Nagasena then told the king, “I am a recluse who has no desire.”

The king said “Nagasena, you should protect yourself and also protect me.”

“What do you mean, by protecting myself and you?”

“Because I am afraid (719a) that people would blame me of being miserly by saying,...

呼王為慳。那先為王解諸狐疑，而不能賜與。恐或人言：那先不能解王狐疑，故王不賞賜。王言：那先受者，當令我得其福。那先亦當護其名。王言：譬如師子在金檻中，猶為拘閉，常有欲望去心。今我雖為國王，在宮省中，其意不樂，欲棄國去而行學道。王語竟，那先便起歸佛寺。那先適去，王竊自念：我問那先為何等事，那先為解我何等事。王自念：我所問那先莫不解我意者。那先歸佛寺亦自念：王問我何等事，我亦報王何等事。那先自念。

...‘Nagasena has solved the king’s doubts, but has not received anything from the king.’ People might also blame you saying, ‘Nagasena was unable to solve the king’s doubts, so the king has not offered him anything.’”

The king continued, “If you, Nagasena, accept my present, I would earn great merit, and you would protect your fame as well.

Just as a lion which is kept in a golden cage will always want to go out. Now, I am a king in the palace, but my mind is not happy. So I want to leave the country and learn the Dharma.”

After the king had finished his speech, Nagasena got up and returned to the temple. When Nagasena had just left, the king pondered by himself over what questions he had asked Nagasena and what answers had been given by Nagasena. Then the king thought, “The questions put by me were well replied to and explained by Nagasena.”

And Nagasena likewise, when he returned to the temple, thought the matter over to himself, “Whatever questions put to me by the king, I have replied to them all.” He thought to himself,...

那先比丘經

王所問者，我亦悉為解之。念此事至天明。日那先被袈裟持鉢直入宮上殿坐。王前為那先作禮已，却坐。王白那先：「那先適去我。自念：問那先何語，那先莫不報我何等語。我自念：所問那先何等語，那先莫不報我何等語。王歡喜安臥至明。那先言：我行歸舍，我自念：王為問我何等事，我亦為王說何等事。我自念：王所問我，輒為解之。用是故歡喜至明。語竟，那先欲去。王便起為那先作禮。」

...”I explained all the questions put by the king.” Nagasena thought over these matters until morning.

The next day, Nagasena dressed himself, took his begging bowl, entered the palace, and sat in the royal hall. The king first paid homage to Nagasena, then sat down and said, “Venerable Nagasena, as soon as you had left, I thought to myself about what I had asked Nagasena and what Nagasena had replied. Then it occurred to me that whatever questions I asked, Nagasena explained them well. These thoughts kept me happy up to the morning.”

Nagasena also said to the king, “After I had returned to the temple, I also thought over what the king had asked me, and what I explained. I had explained all. These thoughts kept me happy up to the morning.” Having said this, Nagasena wanted to depart, and the king paid homage to Nagasena.

[Here ends the *Nagasena Bhiksu Sutra*]



*The Nagasena Bhiksu Sutra*



## SUTRA INTRODUCTION



### THE NAGASENA BHIKSU SUTRA

The invasion by the Greek king of Macedon, Alexander the Great, to the Northwestern part of India in the third century BCE is a well known historical event. Alexander ultimately managed to establish himself in the kingdom known as Bactria. King Milinda, known as Meandner or Menander, is one of Alexander's Indo-Greek successors, and he ruled the Bactrian kingdom in Northwestern India around 150 BCE. He was a patron of Buddhism according to both the Pāli and Chinese literary traditions. The very existence of a King Meandner is further attested to by the large amount of coins bearing the inscription "Savior King Menander" in Greek which are found from modern Kabul to Punjab. Some of the coins of Menander I and Menander II incorporate the Buddhist symbol of the eight-spoked wheel, which is also associated with Greek symbols of victory. According to Buddhist literature, the great Indian Buddhist emperor Asoka (fl. 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BCE) sent Buddhist emissaries to the Greek lands in Asia to spread the

Dharma towards the end of third century BCE. Thus the Buddhist presence in Greek Bactria during the second century BCE and the debates on certain important Buddhist doctrines between King Menander I and a Buddhist monk named Nagasena are quite certain.

These debates are found in the *Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra* 那先比丘經 in Chinese translation and the *Milindapañha* in the Pāli language. The debates between the king and the Buddhist monk mainly center on some of the important Buddhist concepts such as *anātman* (no eternal Self or Soul), rebirth, karma, Buddha, nirvāṇa and spiritual life. These questions are still asked today by those who are interested in Buddhism but have little or no knowledge of the teachings. These questions suggest that the king had little knowledge of Buddhism but had difficulty in understanding some major teachings, in particular the concept of *anātman* and rebirth. As a result, Nāgasena used as many as six similes to illustrate the point. Here is a dialogue on *anātman* theory to show the nature of their debate.

“Suppose a man, O king, were to light a lamp, would it burn the night through?”

“Yes, it might do so.”

“Now, is it the same flame that burns in the first watch of the night, Sir, and in the second?”

“No.”

“Or the same that burns in the second watch and in the third?”

“No.”

“Then is there one lamp in the first watch, and another in the second, and another in the third?”

“No. The light comes from the same lamp all the night through.”

“Just so, O king, is the continuity of a person or thing maintained. One comes into being, another passes away; and the rebirth is, as it were, simultaneous. Thus neither as the same nor as another does a person go on to the last phase of his self-consciousness.”

#### DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE DIALOGUE

From Emperor Asoka in the third century BCE to the time before the writing down of the *Tripitaka* in the first century BCE, there is a short but dark

period in the history of Indian Buddhism since there is no Buddhist record left for us to know the activities, thoughts and traditions of the Buddhist Sangha during this time. However, the *Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra* in Chinese translation is an important text for us to get some information concerning the development of Buddhist thought in this period. Thus the book fills the above mentioned gap and provides us with some valuable information.

There are two Chinese translations of this text that have survived, and also a Pāli version named the *Milindapañha* that has survived, which is much longer than the former texts. The Chinese translation entitled the *Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra* corresponds to the first three books in the Pali *Milindapañha* or the first 89 pages of the Pali Text Society edition of the text. Comparative studies show that the Chinese translation of the *Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra* and the first three books of the *Milindapanha* are very much the same. There are 76 dialogues in the Chinese translation and 86 in the Pali version while 9 dialogues in the latter are not found in the former and 3 in the former are not found in the latter. (See appendix for the

comparison of contents). This portion is considered to be old since at the end of the third book there is a remark saying “Here ends the answering of the problems of the questions of Milinda” in the Pali text. What is more, in both the Chinese and Pāli versions, at the end of the third book, the contents show that their conversations ended with the king Milinda making offerings to the Bhikṣu Nāgasena and his fellow monks. So the latter part of the Pāli *Milindapañha* must have been added later, probably by Sri Lankan Buddhists.

According to Japanese scholar Kogen Mizuno’s research, the Chinese translation of the *Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra* must have been done in the second century CE either at the time of An Shigao or a little earlier because the renderings of technical terms in the text are quite old and irregular and even the latter’s translation is comparatively consistent. This makes the text much valuable in terms of documentation. However, this text has enjoyed much less popularity among Western and Eastern scholars compared with the *Milindapañha*. There are only two translations of the Chinese text compared to thirteen different translations of the

*Milindapañha*. Scholarly studies on the Chinese text are also not many and the few extant articles are either in Japanese, French, or Chinese; only a few are in English.

#### TIME AND PLACE OF COMPILATION

Scholars such as Rhys Davids are of the opinion that the *Milindapañha* is but a translation.<sup>1</sup> This is because in the preface to the Sinhalese translation entitled the *Milinda Prasnaya*, it states that the dialogues of king Milinda and Nāgasena, which took place about 500 years after the death of the Buddha, were translated into the Māgadhī language by ‘teachers of old’— of which that Pāli version was translated into Sinhalese in 1877.<sup>2</sup> Rhys Davids is also of the opinion that the original text most probably was compiled in Northwest India in either Sanskrit or *Prakrit*. But, he said that it must have been compiled a little after the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars like W. W.

1 T.W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda, Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 35-6. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1890-4, p. xi.

2 Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, p. xii.

3 Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, p. xi.



Tarn, while agreeing with Rhys Davids about the place of compilation, disagree about the time of compilation. Tarn has said, “He (the author) is supposed to have written in Northwestern India ...not too long after Menander’s death,” and Tarn places Menander’s death between 150-145 BCE.<sup>4</sup> Mizuno holds a similar opinion as that of Tarn, citing the supporting evidence of references to Milinda’s dialogues with Nāgasena within Buddhaghosa’s commentaries. This fact is also mentioned by Rhys Davids in the introduction to his own translation. But Mizuno believes that the Sinhalese commentarial tradition is much older, and that the four references cited by Buddhist scholar monks who lived in second century BCE are from the beginning of the Christian era. So Mizuno comes to the conclusion that the original text must have been written down in its native land no later than the first century BCE.<sup>5</sup> Winternitz echoed the same by saying that the author must

4 W.W. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1938, p. 419.

5 Kogen Mizuno, “On the Recensions of Milindapanha,” in *Summary of the Research Studies of the University of Komazawa*, Vol. 17. (1959), p. 54-5.

“has lived at a time when people’s memory of the Greek king was still fresh. But as there was an end of Greek rule over India soon after the death of Menandros, it can be hardly presumed that he would have been remembered for more than one century. Accordingly the work might have been composed by about the beginning of the Christian era.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, the original text must have been compiled between 150BCE to 50 CE.

#### THE SCHOOL TO WHICH IT BELONGS

As Mizuno indicated in his study, the *Milindapañha* and the *Nāgasena Bhkṣu Sūtra* must belong to different schools. N. Dutt is of the opinion that the *Milindapañha* very likely belonged to *Sarvāstivāda* school as the *Abhidharmakośa-vyakhya* refers to Nāgasena as *purvaka-sthavira*.<sup>7</sup> However, this statement perhaps better applies to the original text since the *Milindapañha* is but only a translation as discussed above. The *Milindapañha* is quite clear that it is a Theravāda text since it quotes many

6 Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II. Clacutta; 1933, p. 169-70.

7 Nalinaksha Dutt, *Buddhist Sects in India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987, p. 135.



suttas by their titles from the Pāli canon as traced by Rhys Davids. And also the quotation of the seven Abhidhamma books and the stereotypical formula of the *paticcasammuppāda* speak out clearly that the *Milindapañha* belongs to the Theravāda school. But the *Nāgasena Bhkṣu Sūtra* is quite problematic since there is absolutely no evidence to help us. Thich Minh Chau says: “All the proofs above show that the Chinese original was compiled at a time, when the growth of the *Abhidharma* had not yet matured and that the classification of the *Buddhadharma* into *Āgama* or *Nikāya* was not yet widely adopted.”<sup>8</sup> But even this conclusion is too rash, because a deduction based only on the fact that the Chinese version does not mention any the terms like *Tripīṭaka*, *Āgama*, *Abhidharma* etc. is not a good evidence. Probably the classification was already there, but the compiler did not use it.

As mentioned above, N. Dutt thinks that the *Milindapañha* very likely belonged to *Sarvāstivāda*

8 Thich Minh Chau, *Milindapanha and Nagasenabhikshu Sutra: A Comparative Study through the Pali and Chinese Sources*. Calcutta: 1964, p. 23.

school.<sup>9</sup> But, I think this actually points to the original text as belonging to *Sarvāstivāda* school rather the extant *Milindapañha*. However, we have other internal evidence supporting that it may belong to *Sarvāstivāda* school because the text mentions the existence of three times – past, present and future – which is found in both the Chinese translation and the Pāli *Milindapañha*.<sup>10</sup>

#### LANGUAGE OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT

According to Dutt, the original language of the *Milindapañha* was Sanskrit,<sup>11</sup> since in the *Abhidharmakośa-vyakhya*, Nāgasena is referred to as *purvaka sthavira*. The *Sarvāstivāda* school used Sanskrit for their *Tripīṭaka*. According to Rhys Davids, the Pāli version is not the original, but a translation of a work written either in Sanskrit or in some North Indian *Prakrit*. This is followed by Pelliot, Winternitz, Demieville and J. Radher.<sup>12</sup> I.B.

9 Dutt, *Buddhist Sects in India*, p. 135.

10 V. Trenckner, ed., *Milindapañha*. London: PTS, 1880, pp. 49-50; CBETA T32.1670B.711b12-19.

11 Dutt, *Buddhist Sects in India*, p. 135.

12 Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, p. xi; Paul Pelliot, *Les noms propres dans les traductions chinoises des*

Horner says: “I imagine, then, that the two men conversed in *Prakrit*, and that the scribe took down his notes in that tongue, and in it wrote them out more fully afterwards.”<sup>13</sup> She further points out that the dialogues were translated into Sanskrit later. Now, in order to clarify this point, let us take a look at the situation of Buddhist sūtras and how they were transmitted in the second century BCE.

It is generally accepted that the Buddha preached his doctrine in dialect. We are not sure whether this dialect was Pāli or not. But it is definitely not Sanskrit because the Buddha’s language policy is against it.<sup>14</sup> However, this language policy against the use of Sanskrit in Buddhist sūtras relaxed after several centuries of the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*. This is due to the Sanskrit renaissance. According to Ji Xianlin,<sup>15</sup> the Sanskrit renaissance started at first

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*Milindapanha*. Paris: 1915, p. 380; Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, p. 142; Paul Demieville, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” in *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême Orient*, Vol. 24 (1924), pp. 1-258.

13 I. B. Horner, *Milinda’s Questions*, 2 Vols. London: PTS, 1963-4, p. 26..

14 See the story of two brothers in *Cullavagga*, V. 33.

15 Ji Xianlin 季羨林 and WANG Shuying 王树英, *Ji Xianlin*

in the second century BCE. He says: “the Sanskrit renaissance is closely connected with the expansion of the Maurya empire. Emperor Asoka used to use *Adhamagadhi* as his official language, probably he met some difficulties later. The successors of Emperor Asoka and religious people wanted to find out a language which could be accepted by the people throughout the great empire. Sanskrit was the ideal language. It is like the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇, who unified language and writing etc. for the purpose of ruling the whole empire. It is also generally accepted that Sanskrit renaissance started in second century BC in India. The author of *The Yoga-sastra*, Patanjali,<sup>16</sup> was born during that period, and the advent of *The Great Commentary* indicates the rising of Sanskrit. At this time, Sanskrit became more and more influential, so that the orally transmitted *Prakrit Sūtras* among different schools and different regions now gradually started to be

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*lun Fo jiao* 季羨林论佛教 [*Selected Works of Ji Xianlin on Buddhism*], Beijing Shi 北京市: Hua yi chu ban she 華藝出版社, 2006, p. 398.

16 The Sanskrit names of the work and its author are suggested by Ven. Dr. K. Dhammajoti.

sanskritised.” Ji says again that this Sanskritisation of Buddhist *sūtras* took place gradually, and was not accomplished in one move.<sup>17</sup> Regardless, not all Buddhist *sūtras* have been sanskritised, with the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* as one obvious example. But according to Roth’s estimate, the Sanskritisation took place during 1st century BCE to 1st century CE.<sup>18</sup> Michael Coulson is also of the same opinion, he says: “In the early centuries CE, first in the north and later in the south, Sanskrit became the only accepted language both for administration and for learned communication. The Buddhist Asvaghosa (second century CE) is a significant figure in the process.”<sup>19</sup>

17 According to Prof. Ji Xianlin, the Sanskritisation of Buddhist *sūtras* is a gradual procession, the single form of the word 'bhikṣu' for instance, is bhikṣoḥin in classical Sanskrit; but after sankritisation, it became bhikṣusya, 'sya' is the ending of the nouns and adjectives which end with 'a'. The plural form of ' bhikṣu' is bhikṣavah; but after sanskritisation, it became bhikṣu. See also Ji, *Selected Works*, pp. 398.

18 Gustav Roth, "Bhikṣuṣṭīvinaya and Bhikṣu-Prakīrtaka and Notes on the Language" *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* Vol. 52, Nos. 1-4 (Jan. – Dec. 1966), p. 39.

19 Khoroché, Peter. “Aśvaghosa,” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Vol. 1., Robert E. Buswell, ed., New York:

According to the *Mahāvamsa*, the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* was written down in Sri Lanka during 89-77 BCE when King Vattagamani Abhaya was in power. The occurrence of this event is generally accepted by most scholars. Ji says: “Buddhist *Sūtras* written down in its original land might be a little earlier than this, about the end of the second century BCE.”<sup>20</sup> There is another opinion that the writing of Buddhist *sūtras* and their sanskritisation might have taken place at the same time.<sup>21</sup>

As discussed above, the dialogues between King Menander and Nāgasena must have taken place during the latter part of second century to first century BCE since Menander lived in this period. Again, according to scholars, the dialogues were written down a little while after Menander’s death, and not more than a century later.<sup>22</sup> So the compiler of the work must have lived in the time of Sanskrit renaissance. Therefore he most probably compiled Macmillan, 2004, p. 35.

20 Ji, *Selected Works*, pp. 398.

21 Heinz, Bechert, *Die Sprache der ältesten buddhistischen Überlieferung: The Language of the Earliest Buddhist Tradition*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980, p. 880.

22 Such as Rhys Davids, Winternitz, etc.

the dialogues in Sanskrit.

WHICH IS EARLIER,  
THE *NĀGASENA BHIKṢU SUTRA* OR  
THE *MILINDAPANHA*?

We may say that the Chinese version is older and closer to the genuine original. By observing the characteristics of the content of the dialogues and its style, the Chinese text is simple and moderate, and may reflect the genuine recorded historical dialogues between the Greek King Menander and Bhikṣu Nāgasena. However, the Pāli version had gone through a process of revision and interpolation. We agree with Sylvian Levy's opinion that the present Pāli text is nothing but a later enlarged recension of the Pāli translation of the original Indian version from which is derived our Chinese text. This original, whether being in Sanskrit or a kind of *Prakrit*, was prevalent in Northwest India. To prove this, we have the following points in support of the above conclusion. (1) The Pāli text commits a gross anachronism by referring to the six heretical teachers, Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Nigantha Nataputta,

Sanjaya Belatthaputta and Pakudha Kaccayana as having conversed with King Milinda. These six heretical teachers were contemporaries of the Buddha, but Menander lived during the second or first century BCE. (2) The Pāli text refers to *Abhidhamma* eight times within the first three books. More importantly, it gives the exact titles of the seven *Abhidhamma* books as they exist in the present Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. But the Chinese text is silent on *Abhidhamma* and it only refers to *sūtras*. (3) The Pāli text refers to the terms like *Tipiṭaka* and *Nikāya*, while the Chinese text mentions only the Buddha, Dharma, *Buddhasūtra*, or *Sūtravinaya*. (4) The Pāli text obviously belongs to the *Theravāda* school with all the references to Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. But the Chinese text is vague on the subject, it lacks of any characteristics of the school. (5) genuine quality of the Chinese text; some details in the Chinese text compared with the Pāli text are more convincing and authentic. For instance, when Nāgasena preached to a layman, he started from *dānakathaṃ* then *silakathaṃ*, then *saggakathaṃ* ... at last he gave a talk on *dhamma*. This reflects the tradition of early days of Buddhism as found in the Mahāvagga. (6) Abundance of miracles in the

Pāli text compared with the Chinese text show its deviation from Early Buddhism which is simple and moderate. For in the birth story of Nāgasena, the Pāli text refers to even Kassapa Buddha, while the Chinese refers to only the present Buddha. (7) Moderation of the Chinese text; when Nāgasena was invited to meet the king on the following day, the Chinese text says that he went with 80 *sramanas*, but the Pāli text says that he went with 80,000 *sramanas*. And also with regard to the description of *Sāgala*, Nāgasena's qualities, and Menander's wisdom, the Pāli text excels over the Chinese text in much more length and richness. (8) Addition of the latter four books in the Pāli text; the content of the latter four books is not in concordance with the first three books. Scholars, like Kegon Mizuno are of the opinion that they are later additions. Besides, at the end of the third book, the concluding words "*Milindapañhanam pucchavissajjanasamatta*" conveys the impression that the conversation is over, and that the book has ended. (9) The introductory parts of both the Pāli and the Chinese versions differ considerably, especially regarding the former lives of Bhikṣu Nāgasena and King Menander. The Chinese

version is simple while the Pāli version is richer in additional detail.





# TRANSLATION CATALOGUE



## CHINESE VERSIONS

Taishō no. 1670A. *Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra* 那先比丘經. Translated by anonymous author.

Taishō no. 1670B. *Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra* 那先比丘經. Translated by anonymous author.

## OTHER LANGUAGE VERSIONS

*Translations based on Chinese versions of the Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra*

Demieville, Paul, “Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha,” in *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême Orient*, Vol. 24 (1924), pp. 1-258. (French)

HIGATA Ryusho 干瀉竜祥, “[*Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra*] 那先比丘經,” in *Kokuyaku issaikyō: Indo senjutsubu* 國譯一切經：インド撰述部, Vol. 2. Tokyo: Daitō Shuppan, 1926–1936. (Japanese)

*Translations based on the Pāli version of the Milindapañha (unless noted)*

(Pāli version is found in V. Trenckner, ed., *Milindapañha*. London: PTS, 1880.)

Cagnola, G., *Dialoghi des Re Milinda*. Milano: 1923. (Italian, from English)

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## GLOSSARY



**anagamin:** The third stage on the fourfold path to enlightenment according to early Buddhist traditions. One who attains this level will no longer be reborn in the human realm, but will be reborn in the higher heavens to attain enlightenment. Other translations: “non-returner.”

**Ananda:** The cousin of the Buddha who became his personal attendant and is considered one of his ten great disciples. Ananda was considered the foremost in memory, and since he constantly accompanied the Buddha he was believed to have memorized all of his teachings. Thus, during first council of the *sangha* after the Buddha passed away, he was asked to recite the sutras for the attending members of the monastic community so they could canonize the Buddha’s teachings and preserve them for future generations. For this reason, all sutras traditionally begin with “Thus have I heard,” indicating to the reader that this is considered to be Ananda’s first-hand account to the council.

**arhat:** Literally meaning “worthy one”, it is a name for one who has eradicated all of their defilements and has become enlightened. They are distinguished from buddhas and *pratyekabuddhas* by the fact that *arhats* practice the teachings of a buddha, while buddhas and *pratyekabuddhas* attain enlightenment solely through their own efforts. Other translations: “saint”.

**ayatana:** See **twelve ayatanas**.

**bhiksu:** A fully ordained male member of the Buddhist monastic community. Other translations: “monk,” “mendicant.”

**bhiksuni:** A fully ordained female member of the Buddhist monastic community. Other translations: “nun.”

**Brahman:** This figure is an important Hindu *deva* who was regarded as the creator of the world. In Buddhist texts he is relegated to an inferior position, yet is still respected since he rules over the seventh heaven of Buddhist cosmology. In Buddhism this term generally refers to a title or

status rather than a particular *deva*.

**brahman:** The clerical and highest social class among the traditional four castes of India. In Buddhist texts brahmins are sometimes depicted as lay supporters of Buddhism, or as of significant social standing and thus deserving of respect, while in other texts they are criticized for being immoral. Being a brahmin is a birthright and not an occupational choice. Other translation: “Brahmin.”

**Buddha:** A title meaning “Awakened One” used for a being who has perceived the true nature of all phenomena, has overcome all suffering, and who compassionately teaches these insights to others. It is one of the ten titles of a fully enlightened being. When capitalized and preceded by definite article “the” the term refers to the historical figure Siddhartha Gautama, and when it is pluralized or not capitalized or it refers to anyone in the general class of fully enlightened beings. The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha comprise the Three Jewels.

**cakkavattin:** A sovereign ruler who embodies the

Buddhist political ideal of the virtuous monarch who brings about peace and prosperity to his subjects.

**Deva:** An inhabitant of the heavens that are above Mt. Sumeru. Any sentient being with the requisite amount of merit can be reborn as a *deva*. Life in the heavenly realms is generally considered to be utopian, however it is also transient, as all *devas* are mortal and subject to rebirth. Other translations: “god,” “deity.”

**Dharma:** (1) The teachings of the Buddha which lead one to nirvana. (2) A thought or idea, the sensory object of mental perception. Other translations: “mind-object.” (3) A constituent element of the phenomenal world. Dharmas comprise both the physical world as well as the internal psychological processes of a subject. Other translations: “phenomena,” or “thing.”

**Eastern Jin Dynasty:** Following the uprising of non-Chinese nomads in the north and the collapse of the Western Jin (265CE-316CE), the Chinese imperial clan along with the aristocracy and

many landowners and peasants fled to modern-day Nanjing in the south to form the Eastern Jin (317CE-420CE). Because the northern parts of China were controlled by non-Chinese chieftains, this period marks the growth of different cultural traditions in the north and south of China.

**eighteen dhatus:** The eighteen bases of perceptual activity which include the six sense faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind), the six sensory objects (sight, sound, scent, taste, touch, thought), and the six perceptual awarenesses that arise from the contact between the sense faculty and its corresponding sensory object (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental consciousness).

**eighty subsidiary characteristics:** A later expansion of the thirty-two bodily marks which further detail the appearance of a buddha.

**five kinds of grains:** Five cereal crops that were considered sacred in ancient China. Sources vary as to what grains were included, but often listed are: rice, wheat, barley, millet, and soybeans

(technically a legume, not a grain). Other translation: “five kinds of crops.”

**five precepts:** The first five precepts of the **ten precepts**.

**four dhyanas:** Four progressive states of deep meditative concentration, each of which is marked by the abandonment of certain mental conditions that limit one’s meditative abilities.

**hungry ghost:** Originally, in early Indian thought, this being was simply the spirit of a deceased person. In Buddhism, these spirits became a pitiful class of creature who would constantly suffer from starvation, or who would have the endless misfortune of having their food turn into some gross and inedible substance. They are considered to be a class of rebirth in Buddhism owing to particular karmic activities, thus not every deceased person will become a hungry ghost. Other translation: “hungry spirit.”

**Indra:** Vedic *deva* who is considered to be the king of the *devas* (his common Buddhist name was

Sakra). He resides in Trayastrimsa Heaven ruling over a court of thirty-two other heavenly beings. He is regarded as a model for kingship, embodying the ideal ruler who protects the teachings of the Buddha and his followers. In Buddhism this term generally refers to a title or status rather than a particular *deva*.

**Jetavana Anathapindika Park:** A monastic compound located on the outskirts of Sravasti where the Buddha was traditionally said to have spent nineteen rain retreats. The park was donated to the Buddhist monastic community by a wealthy merchant named Sudatta, who was more commonly known as Anathapindika, which means “one who gives to the needy”. The land was originally owned by the royal prince, Jeta, who agreed to sell the land for the amount of gold coins that were required to cover the ground of the entire park. When Anathapindika initially ran out of gold and gave instructions for more to be carted in, Jeta was moved by Anathapindika’s devotion to the Buddha and freely donated the uncovered patch of land. Together they built a meeting hall, a dining hall, residential halls, walkways, wells, and surrounded

the park with a barrier wall. To honor the efforts of both Jeta and Anathapindika, texts refer to the park using both of their names. This site was excavated in 1863 by the English archaeologist Alexander Cunningham, and is located in modern day Saheth, India.

**kalpa:** An extremely vast measurement of time used in ancient India. The length of time of a single *kalpa* is considered to be of an almost inconceivable duration. Other translations: “eon,” “cosmic age.”

**karma:** Literally meaning “action”, it denotes all mental, verbal and physical activities that inevitably entail consequences. It is impossible to circumvent the consequences effected by karmic actions, although it is possible to alter their trajectory through further karmic actions. An evil deed is any karmic activity committed under the influence of greed, hatred, or delusion, while a virtuous deed is any karmic activity guided by generosity, compassion and wisdom. According to traditional Buddhist doctrine, karma is the sole determining factor in deciding a sentient being’s

rebirth.

**kasaya:** The robes of a Buddhist monastic originally made from discarded scraps of fabric. To distinguish themselves from the brahmanical caste who wore white robes, Buddhist monks and nuns in India wore yellow-orange colored garments.

**li:** A traditional Chinese measurement for longer distances. Its measure has changed drastically throughout Chinese history, but was roughly 1500 feet (450 meters) during the Tang Dynasty.

**Menander:** Menander I was an Indo-Greek king who lived in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and ruled over Bactria in northwestern India. He traditionally is considered to have become a patron and lay practitioner of Buddhism, as is perhaps evidenced by coinage struck in his lifetime with the obverse showing the eight-spoked wheel of the dharma. His name in Pali was rendered as Milinda.

**Milan:** See **Menander**.

**naga:** A mythological class of snake-like creatures

that are closely associated with water and rainfall. *Nagas* are thought to be cunning and with the ability to transmogrify into human form. Influenced by native snake species (like the King cobra), Indian artisans depicted *nagas* as either half-human half-snake, or as humanoids with a cobra hood shielding the back of their heads. In China, the Sanskrit term *naga* was translated by the Chinese word for dragon, thus *nagas* are sometimes depicted in that form. Other translations: “dragons,” “serpents.”

**Nagasena:** Literally “army of nagas,” Nagasena is a Buddhist monk who is wholly known for his conversations with the Indo-Greek king Menander I. Nagasena proves to be the only person who can adequately address and answer all of Menander’s questions about Buddhist doctrine.

**Naxian:** See **Nagasena**.

**nine apertures:** The nine openings in the body, i.e. the eyes, nostrils, mouth, ear canals, anus, and urethra.

**ninety six doctrines:** Doctrines and philosophies in India that were different from the teachings of the Buddha. The total of ninety-six was arrived at by adding together six major non-Buddhist teachers of the times along with ninety of their disciples (fifteen for each of them).

**nirvana:** The Buddhist goal of liberation from samsara and the cessation of all suffering caused by the extinction of greed, hatred and delusion. Nirvana literally means “blown out”.

**parinirvana:** The highest form of nirvana, which constitutes the total extinction of residual karmic elements, i.e. the five aggregates. This was the final state of enlightenment attained by the Buddha upon his death, in contrast with the enlightenment attained at Bodhgaya under the Bodhi Tree. Other translation: “nirvana with remainder.”

**saddharma:** Literally the “good dharma,” which refers to the teachings of the Buddha in general.

**sakrdagamin:** The second stage on the fourfold path to enlightenment according to early Buddhist

traditions. One who attains this level will only have one more rebirth in the human realm before enlightenment.

**samsara:** The repetitious cycle of birth and death experienced by a sentient being until they attain enlightenment. This cyclic existence is marked by suffering as beings are continuously reborn in one of the six paths throughout the triple realm. Liberation from *samsara* leads one to enlightenment and the end of suffering.

**sangha:** The monastic community originally organized by the Buddha. Other translation: “Order.”

**Sariputra:** The chief disciple of the Buddha who was considered foremost in wisdom. He is regarded as one of the ten great disciples of the Buddha.

**sramana:** A general term used to denote a person who has shaved their head and renounced their worldly status and possessions to pursue a spiritual practice. Originally referred to any itinerant ascetic who rejected Brahmanical religious orthodoxy.

In Buddhist texts it sometimes refers specifically to a Buddhist monk or nun. Other translations: “renunciant,” “ascetic.”

**sramanera:** Literally meaning “small sramana,” a novice monk in the Buddhist sangha who has taken the ten precepts and is under the age of twenty. Upon reaching the age of twenty, the sramanera (or “sramaneri” for women) can fully ordain as a bhiksu or bhiksuni.

**Sravasti:** Sravasti was the capital city of the ancient northern Indian kingdom of Kosala located in modern day Uttar Pradesh. To distinguish it from a southern Indian kingdom that was also called Kosala, this northern Indian state was sometimes referenced by its capital city, thus being called the Kingdom of Sravasti. Prasenajit, the sovereign ruler of this kingdom, was a devoted follower and friend of the Buddha.

**srotaapanna:** The first stage on the fourfold path to enlightenment according to early Buddhist traditions. One who attains this level has assured their future enlightenment within seven more

rebirths, and will only be reborn as a human, demigod, or god. Other translations: “stream-enterer.”

**sutra:** Scripture which traditionally preserves the discourses of the Buddha. The earliest dialogues of the Buddha were preserved orally, and it is commonly held that his teachings were not committed to writing until the first century BCE. With the advent of Mahayana Buddhism new sutras were circulated in Northern India and Central Asia.

**ten precepts:** Ten rules or teachings intended to help train a monk or nun in ethical conduct. These precepts are taken voluntarily and can mark the initiation of a person into the *sangha*. The first five precepts are followed by lay practitioners. They include: 1) no killing; 2) no stealing; 3) no improper sexual behavior; 4) no false speech; 5) no consumption of alcohol; 6) not eating after noon; 7) not watching dancing, singing, or performances; 8) not adorning oneself with garlands, perfumes, or ointments; 9) not using a high bed; 10) not receiving gold or silver.

**thera:** Literally meaning “elder,” a title reserved

for aged and virtuous monks.

**thirty-two bodily marks:** Of those born with these marks those who embark on a path of religious practice will become a fully enlightened buddha, while those who embark on a secular political career will become all-powerful (“wheel-turning”) kings. The marks of a buddha are considered more distinguished and complete than that of a king. The more famous marks include a prominent protrusion on the crown on the head, a whorl of white hair located between the eyebrows (often represented by a circle or jewel in iconography), and the depiction of Dharma wheels with one thousand spokes on the soles of the feet.

**three evil realms:** The three realms of rebirth that are considered to be the most despised and unfortunate, namely being reborn as a hell being, hungry ghost or animal.

**Tusita:** A heavenly realm known for being the location for the previous birth of Sakyamuni Buddha and the present location of the future Buddha, Maitreya.

**twelve ayatanas:** The six sense faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind) and their corresponding six sensory objects (sight, sound, scent, taste, touch, thought). The five ayatanas refer to the first five pairs. See also **eighteen dhatus**. Other translations: “sense bases,” “sense spheres,” “awarenesses.”

**upasaka:** A male lay Buddhist.

**upasika:** A female lay Buddhist.

**vinaya:** The rules and codes for Buddhist monks and nuns.

**yojana:** A classical Indian measure for longer distances. It is quantified diversely in different sources, but ranges from 4.5 miles to 10 miles (7.2 to 16 km).







## EDITORIAL MESSAGE



With the growing popularity of Buddhism around the world, access to its doctrine through reliable translations of its scriptures is of the utmost importance. Therefore, we have set as our pinnacle goal the production of a new standardized canon of Buddhist sutras in English. As scholars, teachers, and students of Buddhism, we recognize that the most valuable resources for Buddhist texts are the exhaustive editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, yet of the hundreds of sutras in Chinese, only a fraction have been reliably translated into the English language.

In furthering our goal of publishing translations of Chinese sutras we would like to thank Ven. Guang Xing for the contribution of his translation and research on the Nagasena Sutra. This text is a welcome addition to our ongoing series of translations. His copious annotations to the translation have been preserved in a companion volume of endnotes.

Through the publication of these translations, we hope to allow a greater accessibility to Buddhist sutras, and circulate them to a much wider audience. We hope to appeal to not only the uninitiated, but also to the more accomplished student of Buddhist thought.

We would like to extend our gratitude to William Bodiford (UCLA), Jonathan Silk (Leiden University), and Paul Kjellberg (Whittier College) for their comments on this publication.





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