The Discourse on Dhyanas (for the Destruction of the Influxes)
The “Dependent on Dhyāna” Discourse
A 9.36/4:422-426
Theme: The dhyanas lead to spiritual liberation
Translated by Piya Tan ©2010

1. The influxes (āsava)

1.1. Meanings. The word āsava is the Pali cognate of either of these two ancient Indian words:

1.1.1. Skt āsava (ts), fermented spirit;¹ with cpds such as gul’āsava, “spirit from fermented sugar” (VvA 73,14); pupph’āsava, “spirit from fermented flowers” (SA 3:303,10); phal’āsava, “spirit from fermented fruit” (SA 3:303,11); madhv’āsava, “spirit from fermented honey” (VvA 73,11); surāsava, “strong spirit” (SA 3:303,12).

1.1.2. Skt āsrava, “affliction, pain”; BHS āśrava, āsrava, “evil (influence), depravity, misery.” In Pali, it can be taken as (a) a figurative usage of the first meaning (“fermented spirit”), because both are kept for a long time;⁵ (b) Meaning “pus, discharge from a sore.”⁶ (c) Technical term (tt) for the obstacle(s) to the attainment of arhathood. This last meaning is the usage in the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta (A 9.36) and in many other suttas.

The word āsava comes from āsavati, “it flows towards or inwards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints”), corruptions, cankers, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated.⁷

1.2. Usages. As “mental influxes,” the oldest list is probably the set of 3 influxes—of sense-desire (kām’āsava), of existence (bhav’āsava), and of ignorance (avijjâsava)—which are essentially the same as the 3 graspings (ti,gaha) of craving (ta,hā), conceit (ma,na) and views (di,hi), on account of which arise, resp, the notions “this is mine,” “this I am,” and “this is my self”), such as in the Vatthûpama Sutta (M 7).⁸

The Abhidhamma and Commentaries give a list of 4 influxes, which is also found in the Nikāyas, that is, the influxes of (1) sense-desire (kām’āsava), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (bhav’āsava), (3) views (di,hi’āsava), (4) ignorance (avijj’āsava).⁹ These 4 are also known as “floods” (ogha) and “yokes” (yoga).¹⁰

The (Nibbhdhika) Pariyāya Sutta (A 6.63), besides listing the three well known influxes, also gives a list of 5 influxes, according to which rebirth they lead to (gamaniya) (that is, the hells, the animal womb, the ghost realm, the human world, or the deva world).¹¹

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² Etym of āsava: MA 1:61,16 f = AA 2:183,1 f = ItA 1:114,4 f = Mohv 95.7 = DhsA 18.12 f. Usages: V 5:223-11; D 2:84.5; M 1:55.8; S 5:232.7 410.22; Sn 535; Thī 76; AA 3:167.22.
⁴ For translators’ refs, see CPD: āsava.
⁵ D 33.1.10(20)/3:216.9; M 9.70/1:55.10; 121.11/3:108.18; MA 1:86.10, 3:41.25 (ad M 1:361.24); A 3.58/1:-165.16, 6.63/4:314.11; S 38.8/4:256.4 = 45.163/5:56.15 = 47.50/189.29; Vbh §94/384.13.
⁶ M 7.18/1.38 = SD 28.12.
⁷ D 16.1.12/2.82, 16.2.4/2.91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937/373 f.
⁸ V 3:5.27 f; D 16.1.12/2.81,26 = 84.5 & passim, 33.1.11(31)/3:230.10 f; MA 1:62.6 f (ad M 1:6, 22, quoting S 4:256.4); SA 2:65.1 f; AA 2:355 (ad A 1:241.24), 3:79.1 (ad A 2:38.28), 3:321.24 (ad A 3:245.15), 3:395.20 (ad A 3:388.1); ThAA 1:202.23, 214.26; Vbh 373.34 f; Dhs 1:448; Kyv 515.2; Abhs 32.6; Mohv 97.8; Vism 7.59/211.1, 22.56/683.34.
⁹ Atthi bhikkhave āsavā niraya,gamaniyā, atthi āsavā tiracchāna,yoni,gamaniyā, atthi āsavā pitti,visaya,gamaniyā, atthi āsavā manussa,loka,gamaniyā,atthi āsavā deva,loka,gamaniyā, A 6.63.10/3:414.16.

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The (Cha) Āsava Sutta (A 6.58) lists seven ways of abandoning (pahātabba) the influxes, that is, by restraint (saṁvara), by reflective usage (paṭisevanā), by endurance (adhivāsanā), by avoidance (parivajjana), by removal (vinodana), and by cultivation (bhīvanā). This is the same list as the Sabbhiāsava Sutta (M 2) [see following].

The Sábbhiāsava Sutta (M 2) lists seven ways of abandoning the influxes, the same as those listed in the (Cha) Āsava Sutta (A 6.58), with “abandoning by cultivation” (dassana pahātabbaāsava) as the first. As āsava is an important term, most Buddhist encyclopaedias and dictionaries give detailed analyses of it, and they should be consulted.11

2 The progressive abodes (anupubba vihāra)

2.1 The nine progressive abodes. The (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta structures itself on the model of the nine progressive abodes (anupubba vihāra), that is,12

- the 4 form dhyanas (rūpa jhāna),
- the 4 formless attainments (ariḍa samāpatti),
- the cessation of perception and feeling (saṁjhāna nirodha).

They are profound states of meditative progression, each state more peaceful than the previous one, culminating in the cessation of perception and feeling, attainable only by non-returners or arhats. As such, they can be said to be the meditative stages to non-return and arhathood. As they are nine profound meditative states, they are sometimes loosely called “the 9 dhyanas” or the nine attainments (saṁsaṁy bodily). Properly speaking, only the first four form dhyanas are called jhāna, while the higher four formless bases are called saṁsāpa (attainment). The four formless attainments actually belong to the 4th form dhyanas, since they all possess the same two factors (that is, equanimity and samadhi).14

2.2 Form and formless states. While the first three dhyanas take different forms of bliss as their object, and the fourth dhāyana takes a sublime state of pure peace as its object, each of the formless attainments takes a pure mental object. These objects are known as “mind-bases” (āyatana), so called because the mind in these attainments rests on them. These profoundly still mind-bases are progressively more refined and more empty than the form dhyanas.

The formless attainments are so called because in all the four of them, form (rūpa) is perceived as being both infinite and empty, immeasurable and undefined. It is form that is, our ideas of shape and colour, that limits space, but in the formless attainments, we transcend any such perception. Hence, they are called “formless” (ariḍa).

2.3 Progressive cessation stilling and tranquillization. As each of the nine stages, except for the last, depends on the cessation of the previous one, they are also known as “progressive cessation” (anupubba nirodha), as laid out in the Anupubba Nirodha Sutta (A 9.31).15 The “cessation” (nirodha) here occurs by way of emerging from the meditative and reviewing a key feature of that state as being “gross” (lojārika), and so we progress onto the following stage.

The Rahogata Sutta (S 36.11) first introduces the nine progressive abodes by way of cessation (nirodha), followed by the same set of abodes by way of “stilling” (vīpasama), and then by way of five stages of “tranquillization” (passaddhi). This last set of abodes comprises only the four form dhyanas and the attainment of cessation.16 Obviously, this tranquilization passage shows that cessation can be attained through the form dhyanas but without any of the formless attainments.

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10 M 2/1:6-12 = SD 30.3.
11 See āsava in BDit, PED, CPD (etym & usage), DPL, Ency Bsm. See also Sábbhiāsava S (M 2/1:6-12) @ SD 30.3, esp for the connection btw āsava and saṁvījana (fetters).
12 D 33.3.2(5)/3:265, 34.2.2(1)/3:290; A 9.33/4:410-414; see Tevijja S (D 13) @ SD 1.8 Intro (2.2) (3) n.
13 See Santatara S (It 3.3.4/61 f) = SD 24.20.
14 On the formless attainments, see The body in Buddhism = SD 29.6a (5.2.3).
15 A 9.31/4:409 = D 33.3.2(6)/3:266 = SD 33.6 (5.2.3).
16 The 5-stage tranquilization (passaddhi) is listed in (Vedanā) Ānanda S 1 (S 36.15/4:119-221) = (Vedanā) Sambahula Bhikkhū (S 36.17/4:222).
Calm as the basis for insight

3.1 Meditative strategies for awakening. The (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta (A 9.36) describes the attainment of arahathood or non-return through meditation that applies calm (samatha) as a basis for insight (vipassanā). This is one of the four approaches or strategies to meditation as laid out by Ānanda in the (Yiganaddha) Paṭipadā Sutta (A 4.170), makes a very clear reference to the various vehicles for mental cultivation for the attaining of arahathood, as follows:

(1) Insight preceded by calm.17 When the path arises in him, he pursues it, so that the mental fetters18 are abandoned and the latent tendencies19 are destroyed.
(2) Calm preceded by insight.20 When the path arises in him, he pursues it, so that the mental fetters are abandoned and the latent tendencies are destroyed.
(3) Calm and insight coupled together.21 When the path arises in him, he pursues it, so that the mental fetters are abandoned and the latent tendencies are destroyed.
(4) A monk’s mind is seized by agitation caused by higher states of mind,22 but there comes a time when his mind becomes internally steadied, composed, unified and concentrated. Then the

17 Samatha,pubb’āvagamā nippanāno. This refers to the calm practitioner (samatha,vinīka), i.e. one who first cultivates access concentration (upacāra,samīdhi), the dhyānas or the formless attainments and then takes up insight (vipassanā) meditation. “Access concentration” is the concentration gained just before attaining dhyāna. See MA 1:112.
18 Mental fetters, see §7 n. above.
19 Latent tendencies (anusayi), alt. trs “underlying tendencies,” “latent dispositions.” There are 7 of them: (1) sensual desire (kāma-rāga); (2) aversion (parigha); (3) wrong view (diśīhi); (4) spiritual doubt (vīcikkhāva); (5) conceit (mīna); (6) desire for existence (bhava,rāga); (7) ignorance (avijjā). They are also listed in Sangīti S (D 33.2:3-12)/3:254, 282), Cha,chedaka S (M 148.28/3:285), Anusaya S (A 7.11 & 12/4:8 f) and Vibhavāga (Vbh 383). They are deeply embedded in one’s mind through past habitual acts and can only be uprooted on attaining the path. Wrong view and spiritual doubt are eliminated at stream-winning; sensual desire and aversion, at non-return; conceit, attachment to existence and ignorance, only at arahathood. See Abhs 7.9: “The latent dispositions (anusayi) are defilements which ‘lie along with’ (anusenti) the mental process to which they belong, rising to the surface as obsessions whenever they meet with suitable conditions. The term ‘latent dispositions’ highlights the fact that the defilements are liable to arise so long as they have not been eradicated by the supramundane paths. Though all defilements are, in a sense,anusayas, the seven mentioned here are the most prominent.” (Abhs:B 268). See also Abhs:SR 172. The first 3 latent tendencies are mentioned in Sall’atthena S (36.6/4:207-210) in SD 5.5 or “Early Buddhist Sutras” (2004 ch 2). See Madhu,piṇḍika S (M 18) =SD 16.3 Introd (5).
20 Vipassanā,pubb’āvagamānippanāna. Here the practitioner first enters access concentration (upacāra,samīdhi) or full concentration (appanā,samīdhi), and then takes up insight by regarding those states as impermanent, etc (MA 1:108 f). “This refers to one who by his nature first attains to insight and then, based on insight, produces concentration” (AA 3:143), ie the insight practitioner (vipassanā,vinīka). See MA 1:112.
21 Samatha, vipassanā, yuganaddha. Here, one enters the first dhyāna and emerging from it, one applies insight to that experience, i.e. one sees the 5 aggregates within the dhyāna (form, feeling, perceptions, formations, consciousness) as impermanent, subject to suffering and not self. Then one enters the 2nd dhyāna, emerges and applies insight to it. One applies the twofold reflection to the other dhyānas as well in the same manner until the path of stream-entry, or higher, is realized.
22 Dhamma,uddhacca, viggahita, minasavi, hoti. Comy says that the “agitation” (uddhacca) here refers to a reaction of the 10 “impurities of insight” (vipassanā nupakkīle) when they are wrongly taken as indicating path-attainment (AA 3:143). That is, he is distracted by any of these 10 impurities: evil conduct of body, speech and mind; sensual thoughts, thoughts of ill will, violent thoughts; thoughts about relatives, home country and reputation; thoughts about higher mental states (dhamma, vītakka) (Jata,ni,pa S, A 3.100.1-101:253-256). The Visuddhimagga uses dhamma, vītakka (“thoughts about higher states”) to refer to the same 10 impurities (Vism 20.105-128/633-638). Bodhi: “It is plausible, however, that the “agitation caused by higher states of mind” is mental distress brought on by eagerness to instantaneous enlightenment experience” (A:NB 294 n69). See the story of Bhikṣu Dāruṇiyā in Bhiya S (U 1.10/6-9) & also the story of Anuruddha in (Anuruddha Upakkīle) S (M 128/3:152-162).
A path arises in him, and while he does so, the fetters are abandoned and the latent tendencies are destroyed. (A 4.170/2:156 f) = SD 41.5

It should be noted that the teacher here is not the Buddha, but Ānanda, and the locale of teachings in not the heart of the central Gangetic plain (in such places as Sāvatthī) but near Kosambī, in the far west of the Buddhist holy land. Clearly, this teaching was given quite late in the Buddha’s life, or even soon after his parinirvana.23

3.2 CALM AS THE BASIS FOR INSIGHT. The (Āsava-k, khaya) Jhāna Sutta (A 9.36) describes the attainment of arhathood or non-return through meditation that applies calm as a basis for insight. More technically, this is described as “insight preceded by calm” (samatha, pubbāvīgamāvipassāna). Here, “calm” (samatha) refers to dhyana (jhāna), and “insight” (vipassanā) is the contemplation of our experiences as being impermanent, suffering and not self (especially as the first—which the Commentary calls “great insight-wisdom” (balavā, vipassanā, paññā, AA 4:195).

Here, the Buddha explains that the meditator first cultivates insight using dhyana as the basis for contemplation. The meditator analyzes his experiences in terms of the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness).24 Then he goes on to regard the aggregates in eleven ways, that is, “as impermanent; as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.”25

These eleven qualities are an elaboration of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and not-self, as follows:

- Impermanence: impermanent, breaking up;
- Suffering: suffering, disease, tumour, barb, calamity, affliction;

Apparently, we need not take these eleven expressions, most of which are figurative, do not refer to separate acts, but rather are examples of how to contemplate the three characteristics.

3.3 TURNING TO THE DEATH-FREE ELEMENT. The high-point of the meditation instructions of the Sutta is formulated thus:

He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime;26 that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispersion, cessation, nirvana.”27

23 The fact that the vocative, āvuso, is used, suggests that it refers to a time when the Buddha is still living. See the Buddha’s injunction in Mahāparinibbāna S (D 16), “Ananda, now the monks address one another as ‘Āvuso’ [friend], but after my passing, they should not address one another so. Ananda, the more junior monks should be addressed by the more senior monks by name, or by clan [gotra] or as ‘Āvuso.’ The more senior monks should be addressed by the more junior monks as ‘Bhante’ [Bhante] or as ‘Āyasmi’ [Venerable].” (D 16.6.2/2:154) = SD 9. However, this Sutta was compiled sometime after the Buddha’s passing. Furthermore, it is a composite work, and we are not certain when this particular section was inserted. The point is that the monastics prob were still using āvuso even after the Buddha’s time. However, it is likely that Ananda, on receiving such an instruction, would have faithfully executed it. The fact that the vocative, āvuso, is used, suggests that it refers to a time when the Buddha is still living. See the Buddha’s injunction in Mahāparinibbāna S (D 16), “Ananda, now the monks address one another as ‘Āvuso’ [friend], but after my passing, they should not address one another so. Ananda, the more junior monks should be addressed by the more senior monks by name, or by clan [gotra] or as ‘Āvuso.’ The more senior monks should be addressed by the more junior monks as ‘Bhante’ [Bhante] or as ‘Āyasmi’ [Venerable].” (D 16.6.2/2:154) = SD 9. See (Yuganaddha) Paṭipadā S (A 4.170/2:156 f) = SD 41.5.

24 On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

25 Aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato: see §2b n.

26 Paññā, as at M 2:235, 263; A 4:423, 5:8, 110, 320, 322, 354 ff.
The Commentary explains that “he turns his mind away” (cittaṁ paṭivāpeti) from the five aggregates included in the dhyāna, which he has seen to be marked with the three characteristics (of impermanence, suffering, not-self) (MA 3:146). He goes on to regard the dhyāna or attainment, thus: “This is peaceful… nirvāṇa.”

This shift in mental focus marks the transition from a high level of insight to the supramundane path (that is, the path of sainthood). In other words, when the meditator has fully seen the true nature of the five aggregates, his mind turn away from all conditioned phenomena and focusses on nirvāṇa, “the death-free element” (amata dhītu). As this is the only real escape (nissaraṇa) there is from conditioned existence, he attains liberation.

He thus attains arhathood. However, if some subtle clinging to that experience, or an enjoyment of it, still remains, he attains non-return, and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (Suddhāvīsa), attaining liberation in due course.28

3.4 THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. The Sutta gives the same parable of the archer seven times, without elaborating on it, thus:

Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body.29 However, any meditator will be able to relate to how an archer aims his arrow at his target. He needs a great sense of mental focus. The archer first assumes a proper and comfortable posture, holding his bow and arrow in a relaxed yet firm manner. He does not look at the whole target, but only the bull’s eye, the heart of his target. He feels his target so that he is one with the target, as it were.30 Then he gently lets go of the arrow.

Similarly, when we meditate, we first assume a proper and relaxed posture. Then, we fully focus the mind on the meditation object (the breath, lovingkindness, etc), at first, maybe, with some mental verbalization (like counting the breaths, or using short helpful prompts, “May I be well!”). When we feel more focussed, we “feel” the meditation object, that is, let neither words nor thoughts intrude. We know the breath is coming in, we know the breath is going out, or we feel the joy of lovingkindness or unconditional acceptance. And we keep doing this until we forget, as it were, everything else, especially our body. When the mind is fully focussed, we feel a profound sense of inner joy.

I have not come across anyone else explaining the rest of the parable, so I will hazard some pertinent comments, thus:

- “The straw man” (tiṇa, purisa, rūpaka) clearly refers to our being nothing more than a “hollow man,” empty events comprising form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. When we realize this, we become its opposite, that is, the “true individual” (sappurisa)31
- “A pile of clay” (mattikā, puñja): we are a pile of five aggregates, of which form (rūpa), our physical structure, is made up of the four elements (earth, water, fire and wind).32
“A master of the long-shot” (dūre, pātī). Here the arrow is free from the archer’s hands, and flies its way on its own momentum towards its target some distance away. This is when the meditator has overcome all unwholesome mental states and hindrances, and the mental fetters are abandoned. Alternatively, on a higher level, he has attained dhyāna, and remains there as long as necessary, until he fully masters it before proceeding further.  

Who hits the target” (akkhaṇa, vedhī), that is, the meditator attains a dhyāna or an attainment. Alternatively, on a higher level, he gains arahathood or non-return.

“Piercing even a large body” (mahato ca kāyassa padāletā). There is an allusion (see eg the Satippatūtthāna Sutta, M 10) to the state of a meditator who has attained a “great mind,” mahaggata citta, that is, made great or “exalted” because all the mental hindrances have been overcome, thus attaining a dhyāna or a formless attainment. In such meditations as the four divine abodes (including loving-kindness cultivation) and the “totality” (kasiṇa) meditations, this refers to the ability to pervade a certain area with our meditation object, be this the area around the root of a tree, the area of a whole village, or even the area of the whole earth (M 3:146). In other words, we have “broken the barrier,” so that the mind is boundless. This is also the natural state of the awakened mind.

3.5 THE LAST TWO STAGES. While we may use insight knowledge to examine the form dhyānas and the first three formless attainments, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (n’eva, saññā, nā-saññāyañata) and the cessation of perception and feeling (saññā, vedayita, nirodha) are simply too subtle for any kind of examination, as they are without any observable characteristics. As such, these two states cannot be directly be taken as mental objects for investigation with insight.

The cessation of perception and feeling, fully described in the Visuddhi, magga, an anomalous spiritual state, is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight, where all mental states temporarily shut down. On emerging from cessation, the meditator experiences the fruit of his respective attainment, that is, there arises the fruition of non-return (anigami, phala) in the non-returner, and the fruition of arahathood (arahatta, phala) in the arhat.

However, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is a very effective purifier of the mind. Emerging from this state, the meditator reviews that even this state is “gross” (oḷarika), and progresses on to liberation. The attainment of cessation, however, is too subtle for any kind of investigation, as it what we might today be described as a “suspended state of animation.” Moreover, only arhats and non-returners are capable of attaining and dwelling in this state.

3.6 THE CLOSING ADMONITION. This closing admonition of the (Āsava-kkhaya) Jhāna Sutta [§17] should not be misinterpreted as that a meditator should declare his meditative attainments, but rather to inspire and guide others with the possibility of attaining such states. No Vinaya-abiding monk would declare his attainments. The Pārajika rule 4 clearly prohibits a monk from falsely claiming to any superhuman state (uttari,-manussa dhamma), which includes meditative attainments, under the pain of falling or “defeat” from

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monkhood itself.\textsuperscript{42} Even if the claim is true, according to P\textsuperscript{ā}cittiya rule 8, but made to one who is unordained, that is, a novice or lay person, the monk commits an offence entailing expiation.\textsuperscript{43}

Similarly, judicious lay meditators and teachers, too, would not make any claim of high attainments, whether they are true or not. If the claim is false, they break the fourth precept. If the claim is true, it might arouse conceit (m\textsuperscript{ā}na) in their followers. The purpose of such instructions is to discourage guru worship, and to encourage each and every student to endeavour to attain such meditative states for themselves, or at least experience some inner stillness.

4 Related suttas

The topic of how dhyana can expedite awakening and salvation is dealt with in numerous discourses. Here we shall list a few key discourses that should be studied together with the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta. The (Nānā,karaṇa) Puggala Sutta 2 (A 4.124) relates how the practice of the form dhyanas\textsuperscript{44} can lead to non-return.\textsuperscript{45} The Sutta describes how, after attaining to any of the four form dhyanas, we could progress on to attain non-return by contemplating the five aggregates in the eleven reflections mentioned in the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta, that is, “as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.”\textsuperscript{46}

The Mahā Māluṅkya\textsuperscript{,}puṭṭa Sutta (M 64), on the other hand, lists only the first seven of the progressive above, omitting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception and the attainment of cessation. It also has the eleven reflections on the three characteristics [3.2].\textsuperscript{47}

The Anupada Sutta (M 111), which is Sāriputta\textapos;s stage-by-stage personal account of his own awakening, lists all the stages of the progressive abodes, as in the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta, that is, the four form dhyanas, the four formless attainments and the attainment of cessation.\textsuperscript{48} However, it omits the eleven reflections.

A similar method of liberation by applying insight to a dhyana or attainment as the (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna Sutta is found in the Āṭṭhaka\textsuperscript{,}nagara Sutta (M 52). There, however, the “deliverance of mind” through the four divine abodes (brahma\textsuperscript{,}vihāra) (M 52.4-11) replaces the usual form dhyanas, followed by the 3 formless attainments (M 52.12-14).\textsuperscript{49}
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Summary

1. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the first dhyana, I say.
2. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the second dhyana, I say.
3. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the third dhyana, I say.
4. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the fourth dhyana, I say.
5. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless space, I say.
6. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless consciousness, I say.
7. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of nothingness, I say.
8. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, I say.
9. The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on cessation of perception and feeling, I say.

THE 9 PROGRESSIVE ABODES
(nava anupubba vihāra)

Overcoming the 5 lower fetters via dhyana

2a (1) THE 1ST DHYANA. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the first dhyana, I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Here, monks, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, attains and dwells in the first dhyana, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and happiness born of solitude.

2b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness, he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

50 Āsava-k,khaya, i.e the attainment of arhathood (arahatta) (AA 4:195).
51 See (Āsava-k,khaya) Jhāna S (A 9.36/4:422-426) = SD 33.8 Intro (2).
52 The 10 fetters (dasa samyogana) are: (1) self-identity view (sakkayadippa), (2) spiritual doubt (vicikiccha), (3) attachment to rituals and vows (sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa), (4) sensual lust (kāma-rāga), (5) aversion (pa,igha), (6) greed for form existence (rāpa,rāga), (7) greed for formless existence (arahata-rāga), (8) conceit (māna), (9) restless (or remorse) (uddhacca), (10) ignorance (avijjā) (S 5:61; A 5:13; Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (kāma,rāga) is replaced by illwill (vyādha). The first 5 are the lower fetters (orambhiya), and the rest, the higher fetters (ud-dambhiya). The abandonment of the lower 5 fetters makes one a non-returner (opapātika or anāgāmi) (see Anā-pānasati S, M 118.10 = 7.13).
53 A similar method of liberation by applying insight to a dhyana or attainment as seen here is found in a number of other suttas: see Intro (4).
54 “Born of solitude,” viveka,ja; i.e it is the result of abandoning the hindrances: on the 3 kinds of solitude, see The body in Buddhism, SD 29.6a (1.5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (cittassa ek’aggatā) and “concentration” (samādi) here, see The Layman and dhyana = SD 8.5.
55 These are the 5 aggregates (pakka-k, khandha): see SD 17.
56 “Impermanent…not self,” aniccato dukkhato rogato gandato sallato aghato abhādhato parato palakoto suññato anattato: as at M 1:435, 500; A 4:422 f; cf A 2:128; Miln 418. Comy says that the marks of suffering are six-fold (dukkhato rogato gandato sallato aghato abhādhato), the impermanent twofold (aniccato palakato), the not-self...
2c He turns his mind away from these states, thus: “This is peaceful, this is sublime; that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispersion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

2d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (opapātika) (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

3a The Parable of the Archer. Suppose, bhikkhus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body, even so, bhikkhus, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, attains and dwells in the first dhyana, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and happiness born of solitude.

3b Refrain. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness, he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

3c He turns his mind away from these states. Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus: “This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispersion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

threefold (parato suññato anattato) (MA 3:146). This refrain (and the rest) shows the attainment of calm (samatha), leading to the cultivation of insight (vipassanā), or “insight preceded by calm” (samatha, pubhāgamā vipassanā), i.e., on emerging from dhyana, one contemplates on it as an object of insight, reflecting it as having arisen through conditions, esp volition: see Mahā Māluṅkyā, putta S (M 649-16/1:435-437) = SD 21.10; see also Aṭṭhaka, nagara S (M 52.4/1:350) = SD 41.2, where Comy says that this is samatha, pubhāgamā vipassanā; see (Yuganaddha) Patipāda S (A 4.170/2:157) = SD 41.5. See Intro (3.2).

“The parable of the archer.” Be Ce Ee WT pativāpeti, Se patiṭhāpeti throughout. Pativāpeti der from Vṛt, “to shear or sow” (M 1:443; DhSA 407). Other vī: patipādeti, paṭilāpeti (MA), paṭicāreti, paṭivāreti (SHB, but inconsistent). See A.H 4:225 n, where EM Hare suggests reading paṭinivattetvā, “to cause to turn away, to avert,” see McDonell’s Skt Dict, sv Vṛt. See also SD which gives paṭinivartayati, sv parti-ni-Vṛt. One reason for this bewilderment list of variant readings is that the recipients or redactors (after the Buddha’s time) were themselves not sure of the appropriate action at this point in the meditation. This problem, unfortunately, is even more rampant today.

Comy: “He turns his mind away” (cittan paṭivāpetvi) from the 5 aggregates included in the dhyana, which he has seen to be marked with the 3 characteristics (of impermanence, suffering, not-self) (MA 3:146). He goes on to regard the dhyana or attainment, thus: “This is peaceful…nirvana” (see below). See Intro (3.3).

So tehi dhammehi cittan paṭivāpetvā [paṭinivattetvā] amatāyā dhātuyā cittan upasamāhārati.

Paṇītām, as at M 2:235, 263; A 4:423, 5:8, 110, 320, 322, 354 ff.

Etam santiṃ etam paṇithām yad idam sabha, saṅkhāra, samatho sabbapadhi, paṭinissaggo tanha-k-khayo virā giro nirdho nibbānan ti, as at M 1:136. See also V 1:5; D 2:36; S 1:136; A 5:8.

“Desire…delight in dharmas” (dhamma, rāga dhamma, nandī, as at Aṭṭhaka, nagara S (M 52.4/1:350)), where Comy explains that these two terms refer to the desire and lust (chanda-rāga), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). Dhamma here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

Mahā Māluṅkyā, putta S (M 65) (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (anupubba vihāra) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21-10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, issāso vissāso antevāsi vā tiṇa, purisa, rūpake vā matickā, puṇje vā yoggaya karitvā, so apareṇa samayena dūre, pāti ca hiti akkhana, vedhi ca mahato ca kāyaṣsa padāletā.
3d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dhammas, that delight in dhammas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world. [424]

3e "The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the first dhyana, I say," thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

4a (2) THE 2ND DHYANA. "The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the second dhyana, I say," thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Here, bhikshus, a monk, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, attains and dwells in the second dhyana, free from initial application and sustained application, with zest and happiness born of concentration. 66

4b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

4c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

"This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana." 67

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

4d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dhammas, that delight in dhammas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world. 68

5a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikshus, a monk, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, attains and dwells in the second dhyana, free from initial application and sustained application, with zest and happiness born of concentration.

5b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

5c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

65 “Desire...delight in dhammas” (dhamma,rāga dhamma,nandī), as at Aṭṭhaka,nagara S (M 52.4/1:350), where Comy explains that these 2 terms refer to the desire and lust (chanda-rāga), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). Dhamma here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

66 On the repetition of this quality, see also Pariyāyena Nippariyāyena = SD 68.2.

67 The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (ariya,tuḥiy,bhava) because within it initial application and sustained application (thinking and discussion, vitakka,vicīra) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf. S 4:293 where vitakka and vicīra are called verbal formation (vac,sa,vi,kh,ra), the mental factors responsible for speech. In Ariya,parīyāsana S (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate). See Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S (S 40.2/4:263 f) = SD 24.12.

68 Mahā Mālunkey,putta S (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (anupubba vihāra) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

69 On the repetition of this quality, see also Pariyāyena Nippariyāyena = SD 68.2.
“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

5d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

5e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the second dhyāna, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

6a (3) THE 3RD DHYĀNA. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the third dhyāna, I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Here, bhikshus, a monk, with the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in the third dhyāna, of which the noble ones declare, “Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.” He permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body with the happiness free from zest.

6b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

6c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

6d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

7a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikshus, a monk, with the fading away of zest, dwells equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in the third dhyāna, of which the noble ones declare, “Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.” He permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body with the happiness free from zest.

7b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

7c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

7d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

70 Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (anupubba vihāra) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).
7e. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikkhus, is dependent on the third dhyāna, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

8a (4) THE 4th DHYĀNA. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikkhus, is dependent on the fourth dhyāna, I say,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Here, bhikkhus, a monk, with the abandoning of joy and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure—he attains and dwells in the fourth dhyāna, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

8b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

8c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

8d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.71

9a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikkhus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikkhus, a monk, with the abandoning of joy and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure—attains and dwells in the fourth dhyāna, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

9b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

9c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

9d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world. [425]

9e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikkhus, is dependent on the fourth dhyāna, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

Overcoming the 5 lower fetters via the attainments72

10a (5) THE BASE OF INFINITE SPACE. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikkhus, is dependent on the base of boundless space,” thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

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71 Mahā Māluṅkyā, putta S (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (anupubba vihāra) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

72 On the formless attainments, see Paṭhama Jhāna Paṭipa S (S 40.1) = SD 24.11 Intro (5).

73 Ākāsāṇaṇiṭṭṭhāyata (BHSD ākāsāṇiṭṭṭhāyata), resolved as ākāsa + anañca + āyatana. The word ākāsa means “sky, space,” but here clearly means space. The word anañca (BHSD anantiya), “infinity, boundlessness,” is
Here, bhikshus, a monk, a monk, having completely transcended perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, through non-attention to perceptions of diversity, contemplating, “Infinite space,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite space.

10b Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien (as being other), as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

10c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispersion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

10d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

10e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless space, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

11a THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body;

even so, bhikshus, a monk, having completely transcended perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, through non-attention to perceptions of diversity, contemplating, “Infinite space,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite space.

11b REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien (as being other), as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

11c He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispersion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

11d If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

11e “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless space, I say,” thus it is said. In what connection is this said? [426]
Here, bhikshus, a monk, a monk, having completely transcended the base of infinite space, contemplating, “Infinite consciousness,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite consciousness.\(^{77}\)

\(^{12b}\) Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness, he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.\(^{78}\)

\(^{12c}\) He turns his mind away from these states. Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus: “This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.\(^{12d}\) If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.\(^{78}\)

\(^{13a}\) THE PARABLE OF THE ARCHER. Suppose, bhikshus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body, even so, bhikshus, a monk, having completely transcended the base of infinite space, contemplating, “Infinite consciousness,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite consciousness.\(^{13b}\) REFRAIN. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness, he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.\(^{13c}\) He turns his mind away from these states. Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus: “This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.\(^{13d}\) If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas,\(^{80}\) then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.\(^{13e}\) “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of boundless space, I say,” thus it is said. It is in this connection that this is said.

\(^{14a}\) (7) THE BASE OF NOTHINGNESS. “The destruction of the influxes, bhikshus, is dependent on the base of nothingness,” I say, thus it is said. And in what connection is this said? \(^{[426]}\)

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\(^{77}\) Sabbaso ākāsānān’ āyatanaṁ samatikkama anantaṁ viññānaṁ ti viññānaṁcāyatanaṁ upasampajja viharati.

\(^{78}\) Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S (M 65) closes this and each of the other 8 progressive abidings (anupubba vihāra) with this line: “This is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters” (M 64.9 etc) = SD 21.10. On the non-returner, see SD 21.10 Intro (3).

\(^{79}\) So tehi dhammehi cittam paṭivāpetvā amatāya dhātuyā cittaṁ upasaṁharati.

\(^{80}\) “Desire…delight in dharmas” (dhamma,rāga dhamma,nandī), as at Aṭṭhaka,nagara S (M 52/4/1:350), where Comy explains that these 2 terms refer to the desire and lust (chanda-rāga), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). Dhamma here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

\(^{81}\) Ākiñcaññ’ āyatana = ākiñcana [ākiñcana] + āyatana; ākiñcana is der fr a + skic (Dhältup 42: maddane; cf MA 2:354,29; SA 3:99,8).
Here, bhikkhus, a monk, having completely transcended the base of infinite consciousness, contemplating, “There is nothing,” attains and dwells in the base of nothingness.  

Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

The parable of the archer. Suppose, bhikkhus, an archer or his apprentice might practise on a straw man, or a pile of clay, so that in time he becomes a master of the long-shot, who hits his target, piercing even a large body,

even so, bhikkhus, a monk, having completely transcended the base of infinite consciousness, contemplating, “There is nothing,” attains and dwells in the base of nothingness.

Refrain. Whatever states that are therein, by way of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.

He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the death-free element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

“The destruction of the influxes, bhikkhus, is dependent on the base of nothingness, I say,” thus it is said. And it was in this connection that this was said.

Thus, indeed, bhikkhus, to the extent there is attainment with perception, to that extent there is the penetration into true knowledge.

(8) The base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception & cessation. Bhikkhus, as regards these two bases—the base of the attainment neither-perception-nor-non-perception and the cessation of perception and feeling—those monks who are meditators, skilled in the attainments and
skilled in emerging from the attainments, and having attained them and having emerged from them, should rightly point them out [declare them], I say.87

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100601; 100604; 100614

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87 Yāni ca kho imāni, bhikkhave, nissāya dve āyatanāni—n’eva, saññā, nāsaññā āyatana, samāpatti ca saññā,-vedayita, nirodho ca, jhāyī h’ete, bhikkhave, samāpatti, kusalehi samāpatti, vuṭṭhāna, kusalehi samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhahiti- tvā sammā akkhātabbānī ti vadāmi ti. See Intro (3.6).