



JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST STUDIES,
VOL.15, NO.2 (JULY-DECEMBER, 2024) 01-14



MARVEL AS SUPERHUMAN POWER PERFORMANCE (IDDHI-PĀṬIHĀRIYA) IN DHAMMAPADAṬṬHAKATHĀ

Sanu Mahatthanadull

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand

Author for correspondence email; petchsanu@hotmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Academic Article

Keywords:

Iddhi-pāṭihāriya, Buddhism,
Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Marvel,
Superhuman Power Performance.

Received: November 15, 2023

Revised: January 06, 2024

Accepted: January 09, 2024

Published online: June 07, 2024

ABSTRACT

This article aims to understand the power of miracles that appeared in Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā from the Theravāda Buddhist perspective. Notwithstanding, the author does not attempt to criticize the accuracy or credibility of the stories recorded as evidence in the Buddhist scriptures. Marvel as a superhuman power performance, or iddhi-pāṭihāriya in Pali depicts supernatural phenomena or extraordinary things. It is the product of human mental training grounded on the belief that certain phenomena are beyond the laws of nature and science. They cannot be proven by any scientific instruments. In real life, human beings invented innovations to fulfill their needs, imagination and dreams. They are just physical miracles created under the fundamental laws of physics of space-time. In Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, commentary to the Dhammapada, magical events appeared overwhelmingly throughout the texts in which the author has selected just some of them to present and analyze in this paper. The Buddha himself, like all previous Buddhas, performs the twin miracle (yamakapāṭihāriya) including his disciples who are qualified to perform miracles in different times and places. Moreover, some of non-Buddhist ascetics were also able to demonstrate this magic through the form of pseudo-sciences (tiracchānavijjā). It is worth noting that the Buddha laid down the discipline to not allow monks to perform any marvels. What was the true reason? It is a great challenge for Buddhists to find the answers.

 ISSN: 2586-9620 (online)

<https://so09.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jibs>

Copyright: © 2024 by the author.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

INTRODUCTION

The majority of human subjective beliefs are based on what they can prove with their tangible senses, and what cannot be proven by such perception, which requires an abstract mind. Supernormal power is different from natural power. It is something extraordinary and is closely related to the principle of concentration (*samādhi*) and absorption (*jhāna*) in this context. It can be specifically called the power of super knowledge, also known as “*apīññā*”, is the first among the six kinds of special knowledge. Buddhism considers this a form of miracle in the 3 miracles (*paṭihārā*).

In fact, supernatural phenomena significantly appeared as evidence in many Buddhist scriptures ranging from the Tipitaka, Commentaries, to later Buddhist scriptures. In this article, such phenomena will be discussed as an example for further analysis. The main resource of scriptural reference is *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* as commentary to the Dhammapada scripture, which is the Buddhist text that Venerable *Buddhaghosācāriya* transliterated from Sinhala back to Pali language. It is one of the most important pieces of evidence that shows the extraordinary concept of this miraculous power.

The Buddha, like all previous Buddhas, performed the twin miracle (*yamakapāṭihāriya*). Including his disciples, who were qualified to perform miracles at different times and places. Moreover, some of non-Buddhist ascetics were also able to demonstrate these magics through the form of pseudo-sciences (*tiracchānavijjā*) which was forbidden for Buddhist monks. It is worth noting that the Buddha laid down the discipline to not allow monks to perform any miracles. What was the true reason? It is a great challenge for Buddhists to find the answers.

SUPERHUMAN POWER: WHAT IS IT?

Just as a sound mind in a sound body that focuses on the importance of maintaining both physical and mental well-being, in one sense, physical strength is closely related to mental strength. Physical strength is the strength of the body, tolerance for physical workload, including having various systems within a perfectly balanced body. It is a condition that is not easily cause fatigue, disease, fever to the physical body. Especially the immune system of the body that acts to prevent external pathogens from easily harming or destroying internal organs. While mental power is strength of mind, resilience of the mind, flexibility, and a non-stiffness mind that creates conditions suitable for various works. It is a condition that creates mental immunity that acts to prevent germs, such as defilements (*kilesa*), and evils (*akusala*) from possible harming or weakening the mind.

In the Dhammapada, there is a saying that supports the greatness of the mind as follows:

<i>Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā</i>	<i>manoseṭṭhā manomayā</i>
<i>manasā ce paduṭṭhena</i>	<i>bhāsati vā karoti vā</i>
<i>tato naṃ dukkhamanveti</i>	<i>cakkaṃva vahato padaṃ.</i> ¹

¹ Dhp 1.

Mental phenomena are preceded by mind,
 have mind as their leader, are made by mind.
 If one acts or speaks with an evil mind,
 from that sorrow follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox.²

From the passage, apart from the aggregate of form (*rūpakhandā*), the three aggregates of the norm (*arūpakhandā*) have different roles from each other. The mind or consciousness (*viññāna*) is greater than feelings (*vedana*), perception (*saññā*), and mental formation (*saṅkhāra*). That is why Buddhaghosācāriya thus said “*so atthato tāyo arūpino khandhā: vedanākkhadho saññākkhadho saṅkhārakkhandho ti - etehi manopubbaṅgamā. Etesanti manopubbaṅgamā nāma*”³ Those three immaterial aggregates are named as having mind as their leader. This is because “mind is the leader of the said three immaterial aggregates”⁴. In addition, the mind is greater beyond the physical body too. This is because the mind can control the functioning of the body in terms of transforming the energy of the form of the human body integrated by the four great elements, namely the earth element (*pathavi-dhātu*), the water element (*āpo-dhātu*), the fire element (*tejo-dhātu*) and the wind element (*vāyo-dhātu*). The mind is being able to control the twenty-four derivative materials (*upādāya-rūpā*). In other words, the mind can change all forms of matter and energy from microscopic to macroscopic levels such as physical energy, mechanics physics, kinetic energy, magnetic waves, electromagnetic waves, chemicals and biological substances, as well as various countless mass substances.

The above analysis is plausible and reasonable because the body and mind interact deeply with each other within a complex life system. Whatsoever, the term *pāṭihārika* or *pāṭihāriya* (adj.) literally means striking, surprising, extraordinary, special, wonder, miracle, and marvel.⁵ Therefore, marvel means a special thing or event that is extraordinary in nature that is not normal but beyond what a normal human being can capable of. It is a miracle that even surprises normal people but actually exists, not just a story told in a novel. As the Buddha confirmed the existence of such marvel in the *Pāṭihāriya-gāthā*: “*Tiṇimāni bhikkhave pāṭihāriyāni katamāni tīṇi iddhipāṭihāriyaṃ ādesanāpāṭihāriyaṃ anusāsanīpāṭihāriyaṃ*”⁶ which can be translated as “Bhikkhus, there are these three kinds of marvel (metamorphosis). What three? The marvel of success, the marvel of disclosure, the marvel of advice.”⁷ while being translated in the dictionary as “the three marvels (*Pāṭihāriya*) consist of marvel as superhuman power performance, marvel as mind-reading, and marvel as giving instruction⁸ which are marvel of superpower, telepathy and teaching respectively.

² K. R. Norman (trans.), *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)*, (Oxford: PTS, 1997), 1.

³ Dhp-a I 22.

⁴ Dhp-a I 22.

⁵ T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, Part V (P-Ph.), 8 Vols. Set, (London: PTS, 1923), 73.

⁶ Paṭis II 227.

⁷ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (trans.), *The Path of Discrimination (Paṭisambhidāmagga)*, (London: PTS, 1982), 395.

⁸ Ibid.

Marvel as superhuman power performance (*Iddhi-Pāṭihāriya*) thus refers to “A marvel is an act of special power that makes an extraordinary thing or event stand out above the unusual nature. It is a display of superhuman power beyond the capabilities of a normal human being”. Although the Buddha objected to Marvel as a superhuman power performance and praised the marvel as giving instructions, there are some interesting aspects to study because the Teacher himself including some disciples performed. Therefore, the author will focus on such marvel kind. Interestingly, the marvel as superhuman power performance is that their power originates from the mind on the basis that the mind must attain a state of calmness, refinement, and determination until it reaches absorption concentration (*appanā samādhi*). In that state of mind, Sanu Mahatthanadull et al. claim:

A practitioner can access to happiness through the mental dimension. It implies the access to the fivefold happiness in concentration (*dharmasamādhi*), namely: - (1) Gladdening (*pāmojja*), (2) Happiness (*pīti*), (3) Tranquility (*passaddhi*), (4) Bliss (*sukha*), and (5) Concentration (*samādhi*).⁹

From the passage, those who have the power of concentration are those who reach happiness; the power of happiness then creates magics. Just as when Venerable *Piṇḍolabhāradvāja* performs a miracle by flying up to the sky to take a red sandalwood alms-bowl.

Accordingly the Venerable Elder *Piṇḍolabhāradvāja* entered into the trance of the Supernatural Faculties [*abhiññā*], and arising from the trance, he encircled the flat rock three leagues¹⁰ in extent with the tip of his foot, and then raising it aloft as easily as if it were silk-cotton, he walked seven times about in a circle over the city of *Rājagaha*.¹¹

Plus, another important factor as *iddhipāda* “*yesan pana iddhipādā subhāvitā te pi ākase yanti iddhiyā*”¹² is rendered as “They who have fully developed the path of accomplishment [*iddhipāda*], flies through the air with magical power”. Thus, it can be clearly seen that the quality of mind at the *abhiññā* level is the factor that results in the display of the power to change the physical form according to the laws of physics so that he can simply fly in the air like a magical levitation.

Buddhism thus suggests when a yogi who has a well-trained mind follows the path of concentration practice until absorptions arise, the direct knowledge or so called “supernormal powers” will appear. It is known in Pali as *abhiññā* is of six kinds, namely: - supernormal powers (*iddhividhā*), divine ear (*dibbasota*), telepathy (*cetopariyañāṇa*), retrocognition (*pubbenivāsānusatiñāṇa*), divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), and knowledge of the exhaustion of all mental intoxicants (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*) as the last. As mentioned in *Dasuttara Sutta*: Expanding Decades:

⁹ Sanu Mahatthanadull et al., “A Conceptual Model of Bi-Dimensional Development for Happiness Access by Bio-feedback Process,” *Journal of MCU Peace Studies* 8 (March-April 2020): 377-387.

¹⁰ Approximately twelve kilometers.

¹¹ Dhp-a III 202; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 13 to 26, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 37.

¹² “*Timsabhikkhu*” – Dhp-a III 177.

Here, a monk applies and bends his mind to, and enjoys, different supernormal powers (*abhiññā*):

(a) Being one, he becomes many; (b) with the divine ear he hears and distinguishes the minds of other beings; (c) he knows and distinguishes the minds of other beings; (d) he remembers past existences; (e) with the divine eye... he sees beings passing away and arising; (f) he abides, in this life, by his own super-knowledge and realization, in the attainment of the corruptionless liberation of heart and liberation through wisdom.¹³

Unfortunately, the above first five super-knowledges can deteriorate because they are mundane super-knowledge. It is as if a toy that temporally stays with a yogi for a short time is not sustainable, depending on his concentration power. There is only *āsavakkhayañāṇa* which is sublime and will never deteriorate. But it doesn't happen easily because it is a matter of attaining *Nibbāna*.

However, this paper focuses specifically on marvel as superhuman power performance or *iddhividhā*, the first element of the sixfold *abhiññā* as mentioned earlier, excluding the remaining five *abhiññā* which has a much larger dimension. In *The Fruits of the Homeless Life*, the Buddha suggests one common fruit that one can expect for when being a monk. That simply is an ability to enjoys with various superhuman power performances (*iddhividhā*, *iddhividhi*) also known as *iddhi-pāṭihāriya* just when his mind is well concentrated.

And he, with mind concentrated... applies and directs his mind to the various supernormal powers. He then enjoys different powers:

- (1) being one, he becomes many;
- (2) being many, he becomes one;
- (3) he appears and disappears;
- (4) he passes through fences, walls and mountains unhindered as if through air;
- (5) he sinks into the ground and emerges from it as if it were water;
- (6) he walks on the water without breaking the surface as if on land;
- (7) he flies cross-legged through the sky like a bird with wings;
- (8) he even touches and strokes with his hand the sun and moon, mighty and powerful as they are;
- (9) and he travels in the body as far as the *Brahmā* world.¹⁴

They are expanding one's body into thousands; collapse from thousands into one; disappearance; walk through the wall; dive into the ground; walk on the water; flying into the air; stroke the moon and the sun; and travel to the Brahmin's worlds.

From the above *Sutta*, the manifestation of this power in this sense is a special property of the body or the material element in the natural environment. When a yogi who practices until his mind reaches absorption concentration, he will be able to control the elements such as, physical body, time, space, and matter according to the laws of physics as desired. That is, being able to create a thousand enlarged bodies, collapse into a single body from a thousand, disappear, pass through walls, dive into the

¹³ DN III 283; Maurice Walshe (trans.), *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya)*, (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 516.

¹⁴ *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* - DN I 80; Ibid., 105.

ground, walk on water, fly through the air, caress the moon and sun, and travel to the Brahma worlds. All of these is a performance of superhuman power, which is one of the miraculous things that is beyond worldly reason and logic. It is something that is beyond the reach of human sensory nerves and exists in real life around all of us. The following images show the nine different ways of performing a marvel:

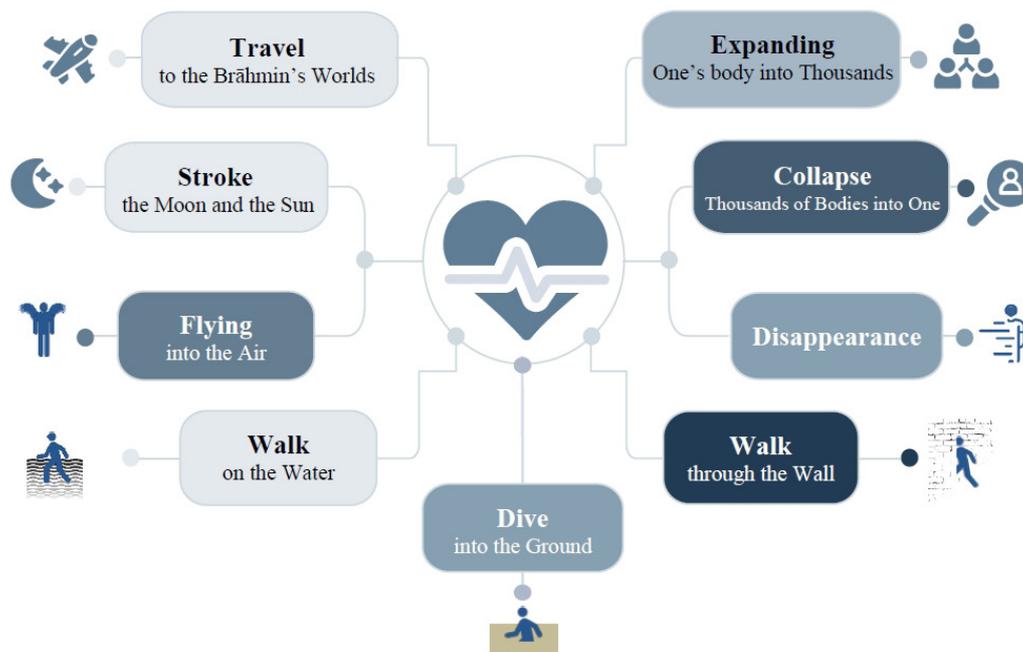


Figure 1: The Nine Superhuman Power Performances

SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA IN REAL LIFE

A long history in the past has shown that humans have intelligent brains that come with abilities to build the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World with the Great Pyramid of Giza, HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON and the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, for instance, as well as incredible medieval and modern wonders. In addition, human beings also create convenient devices in daily life such as clocks, time-telling machines, Televisions, radios, refrigerators, roads, bridges, microwave ovens, smartphones, computers, internet connections, Artificial intelligence (AI), etc., as well as amazing inventions according to modern times such as steam-powered trains, automobiles, motor boats, or even aircraft that carry large numbers of passengers into the air for its maximum capacity based on principles of physics and mechanics.

No one had ever imagined that in this era, people would be able to travel to meet each other in the shrinking world by flying up to the sky like this, unlike 2,500 years ago in the Buddha's era, when people were traveling around just simply on foot, by horse or by carriage. Moreover, humans not only use their brains to invent innovations that go beyond meeting basic human needs or comforts in everyday life but are also able to relentlessly fulfill their imagination and dreams to move forward even further with innovations include satellites, space shuttles, spacecraft, space stations, etc. It is worth noting that the aforementioned various human inventions are just physical miracles created by man under the fundamental laws of physics of space-time.

However, some phenomena are inherent in human existence, such as levitation, teleportation, time travel, unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned drones, etc. No one really knows what the human world will look like in the next century? Will people be as if empowered by material technological advancement to the maximum?

All of the above mentions are just examples of “Material wonders” which may be significantly linked to another form of human wonder. When human beings know how to develop their minds to create *jhāna* and *samādhi*, the “marvel of the mind” will arise, which is a world of abstraction that is waiting to be proven by meditation practitioners and scientists around the world. The only people who have access to the abstract marvel of the mind are those who experience real-life supernatural phenomena, phenomena in which the mind has absolute control over all material phenomena. At this point, the true term “superhero” is not far from practice based on the principle that “performance of superhuman power” is a characteristic of a superhero.” In order to understand the profound influence of marvels in real life, it is necessary to go back and study the cases of various performances in Buddhism, especially from the disciples of the great Teacher.

SUPERHUMAN POWER PERFORMED BY THE DISCIPLES

We’ve already known the superhuman power performances are as nine possible methods together. They are expanding one’s body into thousands as the first, and travel to the Brahmin’s worlds as the last. Indeed, according to the evidence shown in the major Buddhist scriptures especially the Dhammapada commentary, performances of superhuman power are more detailed than that.

Let’s start with the case of Ven. Little Wayman (*Cūlapanthaka*). After attaining Arahatship together with the Four Supernatural Faculties (*paṭisambhidā*), when he wanted to show that there were many monks in the empty mango grove to Ven. Big Wayman (*Mahāpanthaka*) his Arahat elder brother. Here is what happened:

Little Wayman said to himself, “My brother says, ‘There are no monks in the monastery.’ I will show him that there are monks in the monastery.” And forthwith he filled the whole mango grove with monks. Some of them were making robes, others were dyeing robes, others were repeating the Sacred Texts. Thus did Little Wayman create by supernatural power a thousand monks, each different from every other.¹⁵

From the above event, Wayman multiplying himself a thousand-fold by his superhuman power performance. At the end of the meal the Teacher allowed him to pronounce the words of thanksgiving like a young lion roaring a lion’s roar, ranging through the whole of the Three *Piṭakas*. He thus announced his potential to be evident there.

¹⁵ Dhp-a 247; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary), Translation of Books 1 and 2*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 304.

In *Samantapāsādikā* the Vinaya Commentary, a message appeared describing that during the first council (*paṭhamamahāsaṅgīti*), the monks seating themselves in their respective seats in order of seniority, sat down leaving place for the Elder Ānanda. And when some asked for whom, that seat was left they were told that it was for Ānanda. And in answer to the question, “Where has Ānanda gone?” At that time the Elder thought that it was then the time for him to go to the council. “*Tato attano ānubhāvaṃ dassento paṭhaviyaṃ nimujjivā attano āsane yeva attānaṃ dassesi. Ākāsenagantvā nisīditi pi eke.*”¹⁶ “Then displaying his supernatural power, he dived into the earth and showed himself in his own seat. But some say that he came through the air and sat down.”¹⁷ These cases were manifestations of superpower among the monks themselves.

The most important superhuman power performances in Buddhism appear in the Twin Miracle (*Yamaka-pāṭṭihāriya*). The commentator started the story with Ven. *Piṇḍola Bhāradvaja* who performed a miracle by flying up in the sky to take the red sandalwood alms bowl as mentioned earlier. All the Buddha’s disciples were willing to show their supernatural abilities. This was to protect the Master from being undervalued by the Six heretical Teachers, namely: - *Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambala, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Velaṭṭhiputta, and Nigaṇṭha Nāthaputta*. The six Noble disciples who possessed of magical power volunteered to perform miracles in different manners instead of the Master.¹⁸ They are: - (1) An *anāgāmi* female lay disciple named *Gharaṇī* intended to perform a miracle reported to the Teacher “I will convert the great earth which lies enclosed within the circle of the world into water, and then I will dive into the water like a water-bird. . .”, etc., (2) *Cūlla Anāthapiṇḍika* reported “I will assume a form like that of *Mahā Brahmā*, twelve leagues in size. . .”, etc., (3) A certain seven-year-old novice named *Cīrā*, who had attained Fourfold Knowledge, said “I will fetch hither Mount *Sineru*, and the range of mountains that encircles the earth, and *Himālaya* likewise. . .”, etc., (4) A certain seven-year-old *khīnāsava* novice named Cunda, who had attained Fourfold Knowledge, said “I will take upon my shoulder a great rose-apple tree, which is the emblem of the Land of the Rose-apple, and I will wave it back and forth. . .”, etc., (5) Nun *Uppalavannā* reported her intention “Before the eyes of a multitude extended twelve leagues on all sides, I will surround myself with a retinue thirty-six leagues round about, and I will take the form of a Universal Monarch. . .”, etc., and (6) The Elder *Moggallāna* the Great reported “I will put Mount *Sineru*, king of mountains, between my teeth and crunch it like a kidney-bean. . .”, etc. At the end, the Teacher said the burden which he bears is like the burden of none other in which none other is able to bear. He must be the sole performer thus. The Teacher forbade his disciples not to perform miracles on his behalf like this. He performed miracles himself eventually.

When referring to Ven. *Mahā Moggallāna* Thera, one of the Eighty Great Disciples (*asītimahāsāvaka*), and foremost (*etadagga*) as a monk with great superhuman power. At once, he performed a miracle to subdue the dragon-king in the firehouse of *Aggidatta*, house-priest of the King of Kosala. “So the Elder spit smoke himself. Puffs of smoke arose from the bodies of both and ascended to the World of *Brahmā*.”

¹⁶ “*Paṭhamamahāsaṅgītivāṇṇanā*” - Sp 12-13.

¹⁷ N.A. Jayawikrama, *Inception of Discipline and the Vinaya Nidāna*, (London: PTS by Luzac & Company Ltd., 1962), 10-11.

¹⁸ Dhpa 209-213; Look in Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 13 to 26, 42-45.

The puffs of smoke gave the Elder no trouble at all, but troubled the dragon-king sorely.”¹⁹ The Great *Nāga* was eventually defeated by the superhuman power of the Elder. From the story, it can be considered that one powerful display can suppress the one who has conceit or wrong views. Even in the final moments of the life of *Mahā Moggallāna* Thera, he was pursued and killed by a group of thieves hired by the heretics. When a group of thieves followed him to *Kālasilā*, they surrounded his residence. “The Elder, knowing that his place of abode was surrounded, slipped out through the keyhole and escaped. The thieves, not seeing the Elder that day, came back the following day and again surrounded the Elder’s place of abode. But the Elder knew, and so he broke through the circular peak of the house and soared away into the air.”²⁰ He eventually rose into the air, performed all manner of miracles just as did the Elder *Sāriputta* on the day when he passed into *Nibbāna*. And then went to Black Rock Forest (*kālasilā-padesa*) and passed into *Nibbāna*.

Apart from human beings, even *Sakkadevarāja*, the king of the *Tāvatiṃsa* Gods, often performed *iddhipāṭihāriya* as normal.

Sakka ordered the deity Wind-cloud, ‘Uproot the pavilion of the heretics with your winds’. . . ordered the Sun-deity, ‘Check the course of the sun’s disk and scorch them.’ . . . ordered Wind-cloud, ‘Wind-cloud, set the chariot of the wind in motion and go forth.’”²¹

Even in the story of Sukha novice, Sakka forced the moon and the sun to facilitate the practice of him. “Then Sakka gave orders to the moon and the sun, saying, Stop the movement of your cars and stand still”²² Even the moon and the sun did so. With well-focused mind the novice developed Spiritual Insight and attained the Three Paths and Fruits eventually. From the natural system point of view, all-natural things are ruled by gods, namely the gods of wind, god of the sun, god of water, etc. These powerful gods have the power to manipulate or command natural phenomena to be as their wish as in the abovementioned case of *Sakkadevarāja*.

The last example is a performance of superhuman power that the Buddha condemned. It is the case of Ven. Devadatta, a royal monk who has attained the supernatural powers of ordinary people. He showed his superpowers to build *Ajātasattu Rājakumāra* faith to worship him. He departed from Kosambi to *Rājagaha* by flying through the sky.

“*Devadatta* transformed himself into a youth, put four snakes on his hands and feet, put one snake about his neck, coiled one snake about his head as a cushion-rest, placed one snake on one shoulder, and thus arrayed in a girdle of snakes, he descended from the air and seated himself in *Ajātasattu*’s lap”²³

¹⁹ Dhp-a 244; Ibid., 65.

²⁰ Dhp-a 65-66; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 3 to 12, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 304

²¹ Dhp-a 208; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 13 to 26, 42.

²² Dhp-a 97; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 3 to 12, 325.

²³ Dhp-a 139; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 1 and 2, 235.

According to this case, it is a manifestation of one's own superhuman-power for the benefit of wealth and worship. If so, would a monk who performs a miracle in such a case violate the Monastic Rules? How?

WHY ARE MONKS NOT ALLOWED TO PERFORM SUPERNATURAL POWERS?

Before answering this question, one must first know whether the Buddha has performed miracles or not. It seems that super-knowledge, or *apīññā*, is almost always with him in everyday routine. Except for the performance of superhuman power that he will choose to do on certain occasions, times and places depending on the context, with exact intentions every time, such as to reduce other people's egoism, to suppress the arrogance, or to open the Eye of Truth (*dhammacakkhu*) of the listeners, etc.

Much evidence in the Buddhist scriptures indicate events of the Buddha with his Supernatural Faculties. One of the *abhiññās* that is often seen from the Buddha is Supernatural Audition. At one time, elder Tissa who had a jealous mind in his fine quality robe intending to use it the next day. Unable to digest all the food he had eaten, the Elder died during the night and was reborn as a louse in that very robe. When the robe belonged to the Congregation of Monks, the louse screamed and ran this way and that screaming "These monks are plundering my property!". "The Teacher, even as he sat in the Perfumed Chamber, heard that sound by Supernatural Audition [*dibbasota*], and said to Elder *Ānanda*, 'Ānanda, tell them to lay aside *Tissa*'s robe for seven days.'²⁴ With such special ability that the Buddha was able to provide timely assistance to the Elder. In another case in the *Dhammapada* Commentary, there is a story of a hunter whose anger was aroused against the Teacher for he thought that the Buddha was the man who set free the animals he caught. He attempted to kill the Buddha, drawing his bow aiming to the Buddha:

The Teacher permitted him to draw his bow, but did not permit him to shoot. So there the hunter stood, unable to shoot the arrow and unable to take it from the string, wearied to exhaustion, with saliva streaming from his mouth, as if his ribs had been shattered.²⁵

This means that if only the Buddha wishes to use superpowers through direct knowledge, he is able to use them easily to a broad extent. This knowledge is to be functioned through the special sixth sense, namely the mind, in addition to the eyes-contact, ears-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact and body-contact. The divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) in looking at long-short past actions of human beings and sentient beings in other planes of Existence for instance.

One of the most important and extraordinary superhuman power performances of marvel of the Buddha was the time when he performed the twin miracle (*yamakapāṭihāriya*) according to every single Buddha's tradition. The twin miracle that he performed was too wonderful to describe; for example, the Exalted One performed the Twin Miracle amongst his numerous companies in all directions.

²⁴ Dhp-a 342; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 13 to 26, 121.

²⁵ Dhp-a 26; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 3 to 12, 278.

This miracle, therefore, the Teacher performed as he walked up and down the jeweled walk. By means of a trance induced by meditation on the element of fire, flames of fire proceeded from the upper part of his body; and by means of a trance induced by meditation on the element of water, a stream of water proceeded from the lower part of his body. . . Six-colored [*chabbañña-raṅsi*] were they: blue and yellow and red and white and pink and brilliant.²⁶

If we consider it closely, it may be compared with the superhuman powers and special abilities of the protagonists in the most spectacular and imaginative superhero movies. Yet, on many occasions, the Buddha showed his mighty. On one occasion, for the first time after his enlightenment, he went back to Kapilavastu. He performed a miracle in order to break the overweening pride of his kinsfolk. When he reached at *Nigrodhārāma*.

He created by supernatural power a cloister of jewels in mid-air, and in this cloister walked up and down preaching the Law. The hearts of his kinsfolk were straightway endowed with faith, and beginning with the great king Suddhodana, all did reverence to him. Thereupon there fell upon the assemblage of kinsfolk a shower of rain.²⁷

As a result, the king's conceit (*khattiyamāna*) of the relatives was destroyed. On another occasion, the Buddha went to stop the war over the *Rohiṇī* River between his cousins in *Kapilavastu* and *Koliya*. "Accordingly he flew through the air quite alone to the spot where his kinsmen were gathered together, and seated himself cross-legged in the air over the middle of the river *Rohiṇī*."²⁸ The Buddha settles a quarrel by reminding both sides of the inappropriateness of kings killing each other only by fighting for water. The event then finally resolved and the problems did not escalate further than that.

To the question "Is it wrong for monks to perform miracles?" The answer is that the Buddha laid down the Discipline to not allow monks to perform any miracles. If anyone does, he violates the *dukkāṭa* is a minor offence (*lahukāpatti*) caused by an unskillful action. As the case was raised earlier, at once when the Teacher knew that Ven. *Piṇḍolabhāradvāja* flew up into the air and took the bowl made of red sandalwood, and the multitude are applauding him. "Thereupon the Teacher rebuked the Elder, caused him to break that bowl to pieces. . . And he laid down a precept forbidding the exercise of the supernatural powers for such purposes in the future"²⁹ The purpose of the Thera was to get a valuable alms bowl and to show off the magical powers that he had within. This rebuke was a reminder that the Buddha did not encourage his disciples to perform any miracles caused by materialism.

There may be some doubters asking "If the disciples were forbidden to perform miracles, why did the Buddha himself perform it? For example, just as the time when the Buddha performed the Twin Miracles. Is it appropriate? King *Bimbisāra* also asked this question before. To this issue, the Buddha replied, "Great king, I have not laid down a precept for myself; the precept was intended to apply only to my disciples. . . and while I may overstep the precepts which I have myself laid down, others may not so

²⁶ Dhp-a 214-215; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary), Translation of Books 13 to 26*, 46.

²⁷ Dhp-a 163; Ibid., 2-3.

²⁸ Dhp-a 255; Ibid., 71.

²⁹ Dhp-a 203; Ibid., 38.

do; therefore, great king, I shall perform a miracle.”³⁰ The Buddha’s reply was very clear about his service as a Buddha (*Buddhatthacariyā*).

Yet, in many cases, the Buddha gave his disciples permission to perform their superpowers. It was to destroy the opportunity of the heretics who have gathered themselves together for the purpose of oppressing the Buddha. For example, in the case of Santati the king’s minister. After his attaining Arahatsip, said the Buddha:

“Well then, rehearse to us all the meritorious deed you did in a previous state of existence. Do not, however, rehearse it to us standing on the ground, but rehearse it to us poised in the air at a height of seven palm-trees above the ground.”³¹

However, it’s purpose is in order to suppress the wrong view people and to be generous to the right view people who gathered there. Or in the case of Ven. *Mahā Moggallāna* Thera and Ven. *Ānanda Thera* who performed their superpowers on the last day of their lives, as well as many other cases. The reason why the Buddha allowed some of his great disciples to perform their superhuman powers before passing away was according to tradition. It was for the final remembrance of the Teacher (*Buddhānusati*) and the group of monks (*Saṅghānusati*) at the last moment of their lives.

At this point, it may be said that any superhuman power display caused by certain reason such as money, materialism or remuneration, self-reputation, false faith, worship, or to exaggerate claims of virtue that does not exist in oneself was the Buddha’s main purpose in laying down the disciplines regarding the prohibition of performing superhuman power marvel. This is an important reason that makes Buddhism completely different from other religions, cults or dogmatism that practice these magics through the form of pseudo-sciences (*tiracchānavijjā*) or black magic. Yet there are some exceptions to the prohibition against performing supernatural powers when it is done with a good intention, such as preaching Dhamma, reducing other people’s egoism, suppressing the arrogance, destroying wrong view of a wrong view person, receiving direct permission from the Teacher, and performing miracles before the death of some great disciples.

CONCLUSION

The marvel as superhuman power (*Iddhi-pāṭihāriya*) is a natural phenomenon that is supernatural by showing the power that comes from the mental training of human beings, resulting in super-knowledges (*apiññā*), making a performer becomes a superhuman. While the performing of the superhuman power (*Iddhividhi*) is closely related to two teachings in Buddhism, namely: the three types of miracles (*pāṭihāriya*), and the six types of supernatural knowledge (*apiññā*). All of these teachings commonly addressed “the performing of superhuman power” in the first place.

³⁰ Dhp-a 204-205; Ibid., 38-39.

³¹ Dhp-a 81; Eugene Watson Burlingame (trans.), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*, Translation of Books 3 to 12, 314.

As in our real life, there have been many miracles in the history of mankind. Most of them come from human being's intelligence in various fields such as architecture, engineering and science. We use these technological advancements to invent inventions, buildings, and various facilities in life. These "material marvels" come from "spiritual marvel". When humans develop their mind to a certain level, physical objects can be managed and controlled by the mind. People with such potential are referred to as superhumans or "superheroes" on the principle that "superhuman power is a feature of a superhero". As the disciples who performed miracles, most of them were done with good intentions are to preach Dhamma, to reduce other people's egoism, to suppress the arrogance, to destroy wrong view of a wrong view person, or receiving direct permission from the Teacher, to practice recollection towards the Teacher (*Buddhānusati*), and to practice recollection towards Buddhist monks (*saṅghānussati*). As for the performance of superhuman powers caused by materialism, money or remuneration, self-reputation, false faith, worship, or to exaggerate claims of virtue that does not exist in oneself, the Buddha rebuked and then laid down an offense and the violating monks must be punished by the rule. These are key answers to the questions posed earlier.

It is worth noting that the cases of supernormal powers that have been presented here do not cover all such events that actually happened but just picking up some important cases to analyze. In fact, there are many more cases that appear in important Buddhist scriptures that are waiting for further study and analysis. Finally, we must be aware of the attitude of the Buddha, who did not admire and promote the marvel as a superhuman power performance (*iddhi-pāṭihāriya*) at all but instead the marvel as giving instruction (*anusāsani-pāṭihāriya*) that the Teacher truly praised and supported. Eventually the implementation of those teachings truly is a good intention in preaching Dhamma to humanity in order to destroy one's conceit and wrong view in order for the paths, fruits, and ultimate goal achievement is *Nibbāna* as a marvel.

ABBREVIATIONS

DN	<i>Dīgha-Nikāya</i> , Ee: vol. (I - III) page and line.
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i> , Ee (1st and 2nd ed.): verse (1 - 423).
Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā</i> , Ee: vol. (I - IV), page and line.
Ee	Romanized Pali Canon, Pali Text Society (PTS) (European Edition)
Paṭis	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i> , Ee: vol. (I - II), page and line.
PTS	Pali Text Society
Sp	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i> , Ee ad Vin III, IV, I: page (1 - 1154) and line.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

Norman, K. R. (trans.). *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)*. Oxford: PTS, 1997.

Walshe, Maurice (trans.). *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya)*. London: Wisdom Publications, 1987.

Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu (trans.). *The Path of Discrimination (Paṭisambhidāmagga)*. London: PTS, 1982.

Pali Language

Davids, T.W. Rhys and J. Estlin Carpenter (eds.). *The Dīgha Nikāya*. Vol.I. London: PTS, 1975.

Hinuber, O. von and K.R. Norman (eds.). *Dhammapada*. Oxford: PTS, 1995.

Taylor, Arnold C. *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. Vol. II. London: PTS, 1979.

B. Secondary Sources

Burlingame, Eugene Watson (trans.). *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*. Translation of Books 1 and 2. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921.

_____. *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*. Translation of Books 3 to 12. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921.

_____. *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary)*. Translation of Books 13 to 26. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921.

Davids, T.W. Rhys and William Stede (eds.). *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*. Part V (P-Ph.). 8 Vols. Set. London: PTS, 1923.

Jayawikrama, N.A. (trans.). *Inception of Discipline and the Vinaya Nidāna*. London: PTS by Luzac & Company Ltd., 1962.

Mahatthanadull, Sanu; Phramaha Nantakorn Piyabhani; Orachorn Kraichakr; and Sarita Mahatthanadull. "A Conceptual Model of Bi-Dimensional Development for Happiness Access by Biofeedback Process." *Journal of MCU Peace Studies* 8, (March-April 2020): 377-387.

Pali Language

De Silva, Lily (ed.). *The Dīgha-Nikāya Atthakathātikā Līnatthavaṇṇanā*, Vol.III. London: PTS by Luzac & Company LTD., 1970.

H.C. Norman (ed.), *The Commentary on the Dhammapada*, Vol.1 Part I, London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1970.

Norman, H. C. (ed.). *The Commentary on the Dhammapada*. Vol. III. London: Luzac & Company, LTD., 1970.

Stede, W. (ed.). *The Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dīgha-Nikāya*, Part III. (Suttas 21-34). London: PTS by Luzac & Company LTD., 1971.

Takakusu, J. and M Nagai. *Samantapāsādikā: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Vinaya Piṭaka*. Vol. I. London: PTS, 1975.