

(3) At SN 55. 1 the Buddha says:<sup>90</sup>

Bhiksus, although a noble disciple lives on gathered scraps and wears rags, he is possessed of *four things*, and then is released (parimutto) from hell (niraya), from the realm of animals (tiracchayoniyā), and from the realm of ghosts (pittivisayā). He is released from evil-rebirth, from the woe-realm, from downfall (apāya-duggati-vinipatā). (The *four things* are then listed.)

Similarly, SN 55. 16-17 report the Buddha as telling bhiksus that they should give advice to appropriate people so that they become established in the *four limbs of stream-entry*, because if a person is possessed of the four,

it is an absolute impossibility that such a person should be reborn in hell, the realm of animals, or in the realm of ghosts (nirayam vā tiracchānayonim vā pittivisayam vā).<sup>91</sup>

The corresponding SA 835 (= SN 55. 1) and SA 836 (= SN 55. 16-17) record the same teaching.<sup>92</sup>

Accordingly, despite certain differences in expression, the two versions agree regarding the benefits for those who possess of the four qualities. This indicates that encouraging faith, as well as morality, was part of the early Buddhist teaching.

(4) In SN 55. 34-35 and their counterparts SA 847-848 the Buddha calls the four qualities the *four deva-paths to the heavens* (cattāri devānam devapadāni 四種諸天天道).<sup>93</sup> They then add that the noble disciple reflects (patisamcikkhati 念) thus:<sup>94</sup>

What is a *deva-path to the heavens* (devānam devapadan)? He knows (pajānāti) thus: Now indeed I hear the devas who have non-malice (abyāpajjha 無恚) as the highest (parame 爲上). So then I am also without malice (na byābādhemi 不起瞋恚), whether fearful or

mahābhogo mahāyaso)." (SN v, p. 402) "Bhiksus, the noble disciple who is possessed of the *four definite faiths* is not living in a poor life among humans, not leading an indigent life, naturally rich." (T 2, p. 214a; CSA ii, p. 450)

90 SN v, p. 342.

91 SN v, pp. 365-366.

92 T 2, p. 214a-b (CSA ii, pp. 451-452).

93 SN v, pp. 392-394; T 2, p. 216a-c (CSA ii, pp. 459-461).

94 SN 55. 35: SN v, p. 393; cf. its counterpart SA 848: T 2, p. 216b-c (CSA ii, p. 460).

steady (*tasam vā thāvaram vā* 若怖若安).<sup>95</sup> I surely abide possessed of the *dharma of the deva-path* (*devapada-dhamma-samannāgato*).

Thus, both versions emphasise non-malice in connection with the four qualities. They also agree in referring to the four as the *four deva-paths to the heavens*.

SN 55. 31 identifies the four qualities as being “four merit-yields, goodness-yields, happiness-nutriments (*cattāro puññābhisañdā kusalābhisañdā sukhassāhārā*)”.<sup>96</sup> SN 55. 32 is similar, but equates the merit-yields etc. with the three faiths (in Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha) together with generosity and *charitable giving* (*dāna*):<sup>97</sup>

Then again, bhiksus, the noble disciple lives at home (agāram ajjhāvasati) with heart free from the taint of stinginess (vigata-malamaccherena cetasā); he is munificent/generous (mutta-cāgo), pure-handed (payata-pāṇī), delighting in donation (vossagga-rato), accessible to begging (yāca-yogo), delighting in sharing and charitable giving (*dāna-saṃvibhāga-rato*).

The corresponding SA 838 (= SN 55. 31) and SA 840 (= SN 55. 32) have similar teachings.<sup>98</sup> Accordingly, in the two versions (SN 55. 31-32 = SA 838, 840) the four qualities and the notion of *charitable giving* (*dāna* 施) are “merit-yields, goodness-yields, happiness-nutriments”. Here, both SN and SA replace *morality* with *charitable giving* when referring to the life of a lay-person (*agāra*).<sup>99</sup>

To summarise, the Sotāpatti Samyutta of SN and its counterpart Buhuaijing Xiangying of SA record in common a set of four items, called the *four limbs of stream-entry* (in SN) or the *four definite faiths* (in SA), and also known as *deva-paths to the heavens*. The explanations of the four components or qualities are very similar in the two versions, including the specific details of *Dharma* and *morality* (*sīla*).

95 PED: pp. 298, 309 also translates “*tasa-thāvarā*” as “movable (animal) and immovable (vegetable) beings (world)”. Here, “whether fearful or steady” (*tasam vā thāvaram vā*) is preferable for both versions.

96 SN v, p. 391.

97 SN v, p. 392.

98 T 2, pp. 214c-215a (CSA ii, pp. 453-454).

99 This term implies the state of a lay-person, as opposed to *anagāra*, the state of a homeless mendicant (cf. PED, p. 3.)