**Maha-parinibbana Sutta** (excerpts)

translated from the Pali by

Sister Vajira & Francis Story

**The Blessed One's Deadly Sickness**

27. At that time the Blessed One spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: "Go now, bhikkhus, and seek shelter anywhere in the neighborhood of Vesali where you are welcome, among acquaintances and friends, and there spend the rainy season. As for me, I shall spend the rainy season in this very place, in the village of Beluva."

"So be it, O Lord," the bhikkhus said.

28. But when the Blessed One had entered upon the rainy season, there arose in him a severe illness, and sharp and deadly pains came upon him. And the Blessed One endured them mindfully, clearly comprehending and unperturbed.

29. Then it occurred to the Blessed One: "It would not be fitting if I came to my final passing away without addressing those who attended on me, without taking leave of the community of bhikkhus. Then let me suppress this illness by strength of will, resolve to maintain the life process, and live on."

30. And the Blessed One suppressed the illness by strength of will, resolved to maintain the life process, and lived on. So it came about that the Blessed One's illness was allayed.

31. And the Blessed One recovered from that illness; and soon after his recovery he came out from his dwelling place and sat down in the shade of the building, on a seat prepared for him. Then the Venerable Ananda approached the Blessed One, respectfully greeted him, and sitting down at one side, he spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Fortunate it is for me, O Lord, to see the Blessed One at ease again! Fortunate it is for me, O Lord, to see the Blessed One recovered! For truly, Lord, when I saw the Blessed One's sickness it was as though my own body became weak as a creeper, every thing around became dim to me, and my senses failed me. Yet, Lord, I still had some little comfort in the thought that the Blessed One would not come to his final passing away until he had given some last instructions respecting the community of bhikkhus."

32. Thus spoke the Venerable Ananda, but the Blessed One answered him, saying: "What more does the community of bhikkhus expect from me, Ananda? I have set forth the Dhamma without making any distinction of esoteric and exoteric doctrine; there is nothing, Ananda, with regard to the teachings that the Tathagata holds to the last with the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back. Whosoever may think that it is he who should lead the community of bhikkhus, or that the community depends upon him, it is such a one that would have to give last instructions respecting them. But, Ananda, the Tathagata has no such idea as that it is he who should lead the community of bhikkhus, or that the community depends upon him. So what instructions should he have to give respecting the community of bhikkhus?

"Now I am frail, Ananda, old, aged, far gone in years. This is my eightieth year, and my life is spent. Even as an old cart, Ananda, is held together with much difficulty, so the body of the Tathagata is kept going only with supports. It is, Ananda, only when the Tathagata, disregarding external objects, with the cessation of certain feelings, attains to and abides in the signless concentration of mind, [[19]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-19) that his body is more comfortable.

33. "Therefore, Ananda, be islands unto yourselves, refuges unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge.

"And how, Ananda, is a bhikkhu an island unto himself, a refuge unto himself, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as his island, the Dhamma as his refuge, seeking no other refuge?

34. "When he dwells contemplating the body in the body, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world; when he dwells contemplating feelings in feelings, the mind in the mind, and mental objects in mental objects, earnestly, clearly comprehending, and mindfully, after having overcome desire and sorrow in regard to the world, then, truly, he is an island unto himself, a refuge unto himself, seeking no external refuge; having the Dhamma as his island, the Dhamma as his refuge, seeking no other refuge.

35. "Those bhikkhus of mine, Ananda, who now or after I am gone, abide as an island unto themselves, as a refuge unto themselves, seeking no other refuge; having the Dhamma as their island and refuge, seeking no other refuge: it is they who will become the highest, [[20]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-20) if they have the desire to learn."

**Ananda's Appeal**

48. At these words the Venerable Ananda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "May the Blessed One remain, O Lord! May the Happy One remain, O Lord, throughout the world-period, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men!"

49. And the Blessed One answered, saying: "Enough, Ananda. Do not entreat the Tathagata, for the time is past, Ananda, for such an entreaty."

50-51. But for a second and a third time, the Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One: "May the Blessed One remain, O Lord! May the Happy One remain, O Lord, throughout the world-period, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men!"

52. Then the Blessed One said: "Do you have faith, Ananda, in the Enlightenment of the Tathagata?" And the Venerable Ananda replied: "Yes, O Lord, I do."

"Then how, Ananda, can you persist against the Tathagata even up to the third time?"

53. Then the Venerable Ananda said: "This, O Lord, I have heard and learned from the Blessed One himself when the Blessed One said to me: 'Whosoever, Ananda, has developed, practiced, employed, strengthened, maintained, scrutinized, and brought to perfection the four constituents of psychic power could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it. The Tathagata, Ananda, has done so. Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it.'"

54. "And did you believe it, Ananda?"

"Yes, O Lord, I did."

"Then, Ananda, the fault is yours. Herein have you failed, inasmuch as you were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting given by the Tathagata, and you did not then entreat the Tathagata to remain. For if you had done so, Ananda, twice the Tathagata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ananda, the fault is yours; herein have you failed.

55. "At Rajagaha, Ananda, when dwelling at Vultures' Peak, I spoke to you, saying: 'Pleasant, Ananda, is Rajagaha; pleasant is Vultures' Peak. Whosoever, Ananda, has developed... Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it.'

56. "So also at the Banyan Grove, at Robbers' Cliff, at the Sattapanni Cave on the Vebhara Mountain, at the Black Rock of Isigili, at the Serpents' Pool in the Cool Forest, at the Tapoda Grove, at the Bamboo Grove in the Squirrels' Feeding-ground, at Jivaka's Mango Grove, and at Small Nook in the Deer Park I spoke to you in the same words, saying: 'Pleasant, Ananda, is Rajagaha, pleasant are these places. Whosoever, Ananda, has developed... Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it.'

"But you, Ananda, were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting given you by the Tathagata, and you did not entreat the Tathagata to remain. For if you had done so, Ananda, twice the Tathagata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ananda, the fault is yours; herein you have failed.

57. "So also at Vesali, Ananda, at different times the Tathagata has spoken to you, saying: 'Pleasant, Ananda, is Vesali; pleasant are the shrines of Udena, Gotamaka, Sattambaka, Bahuputta, Sarandada, and Capala. Whosoever, Ananda, has developed... Therefore the Tathagata could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it.'

"But you, Ananda, were unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting, given you by the Tathagata, and you did not entreat the Tathagata to remain. For if you had done so, Ananda, twice the Tathagata might have declined, but the third time he would have consented. Therefore, Ananda, the fault is yours; herein you have failed.

58. "Yet, Ananda, have I not taught from the very beginning that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation, and severance? Of that which is born, come into being, is compounded and subject to decay, how can one say: 'May it not come to dissolution!' There can be no such state of things. And of that, Ananda, which the Tathagata has finished with, that which he has relinquished, given up, abandoned, and rejected — his will to live on — the Tathagata's word has been spoken once for all: 'Before long the Parinibbana of the Tathagata will come about. Three months hence the Tathagata will utterly pass away.' And that the Tathagata should withdraw his words for the sake of living on — this is an impossibility.

**The Last Admonition**

59. "So, then, Ananda, let us go to the hall of the Gabled House, in the Great Forest." And the Venerable Ananda replied: "So be it, Lord."

60. Then the Blessed One, with the Venerable Ananda, went to the hall of the Gabled House, in the Great Forest. And there he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Go now, Ananda, and assemble in the hall of audience all the bhikkhus who dwell in the neighborhood of Vesali."

"So be it, Lord." And the Venerable Ananda gathered all the bhikkhus who dwelt in the neighborhood of Vesali, and assembled them in the hall of audience. And then, respectfully saluting the Blessed One, and standing at one side, he said: "The community of bhikkhus is assembled, Lord. Now let the Blessed One do as he wishes."

61. Thereupon the Blessed One entered the hall of audience, and taking the seat prepared for him, he exhorted the bhikkhus, saying: "Now, O bhikkhus, I say to you that these teachings of which I have direct knowledge and which I have made known to you — these you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop, and frequently practice, that the life of purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men.

62. "And what, bhikkhus, are these teachings? They are the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four constituents of psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path. These, bhikkhus, are the teachings of which I have direct knowledge, which I have made known to you, and which you should thoroughly learn, cultivate, develop, and frequently practice, that the life of purity may be established and may long endure, for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, well being, and happiness of gods and men."

63. Then the Blessed One said to the bhikkhus: "So, bhikkhus, I exhort you: All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness. The time of the Tathagata's Parinibbana is near. Three months hence the Tathagata will utterly pass away."

64. And having spoken these words, the Happy One, the Master, spoke again, saying:

My years are now full ripe, the life span left is short.

Departing, I go hence from you, relying on myself alone.

Be earnest, then, O bhikkhus, be mindful and of virtue pure!

With firm resolve, guard your own mind!

Whoso untiringly pursues the Dhamma and the Discipline

Shall go beyond the round of births and make an end of suffering.

**Ananda's Grief**

32. Then the Venerable Ananda went into the vihara[[50]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-50) and leaned against the doorpost and wept: "I am still but a learner,[[51]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-51) and still have to strive for my own perfection. But, alas, my Master, who was so compassionate towards me, is about to pass away!"

33. And the Blessed One spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: "Where, bhikkhus, is Ananda?"

"The Venerable Ananda, Lord, has gone into the vihara and there stands leaning against the door post and weeping: 'I am still but a learner, and still have to strive for my own perfection. But, alas, my Master, who was so compassionate towards me, is about to pass away!'"

34. Then the Blessed One asked a certain bhikkhu to bring the Venerable Ananda to him, saying: "Go, bhikkhu, and say to Ananda, 'Friend Ananda, the Master calls you.'"

"So be it, Lord." And that bhikkhu went and spoke to the Venerable Ananda as the Blessed One had asked him to. And the Venerable Ananda went to the Blessed One, bowed down to him, and sat down on one side.

35. Then the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Enough, Ananda! Do not grieve, do not lament! For have I not taught from the very beginning that with all that is dear and beloved there must be change, separation, and severance? Of that which is born, come into being, compounded, and subject to decay, how can one say: 'May it not come to dissolution!'? There can be no such state of things. Now for a long time, Ananda, you have served the Tathagata with loving-kindness in deed, word, and thought, graciously, pleasantly, with a whole heart and beyond measure. Great good have you gathered, Ananda! Now you should put forth energy, and soon you too will be free from the taints."[[52]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-52)

**Praise of Ananda**

36. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Bhikkhus, the Blessed Ones, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of times past also had excellent and devoted attendant bhikkhus, such as I have in Ananda. And so also, bhikkhus, will the Blessed Ones, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones of times to come.

37. "Capable and judicious is Ananda, bhikkhus, for he knows the proper time for bhikkhus to have audience with the Tathagata, and the time for bhikkhunis, the time for laymen and for laywomen; the time for kings and for ministers of state; the time for teachers of other sects and for their followers.

38. "In Ananda, bhikkhus, are to be found four rare and superlative qualities. What are the four? If, bhikkhus, a company of bhikkhus should go to see Ananda, they become joyful on seeing him; and if he then speaks to them of the Dhamma, they are made joyful by his discourse; and when he becomes silent, they are disappointed. So it is also when bhikkhunis, laymen, or laywomen go to see Ananda: they become joyful on seeing him; and if he then speaks to them of the Dhamma, they are made joyful by his discourse; and when he becomes silent, they are disappointed.

39. "In a universal monarch, bhikkhus, are to be found four rare and superlative qualities. What are those four? If, bhikkhus, a company of nobles should go to see the universal monarch, they become joyful on seeing him; and if he then speaks, they are made joyful by his talk; and when he becomes silent, they are disappointed. So it is also when a company of brahmans, of householders, or of ascetics goes to see a universal monarch.

40. "And in just the same way, bhikkhus, in Ananda are to be found these four rare and superlative qualities."

**The Last Convert**

51. Now at that time a wandering ascetic named Subhadda was dwelling at Kusinara. And Subhadda the wandering ascetic heard it said: "Today in the third watch of the night, the Parinibbana of the ascetic Gotama will take place."

52. And the thought arose in him: "I have heard it said by old and venerable wandering ascetics, teachers of teachers, that the arising of Tathagatas, Arahants, Fully Enlightened Ones, is rare in the world. Yet this very day, in the last watch of the night, the Parinibbana of the ascetic Gotama will take place. Now there is in me a doubt; but to this extent I have faith in the ascetic Gotama, that he could so teach me the Dhamma as to remove that doubt."

53. Then the wandering ascetic Subhadda went to the Sala Grove, the recreation park of the Mallas, and drew near to the Venerable Ananda, and told the Venerable Ananda his thought. And he spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Friend Ananda, it would be good if I could be allowed into the presence of the ascetic Gotama."

54. But the Venerable Ananda answered him, saying: "Enough, friend Subhadda! Do not trouble the Tathagata. The Blessed One is weary."

55-56. Yet a second and a third time the wandering ascetic Subhadda made his request, and a second and a third time the Venerable Ananda refused him.

57. And the Blessed One heard the talk between them, and he called the Venerable Ananda and said: "Stop, Ananda! Do not refuse Subhadda. Subhadda, Ananda, may be allowed into the presence of the Tathagata. For whatever he will ask me, he will ask for the sake of knowledge, and not as an offence. And the answer I give him, that he will readily understand."

58. Thereupon the Venerable Ananda said to the wandering ascetic Subhadda: "Go then, friend Subhadda, the Blessed One gives you leave."

59. Then the wandering ascetic Subhadda approached the Blessed One and saluted him courteously. And having exchanged with him pleasant and civil greetings, the wandering ascetic Subhadda seated himself at one side and addressed the Blessed One, saying: "There are, Venerable Gotama, ascetics and brahmans who are heads of great companies of disciples, who have large retinues, who are leaders of schools, well known and renowned, and held in high esteem by the multitude, such teachers as Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambali, Pakudha Kaccayana, Sañjaya Belatthaputta, Nigantha Nataputta. Have all of these attained realization, as each of them would have it believed, or has none of them, or is it that some have attained realization and others not?"

60. "Enough, Subhadda! Let it be as it may, whether all of them have attained realization, as each of them would have it believed, or whether none of them has, or whether some have attained realization and others not. I will teach you the Dhamma, Subhadda; listen and heed it well, and I will speak."

"So be it, Lord."

**The Lion's Roar**

61. And the Blessed One spoke, saying: "In whatsoever Dhamma and Discipline, Subhadda, there is not found the Noble Eightfold Path, neither is there found a true ascetic of the first, second, third, or fourth degree of saintliness. But in whatsoever Dhamma and Discipline there is found the Noble Eightfold Path, there is found a true ascetic of the first, second, third, and fourth degrees of saintliness.[[54]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-54) Now in this Dhamma and Discipline, Subhadda, is found the Noble Eightfold Path; and in it alone are also found true ascetics of the first, second, third, and fourth degrees of saintliness. Devoid of true ascetics are the systems of other teachers. But if, Subhadda, the bhikkhus live righteously, the world will not be destitute of arahats.

62. "In age but twenty-nine was I, Subhadda,

When I renounced the world to seek the Good;

Fifty-one years have passed since then, Subhadda,

And in all that time a wanderer have I been

In the domain of virtue and of truth,

And except therein, there is no saint

(of the first degree).

"And there is none of the second degree, nor of the third degree, nor of the fourth degree of saintliness. Devoid of true ascetics are the systems of other teachers. But if, Subhadda, the bhikkhus live righteously, the world will not be destitute of arahats."

63. When this was said, the wandering ascetic Subhadda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Excellent, O Lord, most excellent, O Lord! It is as if, Lord, one were to set upright what had been overthrown, or to reveal what had been hidden, or to show the path to one who had gone astray, or to light a lamp in the darkness so that those with eyes might see — even so has the Blessed One set forth the Dhamma in many ways. And so, O Lord, I take my refuge in the Blessed One, the Dhamma, and the Community of Bhikkhus. May I receive from the Blessed One admission to the Order and also the higher ordination."

64. "Whoever, Subhadda, having been formerly a follower of another creed, wishes to receive admission and higher ordination in this Dhamma and Discipline, remains on probation for a period of four months. At the end of those four months, if the bhikkhus are satisfied with him, they grant him admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu. Yet in this matter I recognize differences of personalities."

65. "If, O Lord, whoever, having been formerly a follower of another creed, wishes to receive admission and higher ordination in this Dhamma and Discipline, remains on probation for a period of four months, and at the end of those four months, if the bhikkhus are satisfied with him, they grant him admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu — then I will remain on probation for a period of four years. And at the end of those four years, if the bhikkhus are satisfied with me, let them grant me admission and higher ordination as a bhikkhu."

66. But the Blessed One called the Venerable Ananda and said to him: "Ananda, let Subhadda be given admission into the Order." And the Venerable Ananda replied: "So be it, Lord."

67. Then the wandering ascetic Subhadda said to the Venerable Ananda: "It is a gain to you, friend Ananda, a blessing, that in the presence of the Master himself you have received the sprinkling of ordination as a disciple."

68. So it came about that the wandering ascetic Subhadda, in the presence of the Blessed One, received admission and higher ordination. And from the time of his ordination the Venerable Subhadda remained alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, and resolute. And before long he attained to the goal for which a worthy man goes forth rightly from home to homelessness, the supreme goal of the holy life; and having by himself realized it with higher knowledge, he dwelt therein. He knew: "Destroyed is birth; the higher life is fulfilled; nothing more is to be done, and beyond this life nothing more remains." And the Venerable Subhadda became yet another among the arahats, and he was the last disciple converted by the Blessed One himself.

**Part Six: The Passing Away**

**The Blessed One's Final Exhortation**

1. Now the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "It may be, Ananda, that to some among you the thought will come: 'Ended is the word of the Master; we have a Master no longer.' But it should not, Ananda, be so considered. For that which I have proclaimed and made known as the Dhamma and the Discipline, that shall be your Master when I am gone.

2. "And, Ananda, whereas now the bhikkhus address one another as 'friend,' let it not be so when I am gone. The senior bhikkhus, Ananda, may address the junior ones by their name, their family name, or as 'friend'; but the junior bhikkhus should address the senior ones as 'venerable sir' or 'your reverence.'[[55]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-55)

3. "If it is desired, Ananda, the Sangha may, when I am gone, abolish the lesser and minor rules.[[56]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-56)

4. "Ananda, when I am gone, let the higher penalty be imposed upon the bhikkhu Channa."[[57]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-57)

"But what, Lord, is the higher penalty?"

"The bhikkhu Channa, Ananda, may say what he will, but the bhikkhus should neither converse with him, nor exhort him, nor admonish him."

5. Then the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "It may be, bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice. Then question, bhikkhus! Do not be given to remorse later on with the thought: 'The Master was with us face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him.'"

6. But when this was said, the bhikkhus were silent. And yet a second and a third time the Blessed One said to them: "It may be, bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice. Then question, bhikkhus! Do not be given to remorse later on with the thought: 'The Master was with us face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him.'"

And for a second and a third time the bhikkhus were silent. Then the Blessed One said to them: "It may be, bhikkhus, out of respect for the Master that you ask no questions. Then, bhikkhus, let friend communicate it to friend." Yet still the bhikkhus were silent.

7. And the Venerable Ananda spoke to the Blessed One, saying: "Marvellous it is, O Lord, most wonderful it is! This faith I have in the community of bhikkhus, that not even one bhikkhu is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice."

"Out of faith, Ananda, you speak thus. But here, Ananda, the Tathagata knows for certain that among this community of bhikkhus there is not even one bhikkhu who is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the path or the practice. For, Ananda, among these five hundred bhikkhus even the lowest is a stream-enterer, secure from downfall, assured, and bound for enlightenment."

8. And the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus, saying: "Behold now, bhikkhus, I exhort you: All compounded things are subject to vanish. Strive with earnestness!"[[58]](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-58)

This was the last word of the Tathagata.

**Notes**

[References to Anguttara Nikaya (= AN) are to collection followed by sutta number; those to Digha Nikaya (= DN) and to Majjhima Nikaya (= MN) are to sutta number.]

[19](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-19). *Animitta cetosamadhi.* Comy. explains this term here as referring to the fruition-attainment of arahatship *(phalasamapatti),* in which the Buddha becomes absorbed in the direct experience of Nibbana and no longer attends to external objects or feels mundane feelings. In another context it can mean the concentration developed by intensive insight.

[20](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-20). *Tamatagge:* a difficult word. Comy. takes it to stand for the superlative form, *aggatama,* "highest," but alludes also to the Pali word *tama,* "darkness." It is rather difficult to accept that a superlative suffix should be made to precede the word it qualifies. Tibetan and Chinese parallels (Waldschmidt, *Das Mahaparinirvana-sutra* Berlin, 1950-51) pp. 200 ff.) point to a meaning as "the highest." In the fragments of the Turfan Sanskrit version, these words are not preserved. Comy. says: "*Tamatagge* = *tama-agge;* the 't' in the middle is inserted for euphonic reasons. The meaning is: these are the very highest, the most eminent *(ime aggatama tamatagga).* Having cut every bondage of darkness *(tama-yoga),* those bhikkhus of mine will be on the very top, in the highest rank *(ativiya agge uttamabhave).* Among them those will be on the very summit *(ati-agge)* who are desirous of training; and those whose resort is the four foundations of mindfulness will be at the very top of them."

[21](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-21). *Kappam va tittheyya kappavasesam va.* Comy. takes *kappa* not as "world-period" or "aeon," but as *ayu-kappa,* "life span," and explains *avasesa* (usually "remainder") by "in excess."

Comy.: "He may stay alive completing the life span pertaining to men at the given time. (Sub. Comy.: the maximum life span.) *Kappavasesa:* 'in excess' *(atireka),* i.e., more or less above the hundred years said to be the normally highest life expectation."

Among the numerous meanings of the word *kappa,* there is, in fact, that of time in general *(kala)* and not only the duration of an aeon; but the meaning "life span" seems to have been ascribed to it only in this passage. Also, the meaning "in excess" for *avasesa* (usually "remainder") is unusual.

The four constituents of psychic power *(iddhipada)* are concentration due to zeal, energy, purity of mind, and investigation.

[22](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-22). According to Comy., Ananda's mind had been influenced *(pariyutthitacitto)* by Mara's exhibiting a frightful sight which distracted his attention, preventing him from grasping the Buddha's suggestion.

[50](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-50). The word *vihara,* given in the text, cannot refer here to a monastery or monks' living quarters. Comy. explains it as a pavilion *(mandala-mala).* If the locality was used as a meeting place for the clan, as Comy. states, there may well have been a kind of shelter there. The couch in the open, which Ananda was asked to prepare for the Master, was probably a seat for the chiefs of the Malla clan put up at that place.

[51](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-51). *Sekha.* This signifies those at the three lower stages of emancipation, before reaching arahatship. Ananda, at that time, had reached the first of these stages, stream-entry.

[52](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-52). *Anasavo:* that is, an arahant.

[53](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-53). The "seven jewels" of a universal monarch are: the magical wheel, emblem of his sovereignty, by which he conquers the earth without the use of force; his wonderful elephant; his horse; his beautiful wife; his precious gem; his treasurer; and his advisor. All are endowed with wondrous properties. For more on Maha Sudassana, see the sutta which bears his name, DN 17.

[54](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-54).The four degrees of saintliness are the stream-enterer, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the arahant.

[55](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-55). "Friend," in Pali is *avuso,* "venerable sir" = *bhante,* "your reverence" = *ayasma.*

[56](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-56). Since Ananda, at this point, did not ask what the minor rules were, the Sangha decided not to abolish any of the rules of the Vinaya.

[57](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-57). Channa had been the Buddha's charioteer while the latter was still a prince living in the palace. Because of his prior connection with the Buddha, he was obdurate and refused to submit to discipline. This imposition of the "higher penalty" *(brahmadanda)* changed him into an obedient monk.

[58](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-58). *Handa dani bhikkhave amantayami vo: Vayadhamma sankhara appamadena sampadetha.* Earnestness *(appamada)* is explained as "presence of mindfulness." Comy.: "'You should accomplish all your duties without allowing mindfulness to lapse!' Thus did the Blessed One, while on the bed of his Parinibbana, summarize in that one word on earnestness the advice he had given through forty-five years."

[59](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-59). Anuruddha, the elder brother of Ananda, would have known this through the super-normal power of reading the minds of others, which he possessed.

[60](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-60). Brahma Sahampati was a high divinity of the Brahma-world. It was he who originally requested the newly enlightened Buddha to teach the Dhamma to the world. See MN 26.

[61](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-61). Sakka is the king of the gods in the Tavatimsa heaven, and thus a lower figure in the cosmological hierarchy than Brahma Sahampati.

[62](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-62). A celestial flower which appears on earth only on special occasions, particularly in connection with the chief events in the life of the Buddha. Its appearance in the hands of the Ajivaka ascetic signaled to the Venerable Maha Kassapa that the Buddha's Parinibbana had already taken place.

[63](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-63). He was one of the foremost disciples of the Buddha and became the president of the First Great Council held shortly after the Buddha's Parinibbana. See Helmuth Hecker, *Maha Kassapa: Father of the Sangha* (BPS Wheel No. 345).

[64](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-64). This Subhadda is a different person from the wanderer Subhadda who became the Buddha's last personal disciple.

[65](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fnt-65).Comy. ascribes these verses to the "Elders of Tambapanni Island (Sri Lanka)."