

19

(Catukka) Vesārajja Sutta

The (Fours) Discourse on Intrepidity | A 4.8
 Theme: The 4 certain qualities of the Buddha
 Translated by Piya Tan ©2017

1 On the term *vesārajja*

1.1 ETYMOLOGY AND USAGE

1.1.1 *Vesārajja* and the 4 intrepidities

Vesārajja (neuter), meaning “intrepidity, self-confidence, moral courage,” is the abstract noun of the adjective, *visārada* (Skt **vaiśāradya*). The **intrepidities** (*vesārajja*) are characterized by qualities such as courage, fearlessness and eloquence in what is good.

An “intrepidity” (*vesārajja*) refers to the Buddha’s or an arhat’s perfect maturity and self-confidence. Originally, there are only 3 intrepidities, as stated in **the Sarabha Sutta** (A 3.64), that is, no one can justly claim or rightly prove these:

- (1) that the Buddha is not fully self-awakened;
- (2) that the Buddha has not destroyed all his mental influxes; and
- (3) that the practice of the Dharma does not lead to the destruction of suffering. [3.2]¹

In due course, a 4th intrepidity—that about “obstructions” (*antarāyika dhamma*) to the training—was added, making it a list of 4 intrepidities, as we have them today. Hence, in positive language (a free rendition), the 4 intrepidities are:

- (1) that the Buddha *is* fully self-awakened;
- (2) that the Buddha *has* destroyed all his mental influxes;
- (3) that the practice of the Dharma *does* lead to the destruction of suffering; and
- (4) that the Buddha *has* *rightly* pointed out obstructions to personal development.

1.1.1.2 The 4 intrepidities are given in full in **the Mahā Sīha, nāda Sutta** (M 12),² and briefly here in **the (Catukka) Vesārajja Sutta** (A 4.8), paraphrased as follows:

- | | |
|--|------|
| (1) his full awakening, | [§2] |
| (2) his purity (destruction of all defilements), | [§3] |
| (3) his teaching (identifying of the obstructions to awakening), and | [§4] |
| (4) the benefit of his teaching (the assurance of our own awakening). ³ | [§5] |

¹ A 3.64,26-38 (SD 51.23).

² M 12,22-28/1:71 f (SD 49.1).

³ See also **D 3**,2.22/1:110; **M 27**,7/1:177; **A 6.16**/3:297 f, **7.58**/4:83, **8.21**/4:210, **8.22**/4:216; MA 2:194; Nc 466; J 2:27; DhA 1:86; DA 1:278; KhpA 104; VvA 213; Sdhp 593.

1.1.2 Vesāraja and visārada

1.1.2.1 *Vesāraja* is an abstract noun, and its adjective is *visārada*, which means “intrepid, morally courageous,” hence, “self-confident.”⁴ *Visārada* is resolved as *vi* (meaning “separation”) + *sārada* (from Skt *śarad*, “autumn”); that is, “gone beyond autumn.” “Autumn” is harvest time, the year’s harvest, fresh crops and first-fruits. Figuratively, it means “unripe, immature, inexperienced” —which are senses of the adjective *sāraja* [1.1.2.2].

Hence, *visārada* means “mature, experienced, confident, courageous.” A person with *vesāraja*⁵ is strengthened and motivated by intrepidity or resolute courage, on account of faith, moral virtue, learning, energy and wisdom.⁶ [2.5.2.1]

1.1.2.2 Its opposite is “moral timidity,” even “moral cowardice” (*sāraja*). The 5 qualities bringing about *timidity* are: lack of faith; immorality; lacking learning; laziness; and lack of wisdom, as explained in the *Sāraja Sutta* (A 5.101).⁷ The word *sāraja* is also used in the *Piṇḍolya Sutta* (S 22.80).⁸

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 4 INTREPIDITIES

1.2.1 Secure, fearless and intrepid

No one in this world or in heaven can justly accuse the Buddha of not having these qualities. “Not seeing any such ground, bhikshus, I dwell accomplished in security, accomplished in fearlessness, accomplished in intrepidity [moral courage]” (*etam p’aham bhikkhave nimittam asamanupassanti khema-p,patto abhaya-p,patto vesāraja-p,patto viharāmi*) [§§2-5]. The Buddha’s 4 intrepidities [2] are the bases for his personality that is mentally secure, fearless and intrepid.

On account of the 4 “intrepidities” or certain qualities that gives the Buddha self-confidence and spiritual courage, he is said to be “the lordly bull herd-leader, (he) roars the lion-roar amongst assemblies, and turns the perfect wheel” [§1]. These 3 metaphors highlight the Buddha’s 3 “attainments” (*patta*) of security, fearlessness and intrepidity.

1.2.2 The attainments and the metaphors

The 3 key terms of “attainment” (or psychological accomplishment) describing the Buddha’s personality—his being secure (*khema*), fearless (*abhaya*) and intrepid or resolutely courageous (*vesāraja*) — relate to the 3 key actions of the Buddha as a teacher, alluded to in the Sutta’s **3 metaphors** (those of the bull, the lion and the wheel), thus:

- (1) He is himself “fully secure” (*khema-p,patta*)—safe from worldliness and free from suffering—since he is fully awakened and has attained nirvana. To be in nirvana means to be liberated from all states, divine or human. The Buddha is a unique being,⁹ world-free and freeing the world. Hence, he is like a “lordly bull herd-leader” (*asabha*).

⁴ See (Catukka) *Sobhana S* (A 4.7) + SD 51.17 (1.1.2.4).

⁵ On *vesāraja*, see SD 28.9a (3).

⁶ *Sāraja S* (A 5.101/3:127), SD 28.9a(3).

⁷ A 5.101, SD 28.9a(3). On moral timidity, see also SD 51.17 (1.1.2.4; 2.2.3).

⁸ S 22.80,16 + SD 28.9a (3).

⁹ The Buddha as a unique being, see SD 49.10 (1.3).

- (2) He is “totally fearless” (*abhaya-p, patta*) since he has uprooted all the roots of greed, hate and delusion, and the bias of fear.¹⁰ No matter what kind of distinguished assembly he appears in, he blends with it and speaks the Dharma for its benefit.¹¹ Hence, he “**roars the lion-roar amongst assemblies.**”
- (3) He is “**intrepid** or resolutely courageous” (*vesārajja-p, patta*) since, being awakened, he is able to awaken others from their ignorance and craving by **turning the perfect wheel**, that is, the Dharma that awakens those who practise it, even after the Buddha’s passing.

Each of the 4 intrepidities will be commented on below [2].

1.2.3 The 4 intrepidities and the 10 powers (1) [2.5]

1.2.3.1 Both the 4 intrepidities and the Buddha’s 10 powers (*dasa, bala*) or the Tathagata’s 10 powers are listed, one set after the other, each introduced by the same stock on the 3 metaphors [1.2.2] in the **the Mahā Sīh, nāda Sutta** (M 12).¹² We will briefly examine their connection in the context of our study of the Vesārajja Sutta. In the Mahā Sīh, nāda Sutta, they are called **the 10 tathagata-powers** (*tathāgata, -bala*), which are paraphrased as follows:¹³

- (1) the understanding of the possible (*thāna*) and the impossible (*aṭṭhāna*);¹⁴
- (2) the results of karma undertaken, past, present and future, according to their causes and possibilities;
- (3) the ways leading to all (karmic) destinies (such as subhuman states or happy states);
- (4) the various elements and worlds (the 5 aggregates and the nature of existence);
- (5) the various dispositions of beings (the nature of personal inclinations);
- (6) the spiritual faculties,¹⁵ here and beyond, of other beings, other individuals;
- (7) the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence regarding the attainments, the liberations, the samadhis and the dhyanas;
- (8) he recollects his manifold past lives;
- (9) by his divine eye, he knows the progress of beings according to their karma;
- (10) by his own direct knowledge he has destroyed all his mental influxes¹⁶ (that is, awoken as an arhat).

1.2.4 Evolution of the Tathagata’s 10 powers

1.2.4.1 It is possible that the list of the Tathagata’s 10 powers is a late set, compiled at a time when the numeral zero had been discovered and the decimal system known and used in India.¹⁷ This set, how-

¹⁰ Greed, hate, delusion and fear are the 4 wrong courses or biases (*āgati*): see **Sigal’ovāda S** (D 31,4+5) SD 4.1; **Āgati S 1** (A 4.17) SD 89.7; **Saṅgaha Bala S** (A 9.5,6.4) n, SD 2.21; SD 31.12 (6.4.1.3).

¹¹ He is said to occasionally appear in the 8 assemblies—those of kshatriyas, brahmins, householder, recluses, the 4 great kings, the 32 gods, Māra, the host of brahmas—see **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16,3.21-23) SD 9.

¹² M 12/1:69-73 (SD 49.1): the 10 powers in §§9-21, the 4 intrepidities in §§22-28.

¹³ For a more detailed study of these powers, see M 12,9-21 + nn (SD 49.1).

¹⁴ See **Bahu, dhātuka S** (M 115,12-17), SD 29.1a; see also Vbh 400; Dhs 1337. Comy, however, explains it in the Abhidhamma sense, as the knowledge of the correlations btw causes and their results (MA 2:28). See also **Thāna S** (S 52.15/5:304); **(Chakka) Sīha, nāda S** (A 6.64/3:417+419+420); **(Dasaka) Sīha, nāda S** (A 10.21/5:33); **Adhivuttipada S** (A 10.22/5:37); It 123*; Ap 2:460; Pm 2:174, 175, 176.

¹⁵ That is, how beings fare according to their 5 faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

¹⁶ The mental influxes (*āsava*) are those of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’-āsava*), (3) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216; M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The better known but later set of 4 influxes incl wrong views (*ditṭh’āsava*), as no. 3 (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937).

ever, is probably older than the set of 10 perfections (*pāramī*), which was likely to be a response to the Mahāyāna 6 perfections (*pāramitā*).¹⁸

1.2.4.2 Logically, a shorter list is likely to be the predecessor and pattern for a longer one presenting similar ideas. In fact, **the (Chakka) Sīha,nāda Sutta** (A 6.64) gives a list of 6 powers (*bala*) “by which [the Tathagata] claims his place as the lordly bull herd-leader, roars the lion-roar amongst assemblies, and turns the perfect wheel”—as in §1 of the Vesārajja Sutta (A 4.8) below.

The 6 powers (listed in 3 cycles in the Sutta, A 6.64) are as follows (abridged):

- (1) the understanding of the possible (*thāna*) and the impossible (*aṭṭhāna*);
- (2) the results of karma undertaken, past, present and future, according to their causes and possibilities;
- (3) the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence regarding the attainments, the liberations, the samadhis and the dhyanas;
- (4) he recollects his manifold past lives;
- (5) by his divine eye, he knows the progress of beings according to their karma;
- (6) by his own direct knowledge he has destroyed all his mental influxes¹⁹ (that is, awoken as an arhat).
(A 6.64/3:417 f)

These 6 powers are identical with those numbered 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the 10 powers [1.2.3.1] of the Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta (**M 12**). Numbers 3, 4, 5 and 6 are not found in the (Chakka) Sīha,nāda Sutta (A 6.64) list.

Then, we see the following 6 powers, common between the two lists, occurring in three cycles in the **A 6.64**:

- (1) the understanding of the possible (*thāna*) and the impossible (*aṭṭhāna*);
- (2) the results of karma undertaken, past, present and future, according to their causes and possibilities;
- (7) the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence regarding the attainments, the liberations, the samadhis and the dhyanas;
- (8) he recollects his manifold past lives;
- (9) by his divine eye, he knows the progress of beings according to their karma;
- (10) by his own direct knowledge he has destroyed all his mental influxes²⁰ (that is, awoken as an arhat).

The following four are found in only **the M 12 list** (which we can surmise are the latest additions to the older list to form the list of the 10 powers):

- (3) the ways leading to all (karmic) destinies (such as subhuman states or happy states);
- (4) the various elements and worlds (the 5 aggregates and the nature of existence);
- (5) the various dispositions of beings (the nature of personal inclinations);
- (6) the spiritual faculties,²¹ here and beyond, of other beings, other individuals.

¹⁷ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_mathematics; <http://archaeologyonline.net/artifacts/history-mathematics>.

¹⁸ Dhammapāla (a Tamil Buddhist commentator from south of modern Chennai, who lived very soon after Buddhaghosa, 5th cent CE), in his treatise on the 10 perfections (CA 271-332), after listing them in a verse, immediately adds, “But some say there are 6” (*keci pana cha-b, bidhāti vadanti*) (CA 277).

¹⁹ The mental influxes (*āsava*) are those of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216; M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The better known but later set of 4 influxes incl wrong views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), as no. 3 (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937).

²⁰ On the mental influxes (*āsava*): see (1.2.4.2 (6) n).

²¹ That is, how beings fare according to their 5 faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

Scholars have done comparative studies of these lists.²²

1.3 The arhat's 10 powers

1.3.1 The Khīṇāsava Bala Sutta (A 10.90) gives a parallel set of the 10 powers of the influx-destroyed (*khīṇāsava bala*), that is, an arhat [1.3.4]. We can possibly trace some kind of these powers or, at least, see some kind of numerical progression in them.

The Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda Sutta begins the process with the one “power for a monk” (*bhikkhu bala*), that is, the attaining of arhathood, defined thus:

32 And what, bhikshus, is **(the one) power for a monk?**

Here, bhikshus, a monk, having right here and now realized for himself through direct knowledge, attained and dwelled in the freedom of mind and freedom by wisdom²³ that are influx-free with the destruction of the mental influxes.²⁴

This, bhikshus, is the power of a monk.

(D 26,32/3:78 (SD 36.10))

1.3.2 The (Gaṅgā) Bala Sutta (S 50.1)²⁵ gives a list of these 5 powers—which are the arhat's version of the 5 spiritual faculties—that is, *the powers of faith, of energy, of mindfulness, of concentration, and of wisdom*. When a monk cultivates these powers, he will slope, slide and incline towards nirvana, that is, the attaining of arhathood. (S 50.1/5.249)

1.3.3 The Das'uttara Sutta (D 34) gives this list of the 7 powers of the influx-destroyed (*khīṇāsava bala*), that is, the power of an arhat, which are the qualities to be realized (*satta dhamma sacchiktabbā*), as follows (abridged):

A monk who has destroyed the influxes:²⁶

- (1) has well seen all formations, as they really is, with right wisdom, to be impermanent;
- (2) has well seen sensual-pleasures (*kāma*), as they really is, with right wisdom, to be like glowing coal;
- (3) the mind turns towards solitude (*viveka*), delighting in renunciation, having brought to an end all the bases for the influxes;²⁷
- (4) the 4 focuses of mindfulness²⁸ have been well cultivated;

²² See eg N Katz, 1982:141-145.

²³ “Freedom of mind and freedom through wisdom,” respectively, *ceto,vimutti* (or, freedom by concentration, ie through destruction of the mental hindrances) and *paññā,vimutti* (freedom through insight) (A 1:60). One who is *liberated by wisdom* “may not have reached the 8 deliverances (*vimokkha = jhāna*) in his own body, but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed” (M 70,16/1:478). All arhats are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into two types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain the 8 deliverances (*aṭṭha,vimokkha*), which include the 4 formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called *liberated both ways*, that is, liberated from the physical body by means of the formless dhyanas, and from all defilements by the path of arhathood. Saḷha, like the arhats Sāriputta and Moggallāna, is “liberated both ways” (*ubhato,bhāga,vimutta*). The differences between the two types of freedom are given in **Mahā,nidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kīṭā,giri S** (M 1:477 f). For full list of the 8 deliverances, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15,35/2:70 f). See also D 3:262, 228; **Vimokkha S**, A 8.66/4:306; also M 120,37/3:103, SD 3.4.

²⁴ “Mental influxes,” *āsava*: see (1.2.3.1 (10) n).

²⁵ Also called **Paṭhama Pācīna S**.

²⁶ These 7 powers correspond to nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9 and 10 of the list **Paṭisambhidā,magga** (Pm 19.24-33/2:173 f).

²⁷ On the influxes (*āsava*), see (1.2.3.1(10) n).

²⁸ On the 4 focuses of mindfulness, see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), SD 13.3.

- (5) the 5 spiritual faculties²⁹ have been well cultivated;
 (6) the 7 awakening-factors³⁰ have been well cultivated;
 (7) the noble eightfold path³¹ has been well cultivated. (D 34,1.8.10/3:283)

1.3.4 The Khīṇāsava Bala Sutta (A 10.90) expands on the 7 powers of the influx-destroyed into the following 10 powers of the influx-destroyed possessed by the arhat, thus:

- (1) he has well seen all formations, as they really are, with right wisdom, to be impermanent;
 (2) he has well seen sensual-pleasures (*kāma*), as they really are, with right wisdom, to be like glowing coal;
 (3) the mind turns towards solitude (*viveka*), delighting in renunciation, having brought to an end all the bases for the influxes;³²
 (4) the 4 focuses of mindfulness have been well cultivated;
 (5) the 4 right strivings³³ have been well cultivated;
 (6) the 4 bases of spiritual success have been well cultivated;
 (7) the 5 spiritual faculties have been well cultivated;
 (8) the 5 powers³⁴ have been well cultivated;
 (9) the 7 awakening-factors have been well cultivated;
 (10) the noble eightfold path has been well cultivated. (A 10.90/5:174 f)

Except for powers no. 4, 5, and 8, these powers are identical with those given in the Das'uttara Sutta [1.3.3]. Powers nos. 4-7—the last 7 powers—in fact, form the famous “7 sets” of basic teachings.³⁵

2 The Buddha's intrepidity

Here is a brief commentary on the Buddha's 4 intrepidities:

- (1) “While you claim to be fully awakened, you are not fully awakened about these things.”
 (2) “While you claim to have destroyed the mental influxes, you have not (really) destroyed them.”
 (3) “These things you call obstructions are unable to obstruct (the spiritual progress of) one who engages in them.”
 (4) “When he teaches the Dharma to someone for the sake of the spiritual goal, when he works on it, it would not lead him to the complete ending of suffering.”

2.1 THE 1ST INTREPIDITY: THE BUDDHA'S FULL AWAKENING [§2]

2.1.1 No one on earth or in heaven can justly accuse of the Buddha thus:

- (1) “While you claim to be fully awakened, you are not fully awakened about these things.”
 (*sammā,sambuddhassa te paṭijānato ime dhammā anabhisambuddhā'ti.*)

²⁹ On the 5 spiritual faculties, see *Pañc'indriya* (SD 10.4).

³⁰ On the 7 awakening-factors, see *Bojjhaṅga Sīla S* (S 46.3), SD 10.15.

³¹ On the noble eightfold path, see *Ariya Aṭṭh'aṅgika Magga* (SD 10.16).

³² On the influxes (*āsava*), see (1.2.3.1(10)) n.

³³ On the 4 right strivings, see *Catu Padhāna S* (D 33,1.11 = A 4.14), SD 10.2.

³⁴ On the 5 powers, see *Pañca Bala* (SD 10.5).

³⁵ On the 7 sets, see *SD 10.1*; *Pārīleyya S* (S 22.81,11) SD 6.1; SD 9 (10.3); *Saku'udāyī S* (M 77,15-21) SD 6.18.

No one can rightly accuse the Buddha that he is not **fully awakened** (*abhisambuddha*). Accomplished with this intrepidity, the Buddha “claims his place as the lordly bull herd-leader, roars the lion-roar amongst assemblies, and turns the perfect wheel”—a radiant beacon in the history of religion, respected by the wise of the world, and teaches the true path to awakening [§1].

2.1.2 Buddhahood or full self-awakening is the highest state of spiritual liberation attainable by any being. Having awakened to buddhahood, the Buddha has nothing left that he needs to awaken to or to attain. It is like we have safely escaped from being wrongly imprisoned by some enemies. Once we have escaped, away from the prison, back into the safety of our own country, we are truly free. There is only unqualified *freedom*. This first intrepidity highlights the fact that the Buddha’s awakening is full and complete.³⁶

2.1.3 This state, however, can only be attained as a human being, since only a human is able to truly experience both suffering and pleasure. Hence, humans have the full access to the potential of self-awakening, that is, liberation from suffering and the world itself.³⁷ Heavenly beings are either so involved in their persistently pleasurable lives or in some sustained profound meditation to be able to work to free themselves from worldly conditions.³⁸

2.1.4 The state of **buddhahood** is often called “the supreme full self-awakening” (*anuttara sammā,sambodhi*).³⁹ Interestingly, the Buddha himself is never referred to as “the supreme fully self-awakened one” (**anuttara sammā,sambuddha*), but simply as “the fully self-awakened one” (*sammā,sambuddho*).⁴⁰ The reason for this is probably because while Buddhahood as a state is *supreme*, but as individual buddhas, they are each *unique*, only one appearing in a universe at a time.

2.1.5 The Eka,puggala Vagga (A 1.13/1:22), “the chapter on the unique being,” describes the Buddha as follows:

³⁶ The Chinese version of **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12)—T757 @ T17.593b20—states that the Buddha “knows everything,” 一切智 *yī qiè zhì*, and there is “nothing he does not know,” 無所不知 *wú suǒ bù zhī*. “Omniscience” (in the Buddha sense) is subsumed under the Buddha’s awakening knowledge, and not highlighted in the early Buddhist texts [2.1.1.7]. The Sutta comy, however, attributes omniscience to the Buddha (MA 2:25,18): see SD 7.1 (4.5). See also **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90), SD 10.8 (2); **Sandaka S** (M 76,21+52), SD 35.7; SD 36.2 (5.1.1.2). See also Analayo 2011: 416.

³⁷ See SD 36.13 (4.5.4).

³⁸ On the first step to awakening, see **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

³⁹ *Anuttara sammā,sambodhi*: V 1:11, 3:4; **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,1.16 f/2:83) of the 3 periods, SD 9; **Sampāsadanīya S** (D 28/3:101), SD 14.14; **Mūla,pariyāya S** (M 1/1:6), SD 11.8; **Dahara S** (S 3.1/1:68), SD 42.11; **(Dhātu) Pubbe Sambodha S** (S 14.31/2:170), SD 29.17; **Assāda S 1** (S 22.26/3:28), **Pubbe Sambodha S 1** (S 35.13/4:7), SD 14.9; **Nālandā S** (S 47.12/5:160), SD 12.18; **Pubb’eva Sambodha S** (A 3.101a/1:259), SD 14.6a; **(Tathāgata) Loka S** (A 4.23/2:24) = (It 121/4.13), SD 15.7(2.1.2); **Methuna S** (A 7.47/4:56), SD 21.9; **Verañja S** (A 8.11/4:176); **Tapussa S** (A 9.41/4:448), SD 62.16; **Cunda Kammāra,putta S** (U 8.5/85); Pm 1:174.

⁴⁰ *Sammā,sambuddha* (marked with an asterisk *), usu as *araharū sammā,sambuddha*): V 1:8*, 2:162, 3:1; **Sāmāñña,phala S** (D 2,8/1:49), SD 8.10; **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14/2:2-4), SD 49.8 the 7 buddhas, **Pāṭika S** (D 24/3:5), SD 63.3; **Mūla,pariyāya S** (M 1/1:5), SD 11.8; **Kandaraka S** (M 51/1:344), SD 32.9; **Deva,daha S** (M 101/2:226), SD 18.4; **(Devatā) Samiddhi S** (S 1.20/1:9), SD 21.4; **Pañca Vera,bhaya S 1** (S 12.41/2:69); **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58/3:65), SD 49.10; **Rūp’ārāma S 1** (S 35.136/4:127), **(Agga) Tathāgata S** (S 45.139/5:42), SD 49.17; **(Dhamma) Cakka,vatti S** (A 3.14/1:110), SD 72.10; **Cakkānuvattana S 1** (A 5.131/3:148); **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10/7), SD 33.7; **Dhātu S** (It 3.1.2/46*)*; **Sabhiya S** (Sn 541)*, SD 77.8; **Kassapa B** (B 26.50)*; Pm 2:3; Vbh 336.

The Tathagata (thus-come), the arhat, fully self-awakened one is the one (*eka*) (that is, the unique one):

- A 1.13.1:** who arises in the world for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, good and happiness of gods and humans;
A 1.13.2: whose manifestation is rare (*dullabha*) in the world;
A 1.13.3: who arises in the world as an extraordinary human being (*acchariya,manussa*);
A 1.13.4: whose death is mourned (*anutappā*) by the many;
A 1.13.5: who is unique, peerless, incomparable, unmatched, unequalled, equal only to the unequalled,⁴¹ foremost amongst the two-legged.⁴²

In short, the Buddha, when he appears in our universe, is a unique, rare and remarkable person who benefits all beings worldly, human and divine. There is no hint whatsoever that he will go through any further evolution or state but whom we will mourn and miss when he dies.

2.1.6 The Puggala Paññatti (Pug 1.28 + 9.1) defines the Buddha in two places as follows

*Katamo ca puggalo sammā,sambuddho?
 Idh'ekacco puggalo pubbe ananussutesu
 dhammesu sāmāṃ saccāni abhisambujjhati;
 tattha ca sabbaññūtarāṃ pāpuṇāti, balesu ca
 phalesu vasi,bhāvam –
 ayam vuccati puggalo sammā,sambuddho.*

What kind of person is **the fully self-awakened**?
 Here, a certain person, in things unheard before,
 understands the truths for himself,
 and attains omniscience, powers and mastery
 over the fruits therein—
 this person is called the fully self-awakened.

(Pug 1.28/14 + 9.1/73)

The Commentary explains that “the fruits” (*phala*) here refers to “omniscience” and the “10 powers,” which only the Buddha attains, but not even the “individual buddha” (*pacceka,buddha*) who awakened only for himself (PugA 189). In other words, even the arhats and other saints do not attain omniscience [2.1.7] or the 10 powers [1.2.3.1].

2.1.7 The Buddha's omniscience

2.1.7.1 The early sutta explain “omniscience” (*sabbaññūtarā*) as literally “a knowledge of the all.” The all (*sabba*), as understood here, is defined in **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23) our “internal” sense-bases (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) and their respective “external” sense-bases (form, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought). This is only a “shorthand” way of telling us that whatever we can experience or know are within the purview of our sense-faculties and their sense-objects.⁴³

The Sīmsapā Sutta (S 56.31) relates how the Buddha, while wondering in a forest, stops and scoops up a handful of leaves (probably 4 of them). Then, he asks the monks around him whether there are more leaves in his hand, or there are in the forest. The monks, of course, replied that there are only a few leaves in his hand and an immeasurable number of leaves on the forest trees,

“Even so, bhikshus, much more is the direct knowledge that I have known, but that has not been taught. Few is that which has been taught.

⁴¹ *Asamasama*, meaning, equaled only to the past and future buddhas (AA 1:1216) in moral virtue, etc (BA 42).

⁴² *Adutiyo asahāyo appaṭṭimo appaṭṭipuggalo asamo asamasamo di,padānam aggo.*

⁴³ S 35.23 + SD 7.1 (5).

And why, bhikshus, have I not taught them [pointed them out]⁴⁴?

Because, bhikshus, they are not connected with the goal, not connected with the fundamentals of the holy life, and do not lead to revulsion, to letting go, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to awakening, to nirvana.⁴⁵

Therefore, I have not taught them.

(S 56.31,3+4) + SD 21.7 (5)

2.1.7.2 The Pahāna Sutta 1 (S 35.24), which follows the Sabba Sutta in the Saṃyutta, elaborates on the “all” that is to be abandoned as including sense-consciousness, feel and contact, too, thus:

The eye is to be abandoned;

forms are to be abandoned;

eye-consciousness is to be abandoned;

eye-contact is to be abandoned; **[16]** and

whatever feeling that arises with eye-contact as a condition—

whether pleasant, painful or neutral—that too is to be abandoned. (S 35.24/4:15), SD 105.12

The same applies to each of the other 5 senses, their objects, consciousnesses, and so on.

The Canon, however, nowhere says that nirvana is to be “abandoned.” With the cessation (*nirodha*) of defilement, nirvana is attained, after which there is no further task to be done.⁴⁶ This “all”—how we experience and know things, and their consequences—is known by the Buddha. This a liberating omniscience—a soteriological omniscience—not merely knowing, but with the understanding and the wisdom to at least end or prevent suffering, if not attain awakening and liberation.

2.1.7.3 The Pāsādika Sutta (D 29) says that some wanderers may challenge the Buddha, charging that “The recluse Gotama has limitless knowledge and vision with regard to the past but not with regard to the future.” The Buddha explains that

with regard to the past, the Tathāgata shows boundless knowledge and vision, but it is not so with the future ... He can recall as far back as he wishes. But as for the future, the Tathāgata’s knowledge, born of awakening, arises in him, thus, “This is the last birth, there is no more rebirth here!”⁴⁷

(D 29,27/3:134), SD 40a.6

This clearly means that the Buddha is able to recall anything he wants about the past (whatever that has happened), but nothing of the future (what has not yet happened or will not happen) in terms of fixed events. However, there are two exceptions regarding the Buddha’s knowledge of the future:

- (1) He is able to predict the events related to certain spiritual truths, such as the non-arising in the future of those who have liberated themselves spiritually.
- (2) He is able to prophesy certain patterns of human conduct and events, such as Dharma-ending situations.

⁴⁴ *Anakkhātāṃ, opp akkhātāṃ.*

⁴⁵ On this formula, see *Nibbidā*, SD 20.1.

⁴⁶ See SD 7.1 (5.3).

⁴⁷ *Atītāṃ kho addhānaṃ ārabha samaṇo Gotamo atīrakāṃ ñāṇa, dassanaṃ paññāpeti, no ca kho anāgatam ... So yāvatakaṃ ākaṅkhati tāvatakaṃ anussarati. Anāgatañ ca kho addhānaṃ ārabha Tathāgatassa bodhijāṃ ñāṇaṃ uppajati: ayam antimā jāti, n’atthi dāni punabbhavo ti.*

All such predictions are not merely “prophecies” to licence or authenticate the Buddha in any way, but made as a part of a teaching process to help us understand the nature of human conduct and to make wise choices to prevent or correct the unwholesome, and promote the wholesome for ourself and for others.⁴⁸

2.1.7.4 In summary, then, the Buddha, as regards his omniscience, declares that he cannot know everything all the time (which is impossible for anyone, divine or human), but that he can know anything any time should he so desire.⁴⁹ Both **the Kaṇṇaka-t,thala Sutta** (M 90) SD 10.8 (2) and **the Sandaka Sutta** (M 76) discuss the problem of “knowing everything at the same time” or “simultaneous omniscience,” as claimed by some sectarian teachers of the Buddha’s time.⁵⁰

2.2 THE 2ND INTREPIDITY: THE BUDDHA’S PURITY [§3]

2.2.1 No one on earth and in heaven can justly accuse of the Buddha thus:

(2) “While you claim to have destroyed the mental influxes, you have not (really) destroyed them.”
(*khīṇ’āsavassa te paṭijānato ime āsavā aparikkhīṇā’ti*)

A **buddha**, by definition and necessity, is the most highly evolved of beings in a universe who, by destroying the unwholesome roots of greed, hate and delusion, truly see things as they really, so that he awakens to the liberation of nirvana.

2.2.2 The (Pāda) Doṇa Sutta (A 4.36) records a brahmin questioning the Buddha whether he is (essentially) a divine being (*deva*), an intermediate being or gandharva (*gandhabba*), a nature spirit (*yaksha*) or a human.⁵¹ The Buddha replies that

those influxes⁵² by which, when not abandoned,
one would become (a deva, | a gandharva, | a yaksha, | a human),
those influxes have been abandoned by me,
cut them off at the root, made them like a palm-tree stump, done away with them,
so that they are not subject to further growth. (A 4.36,2), SD 36.13

“Therefore,” the Buddha tells the brahmin, “remember me as the Buddha.” Then, the Buddha utters these famous verses:

4 *Yena devûpapaty-assa
gandhabbo vā vihaṅgamo,
yakkhattam̐ yena gaccheyyam̐
manussattañ ca abbaje,
te mayham̐ āsavā khīṇā
viddhistā vinalī,katā.*

That by which one is born as a deva,
a gandharva who moves through the air,
by which one were to attain a yaksha state,
or were to come to the human state—
these influxes⁵³ have been ended by me,
demolished, exterminated.

⁴⁸ See also SD 36.2 (5.10.3).

⁴⁹ Nm 178,179; NmA 223; SnA 1:18. See SD 10.8 (2.2).

⁵⁰ M 90,8/2:117 + SD 10.8 (2); M 76,21+52 + SD 35.7 (3.2); see also SD 36.2 (5.1.1.2). On the limits of omniscience, see SD 10.8 (2.4). See also “Omniscience” in Ency of Buddhism (Colombo) 7:214-219.

⁵¹ On these 4 categories, see SD 36.13 (4.4+4.5).

⁵² On the mental influxes, see (1.2.4.2(6) n).

⁵³ On the mental influxes, see (1.2.4.2(6) n).

*Puṇḍarīkaṃ yathā vaggu
toyena n'upalippati
n'upalippāmi lokena
tasmā buddho'smi brāhmaṇā ti.*

Just like a beautiful lotus,
undefiled by the water,
undefiled by the world am I,
therefore, brahmin, am I buddha.

(A 4.36,2), SD 36.13

The Buddha, then, is the most highly evolved of beings in our universe, human, non-human and divine, on account of his wisdom and conduct. In the case of the Buddha, he is the embodiment of the Dharma that he has awakened to. Although born *into* this world, through his own effort, he rises *above* the world. He is Buddha in his own right, a class all of his own.⁵⁴

2.3 THE 3RD INTREPIDITY: THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING [§4]

2.3.1 No one on earth and in heaven can justly accuse of the Buddha thus:

(3) "These things you call **obstructions** are unable to obstruct (the spiritual progress of) one who engages in them." (*Ye kho pana te antarāyikā dhammā vuttā, te paṭisevato nālaṃ antarāyāyā'ti*)

This third of the Buddha's 4 intrepidities is based on his insight in identifying those states that are "obstructions" (*antarāyikā dhammā*) to spiritual growth.⁵⁵ This is the moral courage in a spiritual teacher to stand firm with what works as hindrances to spiritual growth. Many worldly teachers are either themselves hindered by worldly weaknesses and desires, or, in their desire for the patronage and adoration of a crowd, fall so low as to accommodate worldliness into their teachings and practices. In short, they lack the moral courage to stand up against what is morally wrong.

2.3.2 The Alagaddūpama Sutta (M 22) records the deluded view of the monk, Ariṭṭha that sexuality is no obstruction to the spiritual life of celibate renunciants. The Buddha unequivocally replied that sexuality, which entails desire, clearly is an obstruction to the celibate holy life, and that he has never taught otherwise. The Buddha being resolutely clear about such matters is an example his intrepidity or moral courage in this case.⁵⁶

2.4 THE 4TH INTREPIDITY: THE BENEFIT OF THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING [§5]

2.4.1 No one on earth and in heaven can justly accuse of the Buddha thus:

(4) "When he teaches the Dharma to someone for the sake of **the spiritual goal**, when he works on it, it would not lead him to **the complete ending of suffering**" (*yassa kho pana te atthāya dhammo desito, so na niyyāti tak, karassa sammā dukkha-k, khayāyāti*).

The Buddha, in his teachings, often reassures us of the certainty of awakening in this life. There are numerous records in the suttas of those who gain awakening, especially arhathood, upon listening to

⁵⁴ See SD 36.2 (2.1.2).

⁵⁵ On *antarāyikā dhammā*, see V:H 3:21 n5. The Chinese version specifies that these obstructions are actually desire and lust: T757 @ T17.593c2 records the Buddha as saying: "Lust and desire, I say, are an obstruction to the path of the Dharma," 我說貪欲是障道法 *wǒ shuō tān yù shì zhàng dào fǎ*.

⁵⁶ M 22,3.5/1:130,10 (SD 3.13).

the Buddha,⁵⁷ or after receiving a brief teaching and then going into solitary retreat.⁵⁸ Numerous others who listen to the Dharma are recorded in the suttas as becoming “learners” (*sekha*), that is, saints short of arhathood, especially as streamwinners.⁵⁹

2.4.2 Satipatthana practice

2.4.2.1 A good example of the Buddha’s assurance of spiritual liberation through his teachings is found in the conclusion to both **the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22) and **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), which goes as follows (summarized):

Whoever, bhikshus, were to cultivate these 4 focuses of mindfulness *in this way*⁶⁰ for just 7 years,

one of two fruits may be expected:

either **direct knowledge** [arhathood] in this very life or, if there is any residue of clinging,⁶¹ **non-returning.**⁶²

Let alone 7 years ... for just 1 year ... for just half a month ...

Let alone half a month—whoever were to cultivate these 4 focuses of mindfulness in this way for just 7 days⁶³ (D 22,22), SD 13.2 = (M 10,46), SD 13.3

2.4.2.2 Based on this teaching, we often see meditation retreats—especially those based on the methods of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta—tend to last at least a week, but often extending to longer periods. The mention of 7 years is encouraging, too, since a busy lay practitioner will need longer time practising on his own. The results, however, are certain. Even when we do not attain non-returning, with proper practice—especially the perception of impermanence—we are certain to attain streamwinning in this life itself.⁶⁴

2.4.3 The perception of impermanence

⁵⁷ The best cases of those who become arhats upon merely listening to the Buddha include Bāhiya Dāri, ciriya in **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10,9-14 + 18), SD 33.7, and Sāriputta, in **Dīgha, nakha S** (M 74,14), SD 16.1.

⁵⁸ On the solitary retreat (*paṭisallāna*), see **(Duka) Paṭisallāna S** (It 45) + SD 41.4 (1); **Viveka, ja S** (S 28.1), SD 33.3a.

⁵⁹ A drunkard becomes a streamwinner, see **Sarakānī S 1** (S 55.24), SD 3.6. Lists: **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16,2.7), SD 9.

⁶⁰ *Evam bhāveyya*. The guarantee of spiritual liberation here should be understood in connection with this crucial phrase, “were to cultivate in this way” (*evam bhāveyya*). See SD 13.1 (7).

⁶¹ *Upādi, sese*, “trace of clinging = *upādāna, sese*” (MA 1:301) or as “grasping” (*sa, gahana, sesa*)” (MA 4:55). The term *upādi* is very close to *upadhi* (“life-basis, substrate”), and, they share the common meaning of “material support (the result of past karma)” (MA 4:55; UA 151), ie, the 5 aggregates (*khandha*). Technically, we can also say that this “trace” (at least here) refers to the 5 higher fetters (breaking of which brings about non-returning): see SD 45.18 (2.5.5). Cf secular use in the parable of the man shot with a dart, “trace (of poison)” (M 105,19). In D:W 350 (2 places), Walshe renders it as “substrate,” probably confounding it for *upadhi*, a very close term. See SD 50.13 (1.3.2.1).

⁶² “One of two fruits ... non-returning,” as at **Mahā Sati’paṭṭhāna S** (D 22,22/2:314,12), SD 13.2; **Sati’paṭṭhāna S** (M 10,46/1:62), SD 13.3; **Kiṭṭa, giri S** (M 70,27/1:481), SD 11.1; **Aṭṭhika Maha-p, phala S** (S 46.57/5:129,21); **Nirodha S** (S 46.76/5:133); **Dve Phalā S** (S 48.65/5:236); **Phalā S 1+2** (S 54.4+5/5:313 f); **Iddhi, pāda S 1** (A 5.67/3:82), SD 106.15; **Sati Supaṭṭhita S** (A 5.122/3:143); **(Dasaka) Pabbajjā S** (A 10.59/5:108); **(Duka) Paṭisallāna S** (It 2.2.8/39,15), SD 41.4; **Sikkhānisaṃsa S** (It 2.2.9/40,12); **Jāgariya S** (It 2.2.10/41,11); **Dvayatānupassanā S** (Sn pp140,13, 148,13), SD 104.2.

⁶³ On the significance of this “prediction,” and why some do not see results within a week as stated, see SD 13.1 (7).

⁶⁴ See esp **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7 [1.7.3; 5].

2.4.3.1 Busy or worldly laity (even monastics) have the option, as it were, of a simpler “practice package”—that of the perception of impermanence (*anicca,saññā*)—as taught in **the (Anicca) Cakkhus Sutta** (S 25.1)⁶⁵ or any of the other 9 suttas in the same Okkanta Saṃyutta (S 25). *Impermanence*, understandably, is the first and most basic of the 3 universal characteristics, that all things are impermanent, suffering and non-self. If we are able to understand or accept the truth of impermanence [2.4.3.2], it is easier and more certain of our seeing ourself and the world as it really is.⁶⁶

2.4.3.2 According to **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1) or any of the other suttas of the Okkanta Saṃyutta (S 25), whether out of faith (*saddhā*) or through wisdom (*paññā*), we practise *the perception of impermanence*, we will surely become “true individuals” (*sappurisa*), those who are sure to head for the path of awakening, and so free ourselves from the subhuman planes of existence. With this practice, we would surely attain at least streamwinning in this life itself; if not, certainly at the moment of passing away.⁶⁷

2.4.4 The Buddha’s lion-roar

2.4.4.1 The Buddha is famously recorded on a number of occasions teaching the Dharma to others, even though they do not immediately attain any kind of sainthood, or decide to renounce the world, or even go for refuge. There is the case of the naked ascetic (*ājīvika*), **Upaka**, the first person to whom the Buddha declares his awakening, but Upaka is unimpressed.

Upaka goes into the forest and marries a hunter’s daughter and has a child. After an unhappy marriage, both he and his wife later join the order.⁶⁸ Upaka becomes a non-returner.⁶⁹

2.4.4.2 The Majjhima Commentary says that a lion-roar is a statement of supremacy and fearlessness, one that cannot be debunked. Two other related discourses that refer to the lion and his roar, in connection with the Buddha’s teaching, are **the (Anicca) Sīha Sutta** (A 4.33) and **the (Dasaka) Sīha,nāda Sutta** (A 10.21).⁷⁰ Like a Dharma-lion, the Buddha roars his teaching even when the audience seems not to be ready—the rub here is that the audience’s wrong views are corrected. It is only a matter of time, when the listener spiritually matures that he will return to the Buddha and renounce.

The Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda Sutta (D 25) records the Buddha’s own lion-roar (*sīha,nāda*) to the puffed-up wanderer **Nigrodha** and his followers. Despite giving a full-length Dīgha discourse, at the end of it, neither Nigrodha nor any of the other wanderers attain any level of the path, nor go for refuge. The positive note is that it attests to the Buddha’s understanding of the wanderer’s teachings and his response to them. Although Nirodha is impressed and delighted⁷¹ by the Buddha’s teaching, and even apologizes to the Buddha for his haughtiness, he neither renounces nor goes for refuge.⁷²

⁶⁵ S 25.1 (SD 16.7).

⁶⁶ See **Mahā Rāhu’ovāda S** (M 62,23), which says that this practice helps us remove the “I am” conceit, ie, the basis of self-identity view, the 1st of the 3 fetters (SD 3.11). On the 3 fetters, see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8. See also **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

⁶⁷ S 25.1 (SD 16.7).

⁶⁸ **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,25) n, SD 1.11. For Upaka’s life: SD 12.1 (4+5); SD 49.13 (4.2); SD 49.20 (comy Sn 211).

⁶⁹ Upaka’s non-returning: SD 12.1 (4+5).

⁷⁰ Respectively A 4.33/2:33 f = S 22.78/3:84-86 (SD 42.10) & A 10.21/5:32-36 @ SD 81.2.

⁷¹ See **Kassapa Sīha,nāda S** (D 8,23/1:175 f), where the Buddha recalls teaching Nigrodha (SD 73.12).

⁷² D 25/3:36-57 (SD 1.4). For other occasions when the Buddha teaches but his audience remains unconverted, see SD 1.4 (2.3).

The Commentary, however, notes that although the wanderers do not attain any “distinction” (*visesa*), that is, the path of awakening, the Buddha’s teaching leaves a “support of karmic impression” (*vāsamāya paccayo*)⁷³ on them (DA 3:844). This is a hint that they will, in due course, meet the Buddha again and convert.

2.5 THE 4 INTREPIDITIES AND THE 10 POWERS (2) [1.2.3]

2.5.1 Early and late

2.5.1.1 As qualities of the Buddha, the 4 intrepidities (*catu vesārajjā*) and the 10 powers (*dasa bala*) are closely related. As the shorter list, the set of 4 intrepidities is likely to be older than the list of 10 powers. Indeed, it is even possible that the intrepidities evolved into the powers over the years of the Buddha’s teachings. It is also possible that the early monastic redactors compiled the list of 10 powers as a teaching tool reflecting the Buddha’s amazing range and depth of wisdom.

2.5.1.2 Even though we may speak of the list of 10 powers was being “later” than that of the 4 intrepidities, or that it was not used by the Buddha himself but compiled by the sutta redactors, this in no way diminish its value—or the value of similar early doctrines—as teaching and learning tools. Even in our own time, skillful teachers come up with helpful teaching aids and learning aids for the Dharma. These sutta lists and teachings are clearly older and have been introduced on account of the wisdom of the early Dharma teachers and they continue to benefit us to this day.

2.5.2 Intrepidities and powers

2.5.2.1 Both the 4 intrepidities [1.1.1] and the 10 powers [1.2.3] are expressions of the Buddha’s wisdom and compassion. The 10 powers are all the manifestations of great **wisdom**; wisdom is their essence. The 4 intrepidities are rooted in **compassion**, which is their essence. In other words, the Buddha’s wisdom is expressed through the 4 intrepidities: his moral courage arises from the interaction of his wisdom and compassion.

According to the commentator Dhammapāla, the powers are the field (*khetta*) of the Buddha’s wisdom, while the intrepidities his field of compassion. Through his powers, the Buddha is not conquered by others; through the intrepidities, he conquers others. Accomplishment as a teacher comes from the powers; the accomplishment of the teaching (*sāsana*) comes from the intrepidities. Buddhahood is accomplished by the powers; the Dharma, through the intrepidities. (ItA 1:16)

2.5.2.2 As already noted, it is likely that the list of **the 4 intrepidities** is probably older than that of the 10 powers, and the former may have evolved into the latter [1.2.4]. Here is how the two sets correlate and how the list of 10 powers evolved:

<u>The 1st intrepidity</u>	on knowledge of possibilities	<u>powers 1-3</u>	dealing with karma.
<u>The 2nd intrepidity</u>	on the destruction of the influxes	<u>powers 8-10</u>	the 3 knowledges.
<u>The 3rd intrepidity</u>	on obstructions to cultivation	<u>powers 4-5</u>	on persons and existence.
<u>The 4th intrepidity</u>	on the Dharma’s efficacy	<u>powers 6-7</u>	dispositions and faculties.

⁷³ The term *vāsanā* (lit, “perfuming,” like the linger smell of incense even after it has burnt out), “karmic impression” is non-canonical, but popular with Mahāyāna doctrine, where it refers to the “lingering defilements” of arhats (such as the monk Nanda’s attraction to the celestial nymphs). However, at that time, Nanda was not yet an arhat! Such a notion is false, and certainly not found in the early texts.

Graphically, here is how the two sets correlate:

The 4 intrepidities [1.1.1]

- (1) his wisdom, understanding possibilities
- (3) his teaching (identifying of the obstacles)
- (4) his teaching’s assurance of awakening
- (2) his purity (destruction of all defilements)

the 10 powers [1.2.3.1]

- (1) understanding of possibilities
- (2) understanding of karma
- (3) understanding of (karmic) destinies
- (4) understanding of existence (elements and worlds)
- (5) understanding of dispositions of beings;
- (6) understanding of the spiritual faculties of beings
- (7) understanding of the mind and meditation
- (8) the recollection of his manifold past lives
- (9) the divine eye (the workings of karma)
- (10) he has destroyed all his mental influxes (an arhat)

Table 2.5: Correlation between the 4 intrepidities and the 10 powers

2.5.3 The relationship between the intrepidities and the powers

2.5.3.1 The two sets do have some differences. The **intrepidities** (*vesārajja*) are essentially the hallmarks of maturity and experience—hence, wisdom and confidence—they are *actively* characterized by qualities of *compassion, courage, pertinence and eloquence*. The **powers** (*bala*), on the other hand, have empowering and supportive qualities of *wisdom, strength, stability and invincibility*.

2.5.3.2 Both sets share the common qualities of purity in reflecting the fact that Buddha has overcome all defilements, and of purifying in the sense that they free us from craving and ignorance, and bring us awakening and liberation.

3 RELATED SUTTAS

3.1 Sārajja Sutta (A 5.101), SD 28.9a (3).

It compares the opposing qualities of the worldling who is “fearful” or “timid” (*sārajja*), and the learner” (a saint short of an arhat) who is “fearless” or “confident,” endowed with the 5 conditions for intrepidity or moral courage, that is faith, moral virtue, deep learning, industry, and wisdom.

3.2 Sarabha Sutta (A 3.64/1:186), SD 51.23

The wanderer Sarabha has just left the Buddhist sangha but goes around claiming that he has learned the Dharma-Vinaya but given up on them. When questioned by the Buddha about what Dharma he has learned, he is unable to answer. He then roars his lion-roar that no one can prove these to be false:

- (1) that the Buddha is fully self-awakened;
- (2) that the Buddha has not destroyed all his mental influxes; and
- (3) that the practice of the Dharma does not lead the destruction of suffering.

These statements concur respectively with intrepidities numbers 1, 2, and 4. Apparently this is probably the urtext for the intrepidities, originally these 3, and later extended to 4 intrepidities with the addition of the statement on “obstructions.” [1.1.1]

3.3 Ambaṭṭha Sutta (D 3,2.22/1:110), SD 21.3

THE VESĀRAJJA PERICOPE:

At the end of the Buddha's teaching, before the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti goes for refuge, it is said of him:

Then, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti,
 having seen the Dharma [the truth],⁷⁴
 having mastered the Dharma,
 having known the Dharma,
 having immersed himself in the Dharma,
 having crossed over doubt,
 having abandoned uncertainty,
 having won **intrepidity** [moral courage], independent of others, in the Teacher's teaching,⁷⁵
 said this to the Blessed One: [He goes for refuge.] (D 3,2.22-2.25), SD 21.3

The closing lines—"having crossed over doubt ... in the Teacher's teaching" clearly suggests that he has attained streamwinning.

3.4 Upāli (Gaha,pati) Sutta (M 56,18/1:380), SD 27.1

THE VESĀRAJJA PERICOPE:

Then, the houselord Upāli,
 who has seen the Dharma [truth],⁷⁶
 won the Dharma,
 knew the Dharma,
 plunged into the Dharma,
 crossed over doubt, abandoned uncertainty,
 gained intrepidity [moral courage] in the Teacher's teaching, independent of others,⁷⁷
 said this to the Blessed One:
 "Bhante, we must now take leave. Many are our duties; there is much to be done."
 "Please, houselord, do as you deem fit here."⁷⁸ (M 56,18.4), SD 27.1

⁷⁴ "The Dharma [the truth]" (*dhamma*) here refers to the 4 noble truths. Having seen the truth for himself, he cuts off the fetter of doubt and now has "the noble and liberating view that accordingly leads the practitioner to the complete destruction of suffering" (*yā'yaṃ diṭṭhi ariyā niyyānikā niyyāti tak,karassa sammā,dukkha-k,khayāya*, **Kosambiya S**, M 48.7/1:322, SD 64.1).

⁷⁵ "Having seen the Dharma...in the Teacher's Teaching," *diṭṭha,dhammo patta,dhammo vidita,dhammo pariyo-gaḷha,dhammo tiṇṇa,vicikiccho vigata,katharṃ,katho vesāraja-p,patto apara-p,paccayo satthu,sāsane*. As in the case of **Yasa's father** (Mv 7.10c/V 1:16), SD 11.2(7).

⁷⁶ "The truth" (*dhamma*) here refers to the 4 noble truths. Having seen the truth for himself, he cuts off the fetter of doubt and now has "the noble and liberating view that accordingly leads the practitioner to the complete destruction of suffering" (*yā'yaṃ diṭṭhi ariyā niyyānikā niyyāti tak,karassa sammā,dukkha-k,khayāya*, **Kosambiya S**, M 48.7/1:322)

⁷⁷ *Atha kho kūṭadanto brāhmaṇo diṭṭha,dhammo patta,dhammo vidita,dhammo pariyo-gāḷha,dhammo tiṇṇa,vicikiccho vigata,katharṃ,katho vesāraja-p,patto apara-p,paccayo satthu,sāsane*. As at **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3.2.21-22/1:110); **Kūṭadanta S** (D 1:150); **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 5/1:234 f x2); **Upāli S** (M 1:380); **Mahā Vaccha,gotta S** (M 1:491); **Dīgha,-nakha S** (M 1:501); **Brahmāyu S** (M 2:145); **Sīha S** (A 4:186); **Ugga S 1** (A 4:209); **Ugga S 2** (A 4:214); **Kuṭṭhi S** (U 5.3/-49).

The closing lines of the *vesārajja* pericope—“having crossed over doubt ... in the Teacher’s teaching” clearly suggests that he has attained streamwinning.

3.5 Nakula Sutta (A 6.16/3:297 f), SD 5.2

In the **Nakula Sutta** (A 6.16), Nakula,mātā reassures her sick husband, Nakula,pitā, not to worry about her, especially that she is a streamwinner, thus:

Houselord, for as long as there are the Blessed One’s white-clad female lay disciples who shall find a footing, a foothold, and solace in this Teaching and Discipline, crossed over doubt, gone beyond uncertainty, won **full confidence**, who, independent of others, dwell in the Teacher’s teaching, I am one amongst them.⁷⁹ (A 6.16/3:297 f), SD 5.2

When they both meet the Buddha and recount these words, the Buddha praises Nakula,mātā for her wisdom.

3.6 Arakheyya Sutta (A 7.55/4:83), SD 51.25

In the **Arakheyya Sutta** (A 7.55), the Buddha declares that there are 4 things that he does not have to hide (*arakheyya*) and 3 things about which he is irreproachable (*anupavajja*). The 4 things that he does not have to hide are his bodily deeds, his speech, his thoughts and his livelihood—they are all purified. The 3 things for which he is blame-free are:

- (1) that the Tathagata’s Dharma is well taught;
- (2) that he has well proclaimed to his disciples the practice that leads to the destruction of the influxes;
- (3) that his assembly comprises many hundreds of disciples who have destroyed their influxes.⁸⁰

Since the Buddha sees no such grounds, he dwells accomplished in security, fearlessness and **intrepidity** (*khema-p,patto abhaya-p,patto vesārajja-p,patto*). [Cf §2 etc]

3.7 (Vesālika) Ugga Sutta (A 8.21/4:210), SD 70.3

According to the **(Vesālika) Ugga Sutta** (A 8.21), Ugga of Vesālī has 8 remarkable and amazing qualities (*acchariya abbhuta dhamma*). The second of these qualities is that of the arising of the Dharma-eye in him, that is, he has attained streamwinning, thus:

“I saw the Dharma, attained the Dharma, understood the Dharma, plunged into the Dharma, crossed over doubt, gone beyond uncertainty,

⁷⁸ *Yassa dāni tvaṃ gahapati kālaṃ maññasī ti*, lit “Please do what you think it is now the time to do.” This is stock: **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,103/1:85), SD 8.10; **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,3.6/2:104), SD 13, **Kandaraka S** (M 51,6.2/1:342), SD 32.9, **Sekha S** (M 53,3/1:354), SD 21.14, **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90,17/2:132 f), SD 10.8; **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145,6/3:269 = S 35.88/4:62,31), SD 20.15, **Avassuta S** (S 35.243/4:183,15, 30), **Khemā Therī S** (S 44.1/4:379,29), **Vesālī S** (S 54.9/5:321,16, 17) & **Thapatayā S** (S 55.6/5:348,27). See Joy Manné, “On a departure formula and its translation,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 10, 1993: 27-43.

⁷⁹ *Yāvata kho gahapati tassa bhagavato sāvīkā gihī odāta,vasanā imasmim dhamma,vinaye ogādha-p,pattā patigādha-p,pattā assāsa-p,pattā tiṇṇa,vicikicchā vigata,katharī,katā vesārajja-p,pattā apara-p,paccayā satthu,-sāsane viharanti, ahaṃ tāsam aññatarā.*

⁸⁰ See (1.2.3.1 (10) n).

won **intrepidity** [moral courage], who, independent of others, dwell in the Teacher’s teaching. Right there, I went to the Buddha, the Dharma and the sangha as refuge, and undertook the training-rule with celibacy as the fifth.”⁸¹ (A 8.21/4:210), SD 70.3

Here we see wealthy layman with 4 young wives becoming a streamwinner, who voluntarily keeps to the 5 precepts with the rule of celibacy (no sex at all) as the 3rd precept.⁸² This is an example of a lay practitioner who shows moral courage (*vesārajja*) in observing celibacy and living like an arhat. In fact, Ugga—like his namesake of Hatthi,gāmaka—later becomes a layman non-returner.

3.8 (Hatthi,gāmaka) Ugga Sutta (A 8.22/4:213), SD 45.15

The (Hatthi,gāmaka) Ugga Sutta (A 8.22) is about a layman non-returner, Ugga of Hatth,gāma, and his 8 remarkable qualities—whose attainment is very similar to that of his namesake of Vesālī, thus:

Then I, having seen the truth,⁸³
 won the Dharma,
 knew the Dharma,
 plunged into the Dharma,
 crossed over doubt, abandoned uncertainty,
 gained intrepidity [moral courage] in the Teacher’s teaching, independent of others,
 right there went to the Buddha and the Dharma and the sangha for refuge.
 I undertook the 5 training-rules with *the celibacy rule*. (A 8.22,6.3-6.5), SD 45.15

Like Ugga of Vesālī, he, too, is a wealthy layman with 4 young wives. On becoming a streamwinner, he voluntarily keeps to the 5 precepts with the rule of celibacy (no sex at all) as the 3rd precept. This is an example of a lay practitioner who shows moral courage (*vesārajja*) in observing celibacy and living like an arhat. Like his namesake of Vesālī, he, too, becomes a layman non-returner in due course.⁸⁴

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⁸¹ *So kho ahaṃ bhante diṭṭha,dhammo patta,dhammo vidita,dhammo pariyogāḷha,dhammo tiṇṇa,vicikiccho vigata,kathaṃ,katho vesārajja-p,patto apara-p,paccayo satthu sāsane tath’eva buddhañ ca dhammañ ca saṅghañ ca saraṇaṃ agamāsiraṃ brahma.cariya,pañcamāni ca sikkhāpadāni samādiyiraṃ.*

⁸² On celibacy and the laity, see SD 31.7 (6).

⁸³ “The truth” (*dhamma*) here refers to the 4 noble truths. Having seen the truth for himself, he cuts off the fetter of doubt and now has “the noble and liberating view that accordingly leads the practitioner to the complete destruction of suffering” (*yā’yam diṭṭhi ariyā niyyānikā niyyāti tak,karassa sammā,dukkha-k,khayāya, Kosambiya S, M 48,7/1:322*)

⁸⁴ For other references to intrepidity, see Pm 2:194; Nc 466; DA 1:278; KhpA 104; VvA 213; J 2:27; DhA 1:86.

(Catukka) Vesārajja Sutta

The (Fours) Discourse on Intrepidity

A 4.8

1 Bhikshus, there are these **4 intrepidities** in which the Tathagata is accomplished with intrepidity, by which he claims his place as the lordly bull herd-leader,⁸⁵ **[9]** roars the lion-roar⁸⁶ amongst assemblies, and turns the perfect wheel.⁸⁷

What are the four?⁸⁸

(1) THE BUDDHA IS FULLY SELF-AWAKENED

2 “Here, I indeed see no ground on which any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or anyone else in the world could justly accuse me, thus:

‘While you claim to be **fully awakened**, you are not fully awakened about these things.’⁸⁹

Not seeing any such ground, bhikshus, I dwell accomplished in security, accomplished in fearlessness, accomplished in intrepidity [moral courage].⁹⁰

(2) THE BUDDHA HAS DESTROYED ALL MENTAL INFLUXES

3 “Here, I indeed see no ground on which any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or anyone else in the world could justly accuse me, thus:

‘While you claim to have destroyed **the mental influxes**,⁹¹ you have not (really) destroyed them.’⁹²

Not seeing any such ground, bhikshus, I dwell accomplished in security, accomplished in fearlessness, accomplished in intrepidity.”

⁸⁵ “The herd-leader” (*āsabha*) (adj, “bull-like, lordly”), the leading bull, the leader. Comy glosses as “the state of excellence and the best,” *seṭṭha-ṭ, ṭhānaṃ uttama-ṭ, ṭhānaṃ*, MA 2:26). The word “bellwether” (leading sheep, with a bell around its neck) also applies here, although it is usu used in English writing in a contemptuous sense for a mob or rebel leader.

⁸⁶ On the Buddha’s making his lion-roar, see **(Anicca) Sīha S** (S 22.78/3:84-86), SD 42.10.

⁸⁷ *Cattār’imāni bhikkhave tathāgatassa vesārajjāni yehi vesārajjehi samannāgato tathāgato āsabhan, ṭhānam paṭijānāti parisāsu sīha, nādaṃ nadati brahma, cakkaṃ pavatteti*. “Turns the perfect [divine] wheel,” *brahma, cakkaṃ pavatteti*, where *pavatteti* is caus, so we lit have, “he sets the wheel rolling,” and so on. It is here rendered idiomatically. Comy explains that the “perfect wheel” (**brahma, cakka**) is the supreme, best, most excellent wheel, the wheel of truth (*dhamma, cakka*) in its twofold meanings: the knowledge that penetrates the truth (*paṭivedha ñāṇa*) and the knowledge of how to expound the teaching (*desanā ñāṇa*) (MA 2:27 f). AA adds that former is supra-mundane (*lok’uttara*) and the latter mundane (*lokiya*). Both knowledges together, however, are unique to the Buddha (AA 5:12; also at 3.9, with refs to various usages of *brahma, cakka*, also at MA 2:27). The phrase ending with the symbol of the perfect wheel (*brahma, cakka*) recurs in **Dasa, bala S 1 + 2** (S 12.21 +22), where it is def as the reflection on the 5 aggregates in terms of the 4 truths; in **Vesārajja S** (A 4.8), where the divine wheel is mentioned in connection with the 4 intrepidities of the Buddha. Also in **Ananussuta S** (A 5.11/3:9), **Sīha, nāda S** (A 6.64/3:417-421).

⁸⁸ These 4 intrepidities of the Buddha are listed in **Mahā Sīha, nāda S** (M 12,22-28), SD 49.1. On the adj *visārada*, “intrepid, morally courageous,” see [1.1] & **(Catukka) Sobhana S** (A 4.7) + SD 51.17 (1.1.2.4).

⁸⁹ *Sammā, sambuddhassa te paṭijānato ime dhammā anabhisambuddhā’ti*.

⁹⁰ *Etam p’aharṃ bhikkhave nimittarṃ asamanupassanti khema-p, patto abhaya-p, patto vesārajja-p, patto viharāmi*.

⁹¹ See (1.2.3.1 (10) n).

⁹² *Khīṇ’āsavassa te paṭijānato ime āsavā aparikkhīṇā’ti*. [1.2.4.2(6) n]

(3) THE BUDDHA HAS CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED SPIRITUAL OBSTRUCTIONS

4 “Here, I indeed see no ground on which any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or anyone else in the world could justly accuse me, thus:

‘These things you call **obstructions** are unable to obstruct (the spiritual progress of) one who engages in them.’⁹³

Not seeing any such ground, bhikshus, I dwell accomplished in security, accomplished in fearlessness, accomplished in intrepidity.”

(4) THE BUDDHA DHARMA ENDS SUFFERING COMPLETELY

5 “Here, I indeed see no ground on which any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or anyone else in the world could justly accuse me, thus:

‘When he teaches the Dharma to someone for the sake of **the spiritual goal**, when he works on it, it would not lead him to **the complete ending of suffering**.’⁹⁴

Not seeing any such ground, bhikshus, I dwell accomplished in security, accomplished in fearlessness, accomplished in intrepidity.”

6 These, bhikshus, are the **4 intrepidities** in which the Tathagata is accomplished with intrepidity, by which he claims his place as the lordly bull herd-leader, roars the lion-roar amongst assemblies, and turns the perfect wheel.

The vesārajja verses

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>7 <i>Ye kec’ime vāda,pathā puthu-s,sitā
yam nissitā samaṇa,brāhmaṇā ca
tathāgatam patvā⁹⁵ na te bhavanti
visāradam vāda,pathātivattam⁹⁶</i></p> | <p>The paths of doctrine whatever that crowds cling to,
that recluses and brahmins rely on, they,
having met the Tathagata, come to not [fail,]
the intrepid gone beyond the doctrine-paths.</p> |
| <p>8 <i>Yo dhamma,cakkam abhibhuyya kevalim⁹⁷
pavattayi sabba,bhūtānukampī
tam tādīsam deva,manussa,seṭṭham
sattā namassanti bhavassa pārāgun’ti</i></p> | <p>Having overcome everything [all], he turned b
the Dharma-wheel out of compassion for all beings. a
To such a one, the best of gods and men,
who has gone beyond existence, let beings salute!</p> |

— evaṃ —

171018 171021 171230

⁹³ *Ye kho pana te antarāyikā dhammā vuttā, te paṭisevato nālam antarāyāyā’ti.* Comy says that sexual intercourse (*methuna,dhamma*) is meant here (MA 2:33). Cf Pāc 68 (V 4:135,18-30); see V:H 3:21 n5.

⁹⁴ *Yassa kho pana te atthāya dhammo desito, so na niyyāti tak,karassa sammā dukkha-k,khayāyāti.*

⁹⁵ The reading *patvāna* does not make good sense of the context. If we read this read as *pattā*, then, we have: “They reach not the Tathagata,” ie, the Buddha is not troubled by them and rejects them.

⁹⁶ Be Ce:Ka *visāradam vāda,pathātivattam*; Ce *visāradam vāda,pāthātivattīnam*; Ee *visāradam vāda,pathāti vuttam*.

⁹⁷ Here, *kevali* or *kevala* is synonymous with *sabba*, “all,” referring to our 6 senses (the 5 physical faculties and the mind) and their respective objects: see **Sabba S** (S 35.23/4:15), SD 7.1. There is an allusion here to “one who has overcome the all” (*sabbābhibhū*): V 1:8*, 2:179*; **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26/1:171*), SD 1.11, = **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85/2:93*), SD 55.2; **Sis’upacālā S** (S 5.8/1:134*), SD 102.11; (**Tathāgata**) **Loka S** (A 4.23/2:24*) = (It 122/121-123), SD 15.7(2.1.2); **Dh** 353; **Bhūridatta J** (J 543/2:235*); Kvu 289*.