CHAPTER 2

SÆRIPUTTA AND MAHÆMOGGALLÆNA

2.1. Venerable SÈriputta,

2.1. 1. Introduction

In chapter one, the concept, the meaning, types, qualities, of Noble ones had been explained in detail and in the second chapter, the accounts of Venerable SÈriputta and Venerable MoggallÈna who had already attained to Noblehood and who were the two most chief disciples, foremost in wisdom and foremost in supernatural power respectively will be mentioned in detail.

2.1. 2. The Searching for the Dhamma

The following account of Venerable SÈriputta early life is taken from many texts such as A~guttara NikÈya Pali, and its commentary, SaÑyutta NikÈya Pali, and its commentary, Dhammapada Pali, and its commentary. The story begins at two brahmanical villages, called Upatissa and Kolita, which located not far from the city of RÈjagaha. Among those two villages, there was a brahmanical woman named R|pasÈrÈ at Upatissa village. Likewise, there was a brahmanical woman named MoggallÈ at Kolita village. The two families were much closed. The two women gave birth to

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58 the mother of Sariputta, who was called after her, his personal name being Upatissa. Her husband was the brahmin Vanganta, and she became the mother of seven children, all of whom became Arahants. Pali Propername p. 759.
boys, on the same day. On the name giving day R|pasÈrÊ’s child received the name Upatissa, as he was a son of the foremost family of that village; and for the same reason MoggallÈ’s son was named Kolita.

When the boys grew up, they were educated and they acquired mastery in all the sciences. Each of them had a following of five hundred Brahmin youths. In RÈjagaha there was an annual event called the Hilltop Festival. They sat together to witness the celebrations. When there was an occasion for laughter, they laughed; when the spectacle was exciting, they became excited. In the same manner they enjoyed the festival for a second day. On the third day, however, strange thoughts cast their shadows across their hearts, and they could no long laugh or share in the excitement. As they sat there, watching the plays and dances, for just a moment the spectator of human mortality revealed itself to their inner vision, and once they had caught a glimpse of it their attitude could never again be the same. For each, this somber mood gradually crystallized into a compelling question: “What is there to look at here? Before these people have reached a hundred years they will all be dead. Shouldn’t we go seek a teaching of deliverance?”

It was with such thoughts in mind that on this third day they sat through the festival. Kolita noticed that his friend seemed pensive and withdrawn and asked him: “What is the matter, my dear Upatissa?” “My dear Kolita, I have been thinking that there is no benefit at all for us in enjoying these hollow shows. Instead of wasting my time on such festivals, what I really ought to do is to seek a path deliverance from

59 Dhp comy 1. p. 55.
the entire round of rebirths.” And Kolita replied: that “My thoughts are exactly the same as yours.” Thus two friends started to set forth to seek a path which is free from death.\textsuperscript{60}

2.1.3. Uppatissa approached Sanjaya

At that time, there lived at \textit{Rējagaha} a wandering ascetic (\textit{paribbējaka}) named \textit{SaŌjaya},\textsuperscript{61} who had a great following of pupils. Upatissa, Kolita and each with his own following of five hundred Brahmin youths received ordination from SaŌjaya. Within a short time the two friends had learned SaŌjaya’s entire doctrine. They went to him and asked: “Master, does your doctrine go so far only, or is there something beyond?” SaŌjaya replied: that “So far only does it go. You know it completely.”\textsuperscript{62}

Hearing this, they thought to themselves: “If that is the case, it is useless to continue the holy life under him. We have gone forth from home to seek a teaching of deliverance, but under him we cannot find it. If we wander through villages, towns, and cities we shall certainly find a master who can show us the path we are seeking.” \textsuperscript{63}And from then on, whenever they heard that there were wise ascetics or Brahmins in this place or that, they went to meet them and learn their doctrines. There was none, however, who could answer all their questions, while they were able to reply to those who questioned them.

\textsuperscript{60} Dhp comy 1. p. 55.
\textsuperscript{61} His name was SaŌjaya Parivējaka and original teacher of Sariputta and Mahamogallana. It is said that when these two disciples left him to become pupils of the Buddha, they were joined two hundreds and fifty others. He then fainted and hot blood issued from his mouth. Suppiyaparivvajaka was also his follower. Pali Propername p.1010.
\textsuperscript{62} Dhp comy 1. p. 57.
\textsuperscript{63} Dhp comy 1. p. 57.
Having thus traveled through the whole of India, they returned to RĒjagaha. There they made an agreement that whichever of them should find the Deathless first would inform the other. It was a pact of brotherhood, born of the deep friendship between the two young men.

Sometime after they had made that agreement, the Blessed One, the Buddha, set out for RĒjagaha. He had, shortly before, completed the first rainy season retreat following his Enlightenment, and the time had arrived for wandering and preaching. Before his Enlightenment he had promised King BimbisĒra that he would return to RĒjagaha after attaining his goal, and now he set forth to fulfill his promise. So in stages the Blessed One journeyed from GayĒ to RĒjagaha, and having received from King BimbisĒra the Bamboo Grove Monastery (VeĀavana), he took up residence there.

Among the first sixty-one Arahants whom the Master had sent forth to proclaim the message of deliverance to the world was an elder named Assaji. Assaji belonged to the group of five ascetics who had attended upon the Bodhisatta while he was engaged in his ascetic practices, and he was also one of the first five disciples.

2.1.4. Upatissa and Venerable Asajji

One morning, when Assaji was walking on alms round in RĒjagaha, Upatissa saw him calmly wending his way from door with his bowl in hand. Struck by Assaji’s dignified and serene appearance, Upatissa thought he had never seen before such a monk. He must be one of those who are arahants, or who are on the way to arahantship. I
should not approach him and not the proper time now for putting questions to this monk, as he is going for alms through the streets. I had better follow behind him after the manner of supplicants.

Then, when the elder had finished his alms round and was seeing a quiet place to eat his meal, Upatissa spread out his own sitting cloth and offered the seat to the elder. Venerable Assaji sat down and took his meal, after which Upatissa served him with water from his own water-container, and in this way performed toward Assaji the duties of a pupil to a teacher.

After they had exchanged the usual courteous greetings, Upatissa said: “Serene are your features, friend. Pure and bright is your complexion. Under whom have you gone forth as an ascetic? Who is your teacher and whose doctrine do you profess?”

Assaji replied: “There is, friend, a great recluse, a scion of the SÈkyas, who has gone forth from the SÈkya clan. I have gone forth under him, the Blessed One. That Blessed One is my teacher and it is his Dhamma that I profess.”

“What does the venerable one’s master teach, what does he proclaim?”

Questioned thus, the Elder Assaji thought to himself: “These wandering ascetics are opposed to the Buddha’s teaching. I shall show him how profound this teaching is.” So he said: I am but new to the training, friend. It is not long since I went forth from home, and I came but recently to this doctrine and discipline. I cannot explain the Dhamma in detail to you.”

64 Dhp comy 1. p. 57.
The wanderer replied: “I am called Upatissa, friend. Please tell me according to your ability, be it much or little. It will be my task to penetrate its meaning by way of a hundred or a thousand methods.”

And he added:

Be it little or much that you can tell,
The meaning only, please proclaim to me!
To know the meaning is my sole desire;
Of no use to me are many words.\(^{65}\)

In response, the Elder Assaji uttered this stanza:

Of those things that arise from a cause,
The Tathāgata has told the cause,
And also what their cessation is:
This is the doctrine of the Great Recluse.\(^{66}\)

\textit{Ye dhammē hetuppabhavē, tesañ āhupetuphetu~ tathāgato ēha tesaÒca yo nirodho, evaÑvēdē mahēsamano.}

Upon hearing the first two lines, there arose in the wanderer Upatissa the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma- the first glimpse of the Deathless, the path of stream-entry- and to the ending of the last two lines he already listened as a stream-enterer. At once he knew that here the means of deliverance is to be found. Then please go ahead, venerable sir. I have a friend with whom I have made an agreement to share the Dhamma. I shall inform him, and together we shall follow you and come into the Master’s presence. Upatissa then prostrated himself at the elder’s feet and went back to the park of the wanderers.

\(^{65}\) Vi 3. p. 60.  
\(^{66}\) AP. p. 1.286.
2.1.5. Reunion of Two closed friends

When Kolita saw Upatissa, Today my friend’s appearance is quite changed. Surely, he must have found the Deathless. He told him all about him meeting with the Elder Assaji, and when he recited the stanza he had heard, Kolita too was established in the fruit of stream-entry, *Sotapanna*.

Then Kolita wanted to see Venerable Assaji immediately but SÈriputta was one who always respected his teacher, and therefore he said to his friend: “First, my dear, we should go to our teacher, the wanderer SaÒjaya, and tell him that we found the Deathless. If he can grasp it, he will penetrate to the truth. If he does not confidence in us, to see the Master; and hearing the Buddha’s teaching, he will attain to the penetration of the path and fruition.”

Then both friends went to SaÒjaya and said: “O teacher! A Buddha has appeared in the world! His doctrine is well proclaimed and his community of monks is following the right path. Let us go and see the Master.”

“What are you saying, my dear?” SaÒjaya exclaimed. And refusing to go with them, he offered to appoint them as co-leaders of his community, speaking of the gain and fame such a position would bring them. But the two wanderers refused to be deflected from their decision, saying: “Oh, we would not mind always remaining pupils. But you, teacher, must know for yourself whether to go or not.”

Then SaÒjaya thought that I am a teacher of many followers. If I were revertting to the state of a disciple, it would be as if a huge water

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67 Khu dhp comy 1. p. 57.
tank were to change into a small pitcher. I cannot live the life of a pupil now.

Both of friends organized their master that not to think like that. When a Buddha has appeared in the world, people flock to him in large crowns and pay homage to him, carrying incense and flowers. We too shall go there. And then what will happen to you?”

To which Saṃjñāṇa replied: What do you think, my pupils: are there more fools in this world, or more wise people?”

“Fools there are many, O teacher, and the wise are few.”

“If that is so, my friends, then the wise ones will go to the wise recluse Gotama, and the fools will come to me, the fool. You may go now but I shall not.”

So the two friends left, saying that you will come to understand your mistake and after they had gone there was a split among Saṃjñāṇa’s pupils, and his monastery became almost empty. Seeing his place deserted, Saṃjñāṇa vomited hot blood. Five hundred of his disciples had left along with Upatissa and Kolita, out of whom 250 returned to Saṃjñāṇa. With the remaining 250, and their own following, the two friends arrived at the Bamboo Grove Monastery.

2.1.6. Upatissa’s arrival of the Buddha

There the Buddha seated among the fourfold assembly, was preaching the Dhamma, and when he saw the two wanderers coming he addressed the monks: “There two friends, Upatissa and Kolita, who are now approaching, will be my two chief disciples, an excellent pair.”

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68 Dhp comy 1. p. 58.
69 That is, monks, nuns, and make and female lay followers.
Having arrived, the two friends bowed low in homage to the Buddha and sat at one side. When they were seated they said to the Buddha:

“May we obtain, lord, the going forth under the Blessed One,
May we obtain the higher ordination.”

The Buddha said: “Come, bhikkhus! Well proclaimed is the Dhamma. Now live the life of purity to make an end of suffering.” This alone served as the ordination of these venerable ones. Then the Master continued his discourse, taking the individual temperaments of the listeners into consideration; and with the exception of Upatissa and Kolita all of them attained to arahantship but on that occasion the two friends did not attain the higher paths and fruits. For them a longer period of preparatory training was needed in order that they could fulfill their personal destiny, that of serving as the Blessed One’s chief disciples.

2.1.7. The Struggle for Magga and Phala

After their entry into the Buddhist Order, they were always referred to Upatissa by the name SÈriputta, while Kolita is always called MahÈmoggalÈna. For this intensive training MahÈmoggallÈna went to live at a certain village near Magadha, which he depended for alms. On the seventh day after his ordination, when he was engaged in intense mediation, he was troubled by fatigue and torpor but spurred on by the Buddha, he dispelled his fatigue, and while listening to the

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70 Dhp comy 1. p. 58.
Buddha expounded the meditation subject of the elements \((dhÈtukammaÔÔhÈna)\), he won the three higher paths and reached the acme of a chief disciple’s perfection.

Venerable SÈriputta continued to stay near the Master at a certain cave, depending on RÈjagaha for his alms. Half of month after his ordination the Buddha gave a discourse to SÈriputta’s nephew, the wandering ascetic DÈghanakha. SÈriputta was standing behind the Master, fanning him. While listening to the discourse and following it attentively in his mind, as though sharing the food prepared for another, SÈriputta reached the acme of “Knowledge pertaining to a disciple’s perfection” and attained to arahantship together with the four Analytical knowledges \((patisambhidÈÒÈna)\)\(^{71}\). His nephew, at the end of the sermon, was established in the fruit of stream-entry. Now it may be asked: “Did not SÈriputta possess great wise? And So, why did he attain arahantship later than MoggallÈna?” The answer, according to the commentaries, is because of the greatness of the preparations required. When poor people want to go anywhere they take to the road at once: but in the case of kings, extensive preparation must be made, and these require time. And so too is it in order to become the first chief disciple of a Buddha.

2.1.8. Bestowing Titles to the Chief Disciples

On that same day, when the evening shadows had lengthened, the Master called his disciples to assembly and bestowed upon the two

\(^{71}\) The fact of his attainment to the patisambhidÈ-ÖÉÔa, or analytical knowledges, which has here been added to the commentarial text, is mentioned by SÈriputta himself at AN 4 :173.
elders the rank of chief disciples. At this, some monks were displeased and murmured among themselves: “The Master should have given the rank of chief disciples to those who were ordained first, that is, the group of five disciples; or if not to them, then either to the group of fifty-five bhikkhus headed by Yasa, or to thirty of the auspicious group (bhaddavaggiya), or else to the three Kassapa bothers. But passing over all these great elders, he had given it to those whose ordination was the very last of all.

The Master inquired about the subject of their talk. When they told him, he said: “I do not show preference, but give to each what he has aspired to. When, for instance, Aññāki Koññā in a previous life gave alms nine times during a single harvest, he did not aspire to chief discipleship; his aspiration was to be the very first to penetrate to the highest state, arahantship. So it came about. But many aeons ago, at the time of the Buddha Anomadassā, Sīriputta and Moggallāna made the aspiration for chief discipleship, and now the conditions for the fulfillment of that aspiration have ripened. Hence I have given them just what they aspired to, and did not do so out of preference.”

2.1.9. Venerable Sīriputta’s Duty and Position

The Buddha had two great disciples, the Venerable Sīriputta and the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna. Of the two, The Venerable Sīriputta is the right-hand disciple, the one regarded as closest to the

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72 The group of five disciples were the five ascetics to whom the Buddha preached his first sermon in the Deer Park at Benares. The others referred to are the successive groups converted to the Dhamma at the outset of the Buddha’s ministry. For details see Vin. 1: 15-35.
“Great Disciples of The Buddha” by Nyanaponika and Hellmuchth Hecker. P. 4-11.
Blessed One, is the disciple distinguished by excellence of wisdom (mahÈpaÒØÈ). Regarding his wisdom, the Dhammapada commentary records that The Venerable SÈriputta can account even the drops of the rain water. In the case of the Buddha Gotama, this was the Venerable SÈriputta. His special task in the Dispensation is the systematization of the doctrine and detailed analysis of its content. By means of his deep insight into the ultimate truth and his sharp discernment of the sphere of differentiated phenomena (dhammadhÈtu) he is responsible for drawing out the subtle implications of the Dhammas and for explicating its meaning with a wealth of detail that the Buddha, as head of the Dispensation, cannot personally attend to himself. As he belonged to the great wisdom, he could partake even to some extent of the Buddha-knowledge. When we talked about him, we should not leave out the Abhidhamma. He and the Abhidhamma were concomitant. He can preach even the Abhidhamma which is very deed and very difficult to understand. How he preached the Abhidhamma will be mentioned in the next title in detail.

2.1.10. The Abhidhamma and Sariputta

We come now about one of the most important contributions made by the Venerable SÈriputta to the Buddhist teaching, namely, his codification of the Abhidhamma. According to the AÔÔhasÈlinÈ, the commentary to the Dhammasa~gaÓÈ, it is said that the Buddha preached the Abhidhamma in the TÈvatiÑsÈ heaven to the devas who had gathered from the ten-thousand fold world-system; Lord Buddha’s
mother, Queen MÈyÈ, was heading the group of celestial beings and who had been reborn as a deva in the Tusita heaven. The Buddha taught the Abhidhamma for three months, returning immediately to the human realm each day to collect his alms food. It was then that he would meet SÈriputta and transmit to him the “method” (naya) of that portion of Abhidhamma he had just preached. The AÔÔhasÈlinÊ says: “Thus the giving of the method was to the chief disciple, who was endowed with the analytical knowledge, as through the Buddha stood on the edge of the shore and pointed out the ocean with his open hand. To the elder the doctrine taught by the Blessed One in hundreds and thousands of methods became very clear.” Thereafter the elder passed on what he had learned to his five hundred disciples.\(^{74}\) He was expert at not only the Abhidhamma but also the other Dhamma. How he was the Master of other Dhamma will be mentioned in the next topic.

2.1.11. The Master of the Dhamma

Concerning the Venerable SÈriputta’s master of the Dhamma and his skill in exposition, the Buddha said:

“The essence of Dhamma (dhammadhÈtu) has been so well penetrated by SÈriputta, O monks, that if I were to question him about it for one day in different words and phrases, SÈriputta would reply for one day in various words and phrases. If I were to question him for one night, or a day and a night, or for two days and nights, even up to

\(^{74}\) AÔÔhasÈlinÊ (PTS ed.) p. 16-17.
seven days and nights, Sīriputta would expound the matter for the same period of time, in various words and phrases”.

That Sīriputta’s great reputation as a teacher of the Dhamma survived him long, to become a tradition among later Buddhists, is shown by the concluding passage of the Milindapañha, written some three hundred years later. There King Milinda compares the Elder Nīgasena to the Venerable Sīriputta, saying: “In this Buddha’s Dispensation there is none other like yourself for answering questions, except the Elder Sīriputta, the Marshal of the Dhamma”.

That Nīgasena’s great reputation still lives today, upheld by the cherished teachings of the great disciple, preserved and enshrined in some of the oldest books of Buddhism alongside the words of his Master. He was not only the Master of the Dhamma but also the helper. I will mention it in the next title.

2.1.12. The Helper for Buddhism

Among the bhikkhus Sīriputta was outstanding as one who helped others. In the Devadaha Sutta the Buddha himself said of his great disciple, “Sīriputta, bhikkhu, is wise, and a helper of his fellow monks.” The commentary, in explanation of these words, refers to a traditional distinction among the ways of helping others: “Sīriputta was a helper in two ways: by giving material help (Ēmisānuggaha) and by giving the help of the Dhamma (dhammānuggaha).”

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75 SN p.12-32.
76 Mil. p. 420.
77 SN 22. p. 2.
Elaborating on the way he provided “material help,” the Saññyutta Nikāya commentary says that the elder did not go on alms round in the early morning hours as the other bhikkhus did. Instead, when they had all gone, he walked around the entire monastery grounds, and wherever he saw an unswept place, he swept it; wherever garbage had not been removed, he threw it away; where furniture such as beds and chairs or earthenware had not been properly arranged, he put them in order. He did this so that the non-Buddhist ascetics who might visit the monastery would not see any disorderliness and speak in contempt of the bhikkhus.

Then he used to go to the hall for the sick, and having spoken consoling words to the patients, he would ask them about their needs. To procure their requirements he took with him young novices and went in search of medicine either by way of the customary alms round or to some appropriate place. When the medicine was obtained he would give it to the novices, saying: “Caring for the sick has been praised by the Master. Go now, good people, and be heedful!” After sending them back to the monastery sick room he would go on the alms round or take his meal at a supporter’s house.

The above was his routine when staying for some time at a monastery. But while going on a journey on foot with the Blessed One, he did not walk at the head of the procession, shod with sandals and umbrella in hand, as one who thinks: “I am the chief disciple.” Rather, he would let the young novices take his bowl and robes and go on ahead with the others, while he himself would first attend to those who were old, very young, or unwell, making them apply oil to any sores
they might have on their bodies. Then, either later on the same day or
on the next day: he would leave together with them.78

Because of his solicitude for others, on one occasion SÈriputta
arrived particularly late at the place where the others were resting. For
this reason he did not get proper quarters and had to pass the night
seated under a tent made from robes. Having seen this, the next day
the Master caused the monks to assemble and told them the Tittira
JÈtaka, the story of the elephant, the monkey, and the partridge who,
after deciding which was the eldest of them, lived together showing
respect for the most senior. He then laid down the rule that “Lodgings
should be allocated according to seniority” 79

2.1.13. Teaching the Dhamma

Sometimes SÈriputta would give material help and the help of the
Dhamma together, eg, when the monk Samitigutta80 was suffering from
leprosy in the infirmary, SÈriputta went to visit him and spoke to him
thus: “Friend, so long as the five aggregates (khandhÈ) continue, all
feeling is just suffering. Only when the aggregates are no more is there
no more suffering.” Having thus given him the contemplation of
feelings as a subject of meditation, SÈriputta left. Samitigutta followed
the elder’s instruction, developed insight, and realized the six

78 SN A 2. p. 236. In Burmese Cript. Great Disciples of The Buddha” by Nyanaponika and
Hellmucth Hecker. p. 21-22.

80 He belonged to a brahmin family of SÁvatthi and entered the Order after hearing the Buddha
preach. He attained to entire purity of conduct, but, because of some action in his former life,
was attacked by leprosy, and his limbs gradually decayed. He therefore lived in the infirmary.
One day SÁriputta, while visiting the sick, saw him and gave him an exercise on contemplation
of feeling. Practising this, Samitigutta developed insight and became an arahant.
supernormal powers (chaąabhiśśa) as an Arahant.\textsuperscript{81} The Venerable SÈriputta helped not only the monks but also lay people. I have already mentioned the Venerable SÈriputta helped the monks. Now how he helped the lay people will be mentioned in the next section.

A sickbed sermon given by the elder to AnÈthapiÓÉika\textsuperscript{82}, the Buddha’s chief patron, is preserved in the SotÈpatti Sañyutta. In this discourse, given when AnÈthapiÓÉika was afflicted by such severe pain that he felt as if his head was being crushed, SÈriputta consoled the great lay disciple by reminding him that as a stream-enterer he was utterly free of the bad qualities that lead to rebirth in states of woe and that he possessed the four factors of stream-entry (SotÈpattiyaÓga): unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sañgha, and “the virtues dear to the noble ones.” Moreover, he was securely established on the Noble Eightfold Path and thus was certain to reach the fruits of the path, enlightenment and deliverance. As AnÈthapiÓÉika listened to him, his pains subsided and right on the spot he recovered from his illness. As a mark of gratitude he then offered SÈriputta the food that had been prepared for himself\textsuperscript{83}.

\section*{2.1.14. The Patience of Sariputta}

The Dhammapada Commentary records an incident that epitomizes still another outstanding trait of the chief disciple, his patience and forbearance. In the neighborhood of the Jetavana monastery, where the Buddha was residing, a group of men were

\textsuperscript{81} Theg A 1. p. 221.
\textsuperscript{82} Account of AnÈthapiÓÉika will be mentioned in the chapter five in detail.
\textsuperscript{83} SN 55. p. 26.
praising the noble qualities of SÈriputta. “Such great patience has our elder,” they said, “That even when people abuse him and strike him, he feels no trace of anger.” One day a person tested Venerable SÈriputta when he entered the city on his alms round, that man approached him from behind and gave him a tremendous blow on the back but he continued on his way.

The fire of remorse leapt up in every part of the bad person’s body. Prostrating himself at the elder’s feet, he begged for pardon. Very well, I pardon you. If you are willing to pardon me, please take your food at my house.” When Sariputta silently consented that man took his bowl and led him to his house, where he served him a meal.

Those who saw the assault were enraged, they gathered at his house, armed with sticks and stones, ready to kill him. When SÈriputta emerged, accompanied by that man carrying his bowl, they cried out: “Venerable sir, order this man to turn back. It was me he struck, he has begged my pardon. Go your ways. Then he was dismissing the people and permitting that man to return, the elder calmly made his way back to the monastery.84

The Venerable SÈriputta’s humility was as great as his patience. He was willing to receive correction from anyone, not only with submission but with gratitude. It is told in the commentary to the SusÈma Sutta that once, through momentary negligence, a corner of the elder’s under-robe was hanging down, and a seven-year old novice, seeing this, pointed it out to him. SÈriputta stepped aside at once and arranged the garment in the proper way, and then he stood

84 Dhp comy 2. 397.
before the novice with folded hands, saying: “Now it is correct, teacher!”

There is a reference to this incident in the Milindapañha, where these verses are ascribed to Sàriputta:

*If one who has gone forth this day at the age of seven*
*Should teach me, I accept it with lowered head;*
*At sight of him I show my zeal and respect;*
*May I always set him in the teacher’s place.*

Thus, in regarding Sàriputta’s patience, the Buddha comment was: “Monks, it is impossible for Sàriputta and his like to cherish anger or hatred. Sàriputta’s mind is like the great earth, firm like a great post, like a pool of still water.” He then recited the following verse:

*Unresentful like the earth, firm like a gate post,*
*Equipoised and strong in vows,*
*Mind without impurities like a pool:*
*For such a one the round of births exists no more.*

**2.1.15. The most Respectable Monk in Buddhism**

It was no wonder, therefore, the throughout his life he continued to show respect for the Venerable Assaji, from whom he had gained his introduction to the Buddha’s teaching. We are told in the commentary to the *Nèvè Sutta* (Suttanipàta), and also in the commentary to the Dhammapada, that whenever Sàriputta lived in the same monastery as the Elder Assaji, immediately after having paid homage to the Buddha, he always went to venerable the great elder,

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85 SN 2, p 29.
86 Khu Mil. p, 397.
thinking: “This venerable one was my first teacher. It was through him that I came to know the Buddha’s Dispensation.” And when the Elder Assaji lived in another monastery, Sīriputta used to face the direction in which he was living and pay homage to him by touching the ground at five places (with the head, hands and feet), and saluting him with joined palms.

Some people were misunderstanding, for when other monks saw Sīriputta acting thus they said: “After becoming a chief disciple, Sīriputta still worships the heavenly quarters! Even today he cannot give up his brahmanical view!” When these complaints reached the Blessed One, he said: “It is not so, bhikkhus. Sīriputta doesn’t worship the heavenly quarters. He salutes the one through whom he first learned the Dhamma, and worships and reveres him as his teacher. Sīriputta is one who gives devout respect to his teacher.” It was then the Master preached to the monks the Nevē Sutta, which starts with the words:

As the devas pay homage to Indra,
So one should revere the person
Through whom one has learnt the Dhamma.⁸⁷

2.1.16. Sariputta’s Gratefulness to Others

Another example of the Venerable Sīriputta’s gratitude is given in a story of Elder Rēdha. The commentary to the Dhammapada relates that Rēdha was a poor brahmin who stayed at Jetavana monastery in

⁸⁷ Khu Suttanipata A 2, p, 61-62.
SÈvatthi. He served as a temple hand, performing a little service such as weeding, sweeping, and the like, and the monks supported him with food. When he asked to be ordained, however, the monks did not want to ordain him. One day the Buddha, in his mental survey of the world, saw that this brahmin was mature for arahantship. He inquired about him for the assemble monks, and asked whether any one of them remembered ever receiving some help from the poor brahmin. SÈriputta said that he remembered an occasion when he was going for alms in RÈjagaha and this poor brahmin had given him a ladleful of alms food that he had bagged for himself. The Buddha asked SÈriputta to ordain the man, which he did. SÈriputta then advised him time and again as to what thing should be done and what should be avoided. RÈdha always received his admonitions gladly, without resentment, and in a sort time he attained arahantship. On the occasion the bhikkhus extolled SÈriputta’s sense of gratitude and said that he who himself willingly accepts advice obtains pupils who do no the same. Commenting on this, the Buddha said that not only then but also formerly SÈriputta had shown gratitude and remembered any good deed done to him. And in that connection the Master told the Alinacitta JÈtaka, in which SÈriputta was a grateful elephant who dedicated his life to helping a team of carpenters that had nursed him when he was wounded.

2.1.17. The Final Days of Venerable SÈriputta

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89 JÈt A 2, p, 16-21.
When venerable SÈriputta entered into the fruition attainment of arahantship (arahattaphalasamÈpatti) and considered his life force, he saw that its residue would sustain him for only one more week. Then, together with the five hundred bhikkhu, he went to the Blessed One, saluted him, and spoke: “O lord, may the Blessed One permit: the time has come for me to attain final NibbÈna.”

In this connection, the text says if the Enlightened One were to have replied, “You may attain final NibbÈna,” hostile sectarians would say that he was speaking in praise of death of death; and if he had replied, “Do not attain final NibbÈna,” they would say that he extolled the continuation of the round of existence. Therefore the Blessed One did not speak in either way, but asked: “Where will you attain the final NibbÈna?” SÈriputta replied: “In the Magadha country, in the village called NÈlaka,\(^90\) in the chamber where I was born.”

Then, as to the Blessing One’s instruction, he said good bye the monks and gave them one last discourse on the Dhamma.” When he had ended his discourse, he paid homage at the feet of the Buddha. If any deed or word of mind did not please you, O Lord, may the Blessed One forgive me! It is now time for me to go. The Buddha answered in the same way: “I forgive you, SÈriputta.” And then, the Buddha addressed the bhikkhus who surrounded him. “Go, bhikkhus,” he said. “Accompany your elder brother.” At these words, all the four assemblies of devotees at once went out of Jetavana, leaving the Buddha there alone. The citizens of SÈvatthi also, having heard the

\(^90\) It is a brahmin village in Magadha, not far from Rajagaha. It was the township of Upatissas(hence called Upatissagama), and it was there that Sariputta and other members of his family were born. Pali Propername 2. p. 65.
news, went out of the city an unending stream carrying incense and flowers in their hands; and with their hair wet (the sign of mourning), they followed the elder, lamenting and weeping.

Sīriputta then admonished the crowd, saying: “This is a road that none can avoid,” and asked them to return. And to the monks who had accompanied him, he said: “You may turn back now. Do not neglect the Master, this is a journey without return, and be heedful, friends! He made them turn back and with only his own group of disciples, he continued on his way. During his journey Sīriputta spent one night wherever he stopped, and thus he favored many people with a last sight of him. Reaching Nīlaka village in the evening, he stopped near a banyan tree at the village gate. He took a rest and went from there to his mother’s house with five hundred bhikkhus. At the time the elder felt severe pains. When one pail was brought in, another was carried out. The mother thought: “The news of my son is not good,” and she stood leaning by the door of her own room.

2.1.18. Heavenly Beings Provided Sariputta at mother’s place
At that time four Great Divine Kings reached to attend on the elder during his illness whom have been feeling severe pains. But they saluted him and left because the elder accepted their helping. When they had left, there came in the same manner Sakka, the king of devas, and after him, Mahēbrahmē, and all of them the elder dismissed in the same way.

The mother of Venerable Sariputta was seeing the coming and going of these deities. She wanted to know who they are and to see her son. Thus, she came to the elder. She realized that the four great
divine kings took care her son and Sakka, king of Deva is like a novice who were carrying a Bhikkhu’s belongings. Venerable said to his mother UpÈsikÈ, the person who came to me is your lord and master, MahÈbrahmÈ.” “Then are you greater, my son, even than my lord and master, MahÈbrahmÈ?” “Yes, UpÈsikÈ.” On the day when our master was born, it is said that four MahÈbrahmÈs received the Great Being in a golden net.”

Upon hearing this, his mother thought: “If my son’s power is such as this, what must be the majestic power of my son’s master and lord?” And while she was thinking this, suddenly rapture and joy arose in her, suffusing her entire body.

2.1.19. Teaching Dhamma to Beloved Mother

When rapture and joy have arisen in his mother, the elder started to preach the Dhamma his mother “At the moment of my master’s birth, at his great renunciation of worldly life, on his attaining Enlightenment, and at his first turning the Dhamma Wheel- on all these occasions the ten-thousandfold world-system quaked and shook. None is there who equals him in virtue, in concentration, in wisdom, in deliverance, and in the knowledge and vision of deliverance.” And he then explained to her in detail the words of homage:

(1) The Buddha is far away defilements,

(2) He knows every things,

(3) He is proficient in three supreme VijjÈ knowledge, eight supreme VijjÈ knowledge and in the fifteen caraÔa practice of morality,
(4) He speaks only suitable, good words which are true and beneficial. And he goes to Nibbāna,
(5) He knows three worlds, namely the world of living beings, the world of conditioned things and the world of abodes,
(6) He can tame the uncivilized men, devas and brahma to be civilize,
(7) He is the Great teacher of men and devas.
(8) He is self-enlightened in the Four Noble Truths,
(9) He is perfect with six powers (issariya, dhamma, yasa, sirī, kīma and payatta etc.⁹¹

After discourse, his mother attained to the fruit of stream-entry. This was that the elder gave his mother the nursing-fee for bringing him up.

2.1.20. The Final Attainment of Parinibbāna

When she was gone, he asked: “What is the time now, Cunda?” (Cunda is his attendant) “Venerable sir, it is near dawn.”

And the elder said: “Let me up to a sitting position, Cunda.” And Cunda did so.

Then the elder spoke to the bhikkhus, saying: “For forty-four years I have lived and traveled with you, my brethren. If any deed of word of mine was unpleasant to you, forgive me, brethren.”

And they replied: “Venerable sir, you have never given us the least displeasure, although we have followed you inseparably like your shadow. But may you, venerable sir, grant forgiveness to us.” After

⁹¹ Vi 1, p. 1. DN 2, p. 8.
teacher and disciples had forgave each other mutually, at the full-moon day of the month Kattika\textsuperscript{92} or the full-moon day of November he utterly passed away into the Nibb\text{"}na-element without residue.

The mother in her room thought: “How is my son? He does not say anything.” She rose, and going into the son’s room she massaged his legs. Then, seeing that he had passed away, she fell at his feet, loudly lamenting; O my dear son! Before this, we did not know of your virtue. Because of that, we did not gain the good fortune to have offered hospitality and alms to hundreds of bhikkhus! And she lamented thus up to sunrise.

As soon as the sun was up, she sent for goldsmiths and had the treasure room opened and had the pots full of gold weighed on a large scale. Then she gave the gold to the goldsmiths with the order to prepare funeral ornaments. Columns and arches were erected, and in the center of the village the Up\text{"}sik\text{"} had a pavilion of heartwood built. In the middle of the pavilion a large, gabled structure was raised, surrounded by a parapet of golden arches and columns. Then they began the sacred ceremony, in which human beings and deities mingled.

After the great assembly of people had celebrated the sacred rites for a full week, they made a pyre with many kinds of fragrant wood. They placed the body of the Venerable S\text{"}riputta on the pyre and kindled the wood with bundles of fragrant roots. Throughout the night of the cremation the concourse listened to sermons on the

\textsuperscript{92} It is the name of constellation and also of a month (October to November), during which the full moon is the near the constellation of Pleiades (kattika). It is the last month of the rainy season. The full moon day of the month was observed as a festival and great rejoicing were help, particularly at night. Pali Propername p,520.
Dhamma. After that the flames of the pyre were extinguished by the elder Anuruddha with scented water. The elder Cunda gathered together the relics and placed them in a filter cloth. He handed over the relics and a filter cloth to the Buddha who was dwelling at Sêvatthi, in Jetavana. The master stretched forth his hand and taking the filter with the relics, placed it on his palm, and said to the monks:

These, O monks, are the shell-colored relics of the bhikkhu who, not long ago, asked for permission to attain final Nibbâna. He who fulfilled the ten perfection for an incalculable period and a hundred thousand aeons—this was that bhikkhu. He who helped me in turning the Wheel of the Dhamma that was first turned by me—this was that bhikkhu. He who obtained the seat next to me—this was that bhikkhu. He who, apart from me, had none to equal him in wisdom throughout the whole ten-thousandfold universe—this was that bhikkhu. Of great wisdom was bhikkhu, of broad wisdom, of bright wisdom, of quick wisdom, of penetrative wisdom was this bhikkhu. Few wants had this bhikkhu; he was contented, bent on seclusion, not fond of company, full of energy, and exhorter of his fellow monks, censuring what is evil. He who went forth into homelessness, abandoning the great fortune obtained through his merits in five hundred existences—this was that bhikkhu. He who, in my Dispensation, was patient like the earth—this was that bhikkhu. Harmless like a bull whose horns have been cut—this was that bhikkhu. Of humble mind like an outcast boy—this was that bhikkhu.

See here, O monks, the relics of him who was of great wisdom, of broad, bright, quick, keen, and penetrative wisdom; who had few wants and was contented, bent on seclusion, not found of company,
energetic—see here the relics of him who was an exhorter of his fellow monks, who censured evil etc!

When the Blessed One had thus lauded the virtues of the Venerable S Èriputta, he asked for a stupa to be built for the relics.93

2.2. Mah Èmoggall Èna;
2.2.1. Introduction

In a small town named Kolita, near R Èjagaha, a child was born who was destined to become the second chief disciple of the Buddha. The boy’s parents named him after the town. The family belonged to the Moggall Ènà clan, one of the most illustrious brahmin clans of the period, which claimed direct descent from the ancient Vedic seer Mudgala. The town was inhabited entirely by brahmins, and in its religious attitudes and social customs it was extremely conservative. Kolita’s father was born of the most prominent family, from which he town’s mayor was usually appointed.

Kolita’s family lived on very friendly terms with another brahmin family from a neighboring village. On the very day of Kolita’s birth, a son was born to this other family, whom they named Upatissa. When the children grew up they become fast friends and before long were inseparable. Whatever they did, they did together. In their temperaments the two were quite different. Upatissa was more adventuresome, daring, and enterprising, while Kolita’s tendency was to preserve, to cultivate, and to enrich what he had gained. Their places within their families were also different: Kolita was the only child, but Upatissa had three brothers and three sisters. Yet, despite the differences in their characters, they never quarreled always dwelt on amicable terms, maintaining a steadfast loyalty and self-sacrificing devotion. When the boys grew up, they were educated and acquired mastery of all the sciences. Each of them had a following of five hundred Brahmin youths.

Each year RÈjagaha hosted a grand public celebration called the Hilltop Festival. While they were watching the show, one day, there were thoughts in their mind that “Before these people have reached a hundred years they will all be dead. What is the use to us all pleasures of eye and ear? They are absolutely worthless! Shouldn’t we rather seek to find release from the devastating law of impermanence, to liberate ourselves from the fleeting illusions of life, which lure us on yet leave us empty?” Therefore they said farewell to their families, and put on the pale saffron garments of religious wanderers. Discarding all
distinguishing marks and privileges of their caste, they entered the classless society if ascetics.\textsuperscript{94}

2.2.2. Wandering and Spiritual search

At that time, northern India teemed with spiritual teachers and philosophers whose views ranged from the demonic to the superdivine. Some taught amoralism, others fatalism, still others materialism. Both friends realized the hollowness of such teaching early enough and thus felt no attraction towards them. In Rējagaha, however, there was one teacher who appealed to them. His name was Saōjaya, who according to the tradition was identical with Saōjaya Belaōôhaputta, mentioned in the Pēăi Canon as one of six non-Buddhist teachers. Under him the group of friends was ordained, which added considerably to Saōjaya’s reputation. Saōjaya’s philosophy was something more than mere evasion. Not having met a better teacher, they were probably attracted to him because of his apparent freedom from dogmatism and his dialectical skills. After a short time, however, they clearly realized that Saōjaya could not offer them what they were really searching for: a cure for the illness of universal suffering. That’s why they left their teacher, Saōjaya.

Thus, for a second time, they took up the life of wanderers in search of truth. They walked across India for many years, from north to south, from east to west. They endured the dust of the road and the tormenting heat.

\textsuperscript{94} AN, Comy. 1, p. 121.
The rain and the wind, spurred on by thoughts that moved deep within the soul: “I am a victim of birth, aging and death, of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. I am a victim of suffering, a prey of suffering. Surely, an end to this whole mass of suffering can be discovered!”

2.2.3. Finding the Deathless Dhamma

Without knowing anything about the Buddha, the two friends gave up their life of wandering and returned to their home country of Magadha. Both were about forty years of age. Despite their many disappointments they still had not given up hopes. Having made a pact that the one who found a genuine path to the Deathless first would quickly inform the other, they set out on their search separately, thereby doubling their chances of meeting a competent spiritual guide.

It was shortly before this happened that the Buddha had set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma at Benares, and after his first rains retreat he sent out his first batch of disciples, sixty arahants, to proclaim the Dhamma for the well-being and happiness of the world. The Buddha himself had gone to RĒjagaha, where the king of Magadha soon became his follower and donated him the Bamboo Grove Monastery. He was living at that monastery when Kolita and Upatissa returned to RĒjagaha, where they were offered accommodations at SaÒjaya’s place.

One day Upatissa’s manner was changing. Never before had he seen him so beatific; his entire being seemed to have been

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“Great Disciples of The Buddha” by Nyanaponika and Hellmuth Hecker. P. 71-75.
transformed, and his face shone with a sublime radiance. Eagerly Kolita asked him: “Your features are so serene, dear friend, and your complexion is so bright and clear. Have you found the way the Deathless?

Upatissa then replied: “It is so, dear friend, the Death has been found.” He then reported that he had found it from the most venerable Assaji, an Arhant and he was a disciple of the ascetic Gotama of the Sakya clan. He explained to me his teacher’s doctrine. A short stanza what he recited is:

Of those things that arise from a cause,
The Tathâgata has told the cause,
And also what their cessation is:
This is the doctrine of the Great Recluse.

When Assaji spoke this stanza, right on the spot arose in Upatissa the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma: “All that has the nature of arising has the nature of cessation.” And the very same thing happened to Kolita when Upatissa repeated the stanza to him. They now stood securely in the stream of the Dhamma (Sotâpatti), assured that the goal was within their grasp.

After Kolita had listened to that potent stanza, he wished to go where the Buddha was staying immediately, but Upatissa asked him to wait, saying “let us first go to Sañjāya and tell him that we have found the Deathless. If he can understand, he is sure to make progress toward the truth. But if he cannot comprehend at once, he may perhaps have confidence enough to join us when we go to see the master. Then, on listening to the Buddha himself, he will certainly understand.”
Thus they went to their former Master said: “Hello! the Venerable teacher, the Buddha has appeared in the world. He is good at teaching and his monks are noble. Come and see him! However he rejected. Therefore they left their teacher and went to the Buddha.”

2.2.4. The Struggle for Magga and Phala

Now Upatissa and Kolita, at the head of 250 fellow ascetics, approached to the Buddha who was staying at Bamboo Grove in RĒjagaha and were ordained at the dispensation of the Buddha. After this point Upatissa was recognized as ‘SĒriputta’ i.e. “the son of SĒrÊ,” after the name of his mother, and Kolita as MahĒmoggallÊna, “MoggallÊna the Great,” to distinguish him from others of the same brahminic clan, such as GaŌaka and MoggallÊna.

After listening to the Buddha’s Dhamma, all of them became arahants except SĒriputta and MoggallÊna. These two went into solitude, in separate places, to continue their striving for the highest goal.

SĒriputta remained in the vicinity of RĒjagaha and went to meditate in a cave called the Boar’s Den(S|karakhataleÓa). From there he walked to the city for his alms, which often gave him the opportunity to listen to the Buddha’s discourses. What he heard from the Master he independently worked over in his own mind and he methodically penetrated for clear understanding of the fundamental nature of the phenomena. He needed fourteen days to reach arahantship, the utter destruction of all cankers (Ēsavakkhaya).

“Great Disciples of The Buddha” by Nyanaponika and Hellmuchth Hecker. P. 75-77.
Moggallâna, however, resorted to a forest near the village of Kallavâlaputta in Magadha. With great zeal, he meditated there but despite his determination he was often overcome by sleepiness. Though he struggled to keep his body erect and his head upright, he kept on drooping and nodding. There were times when he could keep his eyes open only by sheer force of will. The tropical heat, the strain of his long years of a wandering life, and the inner tensions he had gone through all bore down on him at once, and thus, at the very end of his quest, his body reacted by fatigue.\textsuperscript{97}

But the Buddha did not lose sight of him. With his supernormal vision he perceived the difficulties of the new monk, and by psychic power he appeared before him. When Moggallâna saw the Master standing before him, a good part of his fatigue had already vanished. Now the Awakened One asked him:

“Are you nodding, Moggallâna, are you nodding?

“Yes, lord.”

“Well then, Moggallâna, at whatever thought drowsiness descends upon you, you should not give attention to that thought or dwell on it. Then, by doing so, it is possible that your drowsiness will vanish. But if, by doing so, drowsiness does not vanish, then you should reflect upon the Teaching as you have heard it and learned it, you should ponder over it and examine it closely in your mind. Then, by doing so, it is possible that your drowsiness will vanish. But if, by doing so, drowsiness does not vanish, then you should repeat in full detail the Teaching as you have heard it and learned it... you should pull both ear-lobes and rub your limbs with your hands... you should

\textsuperscript{97} Vin 3. 51-51. Vin 3 Ôî P. 223-230.
get up from your seat and, after washing your eye with water, you should look around in all directions and upwards to the stars and constellations... you should give attention to the perception of light, to the perception of day: as by day so by night, as by night so by day; thus, with your mind clear and unclouded, you should cultivate a mind that is full of brightness... with your senses turned inward and your mind not straying outward, you should walk up and down, being aware of going to and fro. Then, by doing so, drowsiness does not vanish, you may, mindfully and clearly aware, lie down lion like on our right side, placing foot on foot, keeping in mind the thought of rising; and on awakening, you should quickly get up, thinking, ‘I must not indulge in the comfort of resting and reclining, in the pleasure of sleep.’ “Thus, Moggallâna, should you train yourself.”

After Moggallâna had received all these personal instructions of the Master, he resumed his training with great ardor, fighting vigorously against the inner hindrances of the mind. During his many years of ascetic life he already had, to a great extent, suppressed sensual desire and ill will, the first and the second of the five hindrances (1.desire, 2.ill will, 3.sloth and torpor, 4. restlessness and worry and 5. doubt). Now, with the help given by the Buddha, he fought against sloth and torpor and restlessness and worry, the third and fourth hindrances. By overcoming these hindrances he was able to attain meditative states transcending the world of material form, which prepared the way for the penetrative knowledge of reality.

He first attained and enjoyed the overwhelming bliss of first Jhêna, a state of profound absorption and concentration. Having thus gained a firm footing in the first Jhêna, he next gained the second
JhÈna, which is called “the noble silenced” because within this absorption all discursive thought is silenced. Thus, in stages, he advanced to the third JhÈna and the fourth JhÈna. From there he proceeded still further in the scale of concentration to the four formless of immaterial absorptions (arupajhÈna) and the cessation of perception and feeling (saÒÒÈvedayitanirodha). Then he gained the “signless concentration of mind,” which is free from all that “marks” or signifies conditioned existence.

But this attainment, too, was not final. For even here he developed a subtle attachment to hid refined experience- an attachment which is still a delusive “sign” or “mark” superimposed on a high spiritual attainment of greatest purity. But aided by the Master’s instructions, he broke through these last, most subtle fetters and attained the final fruit, perfect liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom in all their fullness and depth. Now the Venerable MoggallÈna had become an arahant.

MoggallÈna later said that he attained arahantship by quick penetration (khippÈbhiÒÒÈ), that is, in one week, but his progress was difficult (dukkha-paÔipadÈ), requiring the helpful assistance of the Master. SÈriputta, too, attained arahantship by quick penetration, on two weeks, but his progress was smooth (sukkha- paÔipadÈ). MoggallÈna had advanced to the goal more speedily than SÈriputta because the Buddha directed and inspired him personally and intensively, and also because he had a lesser range to comprehend.
SÈriputta was superior to him in regard to the independence of his progress and also in the detailed scope of his knowledge.\textsuperscript{98}

2.2.5. The Great Pair of Disciples

For a Fully Enlightened One his two chief disciples and his personal attendant are as necessary as the ministers of war, of the interior, and of finance are to a king. The Buddha himself used this comparison with a state's administration. He spoke of Ėnanda, who could remember all the discourses, as the treasurer of the Dhamma (the minister of finance), of SÈriputta as its marshal of or general-in-command, and of MoggallÈna as “the child’s nurse” (the minister of the interior).

After SÈriputta and MoggallÈna had attained arahantship, the Buddha announced to the Order that they would now be his chief disciples. Some of monks were surprised and began to grumble, asking why the Master did not treat with such distinction those ordained first. To this, the Buddha replied that each reaps according to his merit. For aeons SÈriputta and MoggallÈna had been progressing towards this state by gradually cultivating the necessary faculties. Others, however, had developed along different lines. Although both chief disciples were of another caste and from another region than the Buddha’s, their special position within that Noble Order was an outcome of the law of kamma.

In many ways the Buddha had spoken in praise of this noble pair of disciples:

\textsuperscript{98} AN 2. P 461-464. its Comy P. 174-176.
“O monks seek and cultivate the company of SÈriputta and MoggallÈna! They are wise and are helpful to their fellows in the holy life. SÈriputta is like a mother, and MoggallÈna is a nurse. SÈriputta trains the monks for the fruit of stream-entry, and MoggallÈna for the supreme goal.”

The characterization of the two in the last text may be interpreted as follow: SÈriputta, like a mother, gives birth to the path of emancipation in his pupils, urging them to cut through the first, most basic fetters and thus attain to stream-entry. In this way he “converts” his pupils by vigorously diverting them from the futility of the round existence and guiding them into the zone of safety. At this point MoggallÈna takes over and leads the pupils further along the upwards path, supporting them in their struggle for arahantship in the same way that he himself had been helped by the Master. Thus he is like a wet-nurse, nourishing the pupils’ strength and sustaining their growth.

Once SÈriputta said to his friend that, compared with MoggallÈna in regard to supernormal powers, he was like a small splinter of rock set against the mighty Himalayas. MoggallÈna, however, replied that, compared with SÈriputta in regard to the power of wisdom, he was like a tiny grain of salt set against a big salt barrel. About the differing range of wisdom, the Buddha said that there are questions that only he would conceive and answer, but not SÈriputta; there are other questions that only SÈriputta could clarify, but not MoggallÈna; and there are those questions that only MoggallÈna could solve, but not the other disciples. Thus the two chief disciples were like a bridge between
the supreme qualities of the Buddha and the capacities of the other disciples\textsuperscript{99}.

\textbf{2.2.6. Moggall\texttext{ı}na’s Psychic Powers}

The Venerable Moggall\texttext{ı}na was the bhikkhu who had been most assiduous in developing and cultivation the four roads to power, and thus the Buddha named him the foremost disciple among those who possessed the psychic powers. There were, of course, other prominent disciples who were highly skilled in psychic power, but they were usually proficient in only one or two areas. Thus, for instance, the monk Anuruddha and the nun Sakul\texttext{ı} possessed the supernormal vision of the divine eye; the monk Sobhita and the nun Bhadda Kapil\texttext{ı}n\texttext{ı} could recollect their previous lives far back into the past; the monk S\texttext{ı}gala was skilled in the exercise of the fire element; C\texttext{ı}\texttext{ı}\texttext{ı}a Panthaka excelled in the ability to manifest himself in multiple bodies; and Pilindavaccha was foremost on communicating with heavenly beings. Mah\texttext{ı} Moggall\texttext{ı}na, however, had a comprehensive master over the psychic faculties that on other disciple shared, not even the nun Uppalava\texttext{ö}öa, who was foremost among the bhikkhu\texttext{ın} in the exercise of psychic powers.

We shall now turn to what the Buddhist canonical texts relate about Moggall\texttext{ı}na’s supernormal faculties. We will not follow the familiar sequence of the five superknowledges, but instead will single

\textsuperscript{99} MN 3. P. 291. its Commentary 217.
out the particular faculties demonstrated by Moggallāna in incidents and anecdotes related in the suttas.\textsuperscript{100}

### 2.2.7. Penetration of Other’s Minds

Once on an Uposatha day, the Buddha sat silently in front of the assembly of monks. At each watch of the night Ēnanda requested him to recite the code of monastic discipline, the PĒtimokkha, but the Buddha remained silent. Finally, when dawn came, he only said: “This assembly is impure.” Thereupon Moggallāna surveyed with his mind the entire assembly and saw one monk sitting there who was “immoral, wicked, of impure and suspect behavior...rotten within, lustful and corrupt.” He went up to him and told him to leave three times. When the monk did not move even after the third request, Moggallāna took him by the arm, led him out the hall, and bolted the door. Then he begged the Exalted One to recite the PĒtimokkha, as the assembly was now pure again.

### 2.2.8. The Divine Ear

One evening when SĒriputta went to see Moggallāna he found that his features had such a strikingly serene expression that he felt moved to ask Moggallāna whether he had dwelt in one of the peaceful abodes of mind. Moggallāna replied that he had dwelt only in a coarse abode, but that he had been engaged in a talk on the Dhamma. On being asked with whom he had such a talk, Moggallāna replied that it

\textsuperscript{100} AN 3.44. "Great Disciples of The Buddha" by Nyanaponika and Hellmuhth Hecker. P. 91-92.
had been with the Exalted One. SÈriputta remarked that the Master was now dwelling very far away, in SÈvatthi, while they themselves were in RÈjagaha. Had MoggallÈna gone to the Buddha by way of supernormal power, or had the Buddha come to him? MoggallÈ replied that neither had been the case; rather, they had directed toward each other their divine eye and divine ear, which enabled them to engage in a Dhamma talk on the mental faculty of energy. Then SÈriputta exclaimed that MoggallÈna, being endowed with powers so great, might be able to live through an entire aeon, like the Buddha, if he so wished.

With the divine ear MoggallÈna could also hear the voices of nonhuman beings, deities, spirits, etc., and receive messages from them. So, for instance, a spirit had warned him against Devadatta, who harbored evil intentions toward the Buddha and was plotting against him.

2.2.9. The Divine Eye

As mentioned above, MoggallÈna, with his divine eye, was able to perceive the Buddha over a long distance. The texts describe other occasions when the Elder made use of this faculty. Once, while SÈriputta was sitting in meditation, a malicious demon (yakkha) pounded him on the head. MoggallÈna saw this and asked his friend how he was feeling. SÈriputta, who had not seen the demon, said that he was feeling generally well, but was troubled by a slight touch of headache. Then MoggallÈna praised his strength of concentration, but
SÈriputta said that MoggallÈna had been able to see that demon while he himself could not.\textsuperscript{101}

And then, MoggallÈna used his divine eye to observe the operation of the law of kamma and its fruits. Again and again he saw how many beings, through their evil actions that harmed their fellow beings, were reborn among the petas, miserable ghosts, and had to undergo much suffering, while others, who practiced charity and virtue, rose upwards to the heavenly abodes. He often reported such cases to exemplify the law of kamma. These reports are collected in two books of the PÊli Canon, one dealing with the ghost realm (the Petavatthu, fifty-one reports) and one with the heavenly abodes (the VimÈnavatthu, eighty-five). From this it can be readily understood why MoggallÈna was famous as one who knew the worlds beyond as well as the workings of kamma. The reports are too numerous to discuss here, but at least one of his visions, recorded in the SaÑyutta NikÈya, should be mentioned.\textsuperscript{102}

### 2.2.10. Travel by Mind-Made Body

“Just as a person might bend his stretched arm or stretch his bent arm,” so quickly could MoggallÈna departed bodily from the human world and reappeared in a celestial realm. Repeatedly he made use of this capacity to instruct other beings and to look after the affairs of the Order. Thus he taught the devas in the realm of the Thirty-three, the factors of stream-entry, and tested Sakka, their king, to determine whether he had understood the teaching about the extinction of

\textsuperscript{101} Ud. 124.
\textsuperscript{102} Khu Peta Comy P. 5. SN 19:1-21; Vin.3.104-108.
craving\textsuperscript{103}. When the Buddha was preaching the Abhidhamma for three months in one of the heavenly worlds, Moggall\textemdashÄ appeared in that heaven, informed him of happenings in the Order, and asked for instructions\textsuperscript{104}. He visited not only the gods of the sense sphere, but also those of the Brahma-world. Thus he appeared before a Brahm\textemdashÄ deity who believed that there were no ascetics capable of entering his realm, and through questioning and supernormal feats Moggall\textemdashÄna shook that deity’s self-assurance.\textsuperscript{105} On another occasion he appeared in front of a Brahm\textemdashÄ named Tissa- who formerly had been a monk and had died recently- and gave him instructions about stream-entry and the realization of final deliverance.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{2.2.11. Telekinesis}

Moggall\textemdashÄna also had mastery over what appears to be solid matter. Once the monks staying at a monastery were negligent, busying themselves too much with material trifles. Learning of this, the Buddha asked Moggall\textemdashÄ to use a feat of supernormal power in order to shake them out of their complacency and inspire them to return to serious striving. In response, Moggall\textemdashÄna pushed the building with his big toe, so that the entire monastery, called Mansion of Mig\textemdashÄra’s Mother, shook and trembled as if there was an earthquake. The monks were so deeply stirred by this event that they shook of their worldly interests and again became receptive to the Buddha’s instructions. The Buddha explained to them that the source of Moggall\textemdashÄna’s great

\textsuperscript{103} MN 1. P 319..
\textsuperscript{104} Khu Dhp Comy 2. P 145.
\textsuperscript{105} SN 1. 148.
\textsuperscript{106} AN 2. 292.
supernormal prowess was the development of the four roads to power.\textsuperscript{107}

\textbf{2.2.12. The Power of Transformation}

Although we have confined the preceding discussion to incidents mentioned in the PÊli Cannon, this account would be deficient if we did not mention what the commentaries regard as MoggallÊna’s most formidable display of psychic power, his triumph over the divine serpent, the royal nÊga Nandopananda. This incident is recorded in the Visuddhimagga. On one occasion, when the Buddha together with five hundred monks visited the heaven of the Thirty-three, they passed just above the abode of Nandopananda. This infuriated the royal nÊga, who sought to take revenge by surrounding Mount Sineru with his coils and spreading his hood so that the entire world was enveloped in darkness. Several eminent monks offered to subdue the nÊga, but the Buddha, aware of his ferocity, would not permit them. It was only to MoggallÊna, the last to volunteer, that he granted permission. MoggallÊna then transformed himself into a huge royal nÊga and engaged Nandopananda in a terrible battle of flame and smoke. Drawing upon one power after another, appearing in a variety of shapes and sizes, he shattered his rival’s defenses. In the last phase of the battle he assumed the form of a supaÓÓa, the celestial eagle, arch-enemy of the nÊga. At this point Nandopananda capitulated, and the elder, assuming once again the form of a monk, brought him to the Buddha in triumph and elicited from him an apology.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{107} MN 1, 413.
2.2.13. The Last Days of Moggallāna

Half a year before the Buddha’s Parinibbāna, on the full-moon day of the month Kattika (October/November), death separated the two chief disciples for the last time. It was on this day that Sāriputta passed away in his birth chamber in his parental home—surrounded by his many disciples, but far away from Moggallāna. Even though during life the two had been almost inseparable, their deaths, like their attainment of arahantship, occurred at different places.

Soon after the passing away of Sāriputta, Moggallāna had a bizarre encounter with Mara, the Evil one, the Tempter and Lord of Death, which may well have been a premonition of his own imminent demise. One night, while the elder was walking back and forth for exercise, Mara slipped into his body and entered his bowels. Moggallāna sat down and attended to his abdomen, which suddenly felt as heavy as a bag of beans. He then discovered the Evil One lodged within his own belly. Calmly he told Mara to get out. Mara was astonished that he had been detected so soon, and in his delusion thought that even the Buddha would not have recognized him so quickly. But Moggallāna read his thoughts and again ordered him to depart. Mara now escaped through Moggallāna’s mouth and stood at the door of the hut. Moggallāna told him that he knew him not only on that day but had also known him in the past, for their kammic connection was told and deep.

The following is the gist of the five Buddhas appearing in our “Fortunate aeon” (bhaddakappa) was kakusandha, whose chief disciples were the arahants Viddhura and Saññāva. At that time,
Moggallè was Mêra, by name Mêra DısÈ. For Mêra too, like MahÈbrahmÈ and sakka, is not a permanent being but a cosmic post or office- chief of demons, lord of the lower world- which is filled by different individuals migrating through the round of existence. At that time Mêra DısÈ had a sister named KÈïÈ, whose son was to become the Mêra of our age. Hence MoggallÈ’s own nephew then was now standing in front of him in his hut as the present Mêra. When, in that past age, MoggallÈ was Mêra, he had taken possession of a boy and made him throw a potsherd at the head of the Buddha Kasandha’s chief disciple, the arahant Vidhura. The wound was a severe one, which caused blood to flow.

When the Buddha Kakusandha tuned around and saw this, he said: “Indeed, Mêra knows no moderation here”- for even in diabolical actions there might be moderation- and under the Perfect One’s glance Mêra DısÈ’s body dissolved and reappeared in the deepest hell. Just a moment earlier he had been the overlord of all the hellish worlds, and now he himself was one of hell’s victims. For many thousands of years MoggallÈna had to suffer in hell as the kammic result of attacking an arahant. He was condemned to spend ten thousand years alone in the Great hell, having a human body and the head of a fish, just like the beings in Pieter Breughel’s pictures of the hells. Whenever two lances of his torturers crossed in his heart, he would know that a thousand years of his torment had passed.

This encounter with Mêra once more brought to MoggallÈna’s mind the terrors of SaÑsÈra from which he was now forever free. Soon afterwards MoggallÈna felt that the time of his last existence was running out. Being an arahant he saw no reason to extend his life span
to the end of the aeon by an act of will, and he calmly allowed impermanence to take its lawful course.\textsuperscript{109}

\section*{2.2.14. Moggall\textsc{\textipa{\textbeta}}}na’s Parinibb\textsc{\textipa{\textbeta}}na}

Surrounded by many of his monks, the Buddha passed away peacefully during a meditative absorption which he entered with perfect mastery. SËriputta’s death in his parental home, likewise with fellow monks in attendance, was similarly serene. Ēnanda died at the age of 120; as he did not wish to burden anyone by his funeral, he entered meditative concentration on the fire element so that his body vanished in a blaze. Considering the serene death of the Master and of these two disciples, one would have expected that MahĒmoggallēna, too, would have undergone the final dissolution of the body under peaceful circumstances. But Moggallēna’s end was very different, though the gruesome nature of his death did not shake his firm and serene mind.

Moggallēna passed away a fortnight after his friend SËriputta, on the new-moon day of the month Kattika (October/November), in the autumn. The “great decease” of the Buddha took place on the full-moon night of the month VesÈkha (May), half a year after the death of his two chief disciples. The Buddha was in his eightieth years when he passed away, while both SËriputta and MahĒmoggallēna died at the age of eighty-four.

The circumstances of Moggallēna’s death are related in two sources, the Dhammapada Commentary and the JÈtaka Commentary.

Although these two sources share a common core, they differ in details, which no doubts stem from embellishments in the course of oral transmission. The account here will be based on the Dhammapada Commentary, with the differences in the JÈtaka Commentary noted parenthetically.

Because the Buddha was so skillful as a teacher, leading countless people to the gates of deliverance, the populace of Magadha for the most part had transferred its allegiance from the various rival ascetic orders to the Enlightened One and his SaÑgha. A group of naked ascetics, resentful over this loss of prestige, pinned the prime responsibility for their hard times on the Venerable MahÈmoggallÈna. They believed that MoggallÈna had won over their own adherents to the Buddha’s Dhamma with his reports of his celestial travels, in which he related how he had seen the virtuous devotees of the Buddha enjoying rebirth in heaven and the followers of other sects, lacking moral conduct, suffering in miserable subhuman states of existence. These ascetics were so enraged about their loss of popularity that they wanted to eliminate MoggallÈna. Without accepting responsibility for their own misfortune, they projected the blame externally and concentrated their envy and hate on the great disciple.

While the ascetics were hesitant to kill MoggallÈna with their own hand, they had no scruples about employing others to carry out their nefarious deed. Having procured a thousand gold coins from their followers, they approached a band of brigands and offered them the money in exchange for the great disciple’s life. At that time MoggallÈna was living alone in a forest hut at the Black Rock, on the slope of Mount Isigili outside RÈjagaha. After his encounter with MÈra he knew
that the end of his days was near. Having enjoyed the bliss of liberation, he now left the body to be an obstruction and burden and had no desire to use his psychic faculties to keep it alive for the rest of the aeon. Yet, when he saw the brigands approach, he knew they were coming to kill him, and he used his supernormal powers to slip through the keyhole. The gangsters arrived at an empty hut, and though they searched everywhere, they could not find him. They returned the following day too, but this time the elder soared up into the air and escaped through the roof. The next month too the bandits came, but again they could not catch the elder. (In the JÈtaka version the bandits return on six consecutive days and catch him only on the seventh day.)

MoggallÈnÈ’s motivation in escaping was not fear of death. The reason he used his psychic powers to elude the gangsters was not to protect his body but to spare the would-be assassins the frightful kammic consequences of such a murderous deed, necessarily leading to rebirth in the hells. He wanted to spare them such a fate by giving them time to reconsider and abstain from their crime. But their greed for the promised money was so great that they persisted and returned again the following month (or on the seventh day in the JÈtaka account). This time their persistence was “rewarded,” for at that moment MoggallÈnÈ suddenly lost his psychic mastery over the body.

The reason for this sudden change in fate lay in a terrible deed he had committed in the distant past. Many aeons ago, in a previous birth, MoggallÈnÈ had brought about the death of his parents (in the JÈtaka version, however, he relents at the last moment and spares them). That heinous kamma had brought him to a rebirth in hell for countless years, but it had not yet fully matured. A residue remained,
and now, when he was in mortal danger, that residue suddenly ripened and confronted him with its fruit. Moggallâna realized that he had no choice but to submit to destiny. The brigands entered, knocked him down, and “pounded his bones until they were as small as grains of rice.” Then, thinking that he was dead, they threw his body behind a clump of bushes and fled, keen on collecting their reward.

But Moggallâna’s physical and mental strength was formidable and he had not yet capitulated to death. He regained consciousness and, by the power of meditation, he soared through the air and came into the presence of the Master. There he announced that he would attain final Nibbâna. The Buddha asked him to give a final sermon to the community of monks, which he did, with an additional display of wonders and marvels. Then he paid homage to the Blessed One, returned to the Black Rock, and passed into the Nibbâna element without residue. (The Jâtaka account more realistically omits the final sermon and had Moggallâna expire right at the Buddha’s feet.)

In this last turbulent phase of his life, the kamma of the past that had ripened so suddenly could affect only his body but could not shake his mind, for he no longer identified himself with his empirical personality. For him the five aggregates that others identified as “Moggallâna” were as foreign as an inanimate body:

They penetrate the subtle truth
As the tip of a hair with an arrow
Who see the five aggregates as alien
And do not regard them as self

\(^{110}\) Khu Dhp Comy 2. P 41-45.
Those who see conditioned things
As alien and not as self
Have pierced right through the subtle truth
As the tip of a hair with an arrow.111

This last episode of Moggallâna’s life, however, did show that the law of moral causality has even greater potency than the supernormal feats of a master of psychic power. Only a Buddha can control the kammic consequences acting upon his body to such an extent that nothing might cause his premature death.

Speaking about his chief disciples shortly after their deaths, the Buddha declared:

Those who in the past have been Holy Ones, Fully Enlightened Ones, those Blessed One, too, had such excellent pairs of disciples as I had in Sëriputta and Moggallâna. Those who in the future will be Holy Ones, Fully Enlightened Ones, those Blessing Ones, too, will have such excellent pairs of disciples as I had in Sëriputta and Moggallâna.

Marvelous it is, most wonderful it is, bhikkhus, concerning those disciples, that they will act in accordance with the Master’s teaching, will act in accordance with his advice; that they will be dear to the four assemblies, will be loved, respected, and honored by them.

Sëriputta and Moggallâna were such wonderful disciples, the Buddha said, that the assembly of monks appeared empty to him after their death. It was marvelous that such an excellent pair of

111 Theragathâ No. 1160-61.
disciples existed, but it was marvelous, too, that, in spite of their excellence, when the two had passed away there was no lamentation on the part of the Master.\footnote{SN 3. P. 141-142.}

Therefore, the Buddha continued, inspired by the greatness of the two chief disciples, let dedicated followers of the Dhamma strive to be their own island of refuge. Let them rely entirely on the powerful help of the four foundations of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhadhamma). Those who, with keen desire, thus train themselves along the Noble Eightfold Path will certainly pass beyond all the realms of darkness which abound in Saññāka. So the Master assures us.

\textbf{2.2.15. Conclusion}

In this chapter, as a conclusion, the Venerable Sriputta aspired to be the Buddha’s first chief disciple and foremost in wisdom. So he fulfilled the perfections (Pāramis) for one incalculable and one hundred thousand aeons. As a result, he was the Buddha’s first chief disciple and foremost in wisdom and the true son of the Dhamma and assisted the Buddha in setting in motion the Wheel of Wisdom. The Venerable Mahāmoggallāna aspired to be the Buddha’s second chief disciple and foremost in supernatural persons. So he fulfilled the perfections (Pāramis) for one incalculable and one hundred thousand aeons. As a result, he became the Buddha’s second chief disciples and foremost in supernatural persons. In the Buddha’s Sāsana, the two chief disciples devoted their lifes for the title of Aggamahāsāvaka. To get it, they fulfilled the perfections (Pāramis) practically. The Buddha’s teaching is
practical. We cannot get the results of Magga and Phala only by praying or orally. When they got their title of AggamahÈsÈvaka or their goal which they wanted, they spent their lifes for the welfare, happiness of the people without taking a rest. For example, when the monk Samitigutta was suffering from leprosy in the infirmary, the Venerable Sriputta went to pay a visit to him and spoke to him thus: “Friend, so long as the five aggregates continue, all feeling is just suffering. Only when the five aggregates are no more, there is no more suffering.” Having thus given him the contemplation of feelings as a subject of meditation, SÈriputta left. Samitigutta followed the elder’s instruction, developed insight, and realized the six supernormal powers (chaÄabhiÒÒÈ) as an Arahant. This is how the Venerable Sriputta performed for the welfare, happiness of the people.

On the other hand, by using his supernatural powers and his ability to teach The Venerable MahÈmoggallÈna helped many thousands to have confidence in the Dhamma and strive for emancipation. Through the above said, every man has within himself the potentiality of becoming the Venerable SÈriputta or the MoggallÈna, if he so wills it and endeavours. Man's position, according to Buddhism, is supreme. Man is judgment over his own master, and there is no higher being or power that sits in destiny.

“One is one's own refuge, who else could be the refuge?” said the Buddha. He admonished his disciples to 'be a refuge to themselves, and never to seek refuge in or help from anybody else. He taught, encouraged and stimulated each person to develop himself and to work out his own emancipation, for man has the

113 Theg A 1. p. 221.