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Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 3

The Third Discourse on the Wonderful and Marvellous | **A 4.129**
Ānanda Acchariya Sutta The Ānanda Discourse on the Wonderful
 Theme: Ānanda's 4 charismatic qualities
 Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2018

1 Overview

1.1 The Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 3 (A 4.129) is the 3rd of a series of 4 suttas in **the Bhava Vagga** (the chapter on existence) in the Book of Threes (Tika Nipāta) of the Aṅguttara Nikāya. The 4 suttas are as follows:¹

Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 1	A 4.127/2:130 f	SD 52.2a	the Buddha's 4 key life-events and radiance
Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 2	A 4.128/2:131 f	SD 52.2b	attachment, conceit, non-stillness, ignorance
Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 3	A 4.129/2:132	SD 52.2c	Ānanda's fourfold charisma
Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 4	A 4.130/2:133	SD 52.2d	Ānanda's charisma is like that of a world-monarch

1.2 The Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 3 is also called **the Ānanda Acchariya Sutta**, the Ānanda Discourse on the Wonderful, that is, it deals with Ānanda's 4 charismatic qualities. This text is probably the source for the same passage in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16).²

1.3 The Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 3 is clearly an abridged version of the longer **Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 4** (SD 52.2d)—also called **the Cakka,vatti Acchariya Sutta**, the Wheel-turner Discourse on the Wonderful, where the whole of the former sutta appears as its closing half. Actually, the latter deals with the same topics—Ānanda's 4 charismatic qualities [§§7-11]—but prefaces it by comparing him to a wheel-turning world monarch with similar qualities [§§1-6]. Hence, Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 4 is the full version of the former.

1.4 It is highly probable that it is in this connection (A 1:25) that Ānanda is declared the foremost of the monks who are *gatimantānaṃ*. Based on this Sutta, we can translate *gatimanta* or *gatimā* as “one who knows the course of things,” that is, perspicacious in protocol (cf AA 1:287). On account of this, he is articulate and popular with the masses.

The Commentaries, however, generally gloss *gatima* as “possessed of understanding,” thus, Ānanda is “accomplished in peerless understanding” (*gatimanto'ti asadisāya ñāṇa,gatiyā samannāgato*, ThaA 3:121,9); or, according to the Vinaya Commentary, he is “wise, meaning with wisdom, accomplished in understanding,” *paṇḍitā'ti paṇḍiccena samannāgtā gatimantā* (VA 552,24).³

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¹ See SD 52.2 (4.1).

² D 16,5,16/2:145 f (SD 9).

³ See DP sv.

Acchariya,abbhuta Sutta 3

The Third Discourse on the Wonderful and Marvellous

A 4.129

1 Bhikshus, there are these 4 wonderful and marvellous qualities about **Ānanda**. What are the four?

(1) The assembly of monks

<p>1 If an assembly of monks comes to see Ānanda, and if Ānanda then <u>talks</u> on the Dharma to that assembly of monks, but when Ānanda is <u>silent</u>,</p>	<p>they are pleased at the sight of him;⁴ they are pleased with the talk;⁵ they are disappointed.⁶</p>
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(2) The assembly of nuns

<p>3 If an assembly of nuns comes to see Ānanda, and if Ānanda then <i>talks</i> on the Dharma to that assembly of nuns, but when Ānanda is <i>silent</i>,</p>	<p>they are pleased at the sight of him; they are pleased with the talk; they are disappointed.</p>
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(3) The assembly of men lay-followers

<p>2 If an assembly of men lay-followers comes to see Ānanda, and if Ānanda then <i>talks</i> on the Dharma to that assembly of men lay-followers, but when Ānanda is <i>silent</i>,</p>	<p>they are pleased at the sight of him; they are pleased with the talk; they are disappointed.</p>
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(4) The assembly of women lay-followers

<p>3 If an assembly of women lay-followers comes to see Ānanda, and if Ānanda then <i>talks</i> on the Dharma to an assembly of women lay-followers, but when Ānanda is <i>silent</i>,</p>	<p>they are pleased at the sight of him; they are pleased with the talk; they are disappointed.</p>
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4 These, bhikshus, are these 4 wonderful and marvellous qualities about Ānanda.

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⁴ *Sace bhikkhave bhikkhu, parisā ānandaṃ dassanāya upasaṅkamati dassanena sā attamanā hoti.*

⁵ *Tattha ce ānando dhammaṃ bhāsati bhāsitenā pi sā attamanā hoti.*

⁶ *Atittā va bhikkhave bhikkhu, parisā hoti atha ānanda tuṅhī bhavati.*