

## 4

**(Duka) Paṭisallāna Sutta**

The (Twos) Discourse on Solitude | It 45

Theme: The benefits of a balanced practice

Translated &amp; annotated by Piya Tan ©2013

**1 *Paṭisallāna***

**1.1 The (Duka) Paṭisallāna Sutta** is a discourse on “solitude” (*paṭisallāna*), here meaning quiet personal time, especially of that spent in mindfulness or meditation practice. The word *paṭisallāna*<sup>1</sup> (BHS *pratisamlayana = pratisamlāna*)<sup>2</sup> is derived from *paṭi* + *saṃ* + √LĪ, “to stick ‘together’ (in oneness).” [2.1.1]

Here, the prefix *paṭi* means “counter, against, reverse” + *saṃ* (a strengthening infix, similar to “com-“ or “con-“ in English, suggesting integration or togetherness) + √LĪ, a root with the basic sense “to stick.”<sup>3</sup> Hence, a literal gloss of it would be “focusing our efforts in **countering** clinging (to things).”

**1.2 The Paramattha Dīpanī 2**, Dhammapāla’s commentary on the Iti,vuttaka, explains *paṭisallāna* in some detail, thus:

In the eighth [sutta of the second chapter in the Book of Twos], *paṭisallāna,rāmā* means delighting in solitude, turning away from clinging (*sallānam*),<sup>4</sup> from such and such beings or formations; dwelling alone, resorting to one side (a remote end), bodily solitude (physical separation). *Paṭisallāna,rāmā* means that they delight, find pleasure in solitude.

It can also be read as *paṭisallān’ārāma* (“enjoying solitude”). It is said to be “enjoying solitude” on account of their enjoying (*ārāma*) whatever is to be enjoyed (*ārāmatabbata*) in terms of solitude.

*Viharatha* means “You must dwell in such a manner.”

*Paṭisallāna,ratā* means they find pleasure in (*ratā*), are fond of (*niratā*), fully enjoy (*sammuditā*) solitude. This is indicated by the extent to which they are devoted to wakefulness, which is a sign of his physical withdrawal (to a suitable place). Since here it cannot occur without these states—that is, for the purposes of devotion of wakefulness, restraint on account of moral virtue, guarding of the sense-doors, moderation in food, and mindfulness and clear comprehension—it should be understood as being said of just this case. [2.1] (ItA 1:168)<sup>5</sup>

**2 Sutta commentary****2.1 OVERVIEW**

**2.1.1 *Paṭisallāna* as meditation.** The (Duka) Paṭisallāna Sutta opens [§2] with the Buddha’s admonishing us to “dwell enjoying solitude, delighting in solitude,” and to cultivate mental stillness. There should be a balance between calm and insight. This is accomplished by resorting to places and conditions that conduce to inner stillness.

<sup>1</sup> D 3:252; M 1:526; S 1:77, 3:15, 4:80, 144, 5:12, 398, 414; A 2:51, 176, 3:86 f, 116 f, 195, 4:15, 36, 88, 5:166; Sn 69; J 2:77; Vbh 244, 252; Miln 138, 412.

<sup>2</sup> Divy 196, 291.

<sup>3</sup> For meaning of roots (Skt), see eg W D Whitney, *The Roots, Verb-forms and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language*, 1885.

<sup>4</sup> “Clinging” (*sallāna*, which I take as der from *saṃ* + √LĪ, to cling): this is conjectural as the word is not found in any dictionary.

<sup>5</sup> *Aṭṭhame paṭisallāna,rāmā’ti tehi tehi satta,sañkhārehi paṭinivattitvā sallānam paṭisallānam, eka,vihāro ekam-anta,sevitā, kāya,viveko’ti attho. Tam paṭisallānam ramanti rocantīti paṭisallāna,rāmā. Paṭisallānārāmā’tipi pāṭho. Yathā vuttam paṭisallānam āramittabbato āramo etesan’ti paṭisallān’ārāmā. Viharathāti evam,bhūtā hutvā viharathāti attho. Paṭisallāne ratā niratā sammuditāti paṭisallāna,ratā. Ettāvata jāgariyānuyogo, tassa nimitta,bhūtā vūpakaṭṭha,kāyatā ca dassitā. Jāgariyānuyogo, sīla,samvaro, indriyesu gutta,dvāratā, bhojane mattaññutā, sati,sam-pajaññanti imehi dhammehi vinā na vattatīti te’pi idha atthato vuttā evāti veditabbā. (ItA 1:168)*

The Sutta’s key word is **solitude** (*paṭisallāna*) [1.1], which serves as a synecdoche for meditation (it refers to meditation as a whole) [1.2], that is, preparing the practitioner, seeking a suitable place, using the proper methods, and gaining the wholesome fruits. The Iti,vuttaka Commentary mentions some specific teachings connected with meditation, that is,

devotion to wakefulness, <sup>6</sup>	<i>jāgariyānuyoga</i>	
restraint on account of moral virtue, <sup>7</sup>	<i>sīla,samvara</i>	
guarding of the sense-doors, <sup>8</sup>	<i>indriyesu gutta,dvāratā</i>	
moderation in food, <sup>9</sup> and	<i>bhojane mattaññūtā</i>	
mindfulness and clear comprehension. <sup>10</sup>	<i>sati,sampajañña</i>	(ItA 1:168)

All these qualities are described in the **Mahā Assa,pura Sutta** (M 39) as being the qualities that define a **recluse** (*samaṇa*). “Restraint on account of moral virtue” is mentioned first as a recluse’s *fourfold purity*, while the rest follow, bringing about the abandoning of the mental hindrances, so that dhyana is attained.<sup>11</sup>

**2.1.2 “Frequenting empty places.”** Another key phrase we need to examine here is *brūhetā suññā-gāraṇaṃ*, “frequenting empty places” or “frequenter of empty places”<sup>12</sup> [§3]. While the European, Sinhala, and Siamese read *brūhetā*, the Burmese text reads *brūhetāra*, but the sense is the same.<sup>13</sup> It is the agent noun of the verb *brūheti*, “to cause to grow, increase (comy: “who is cultivated by, or on account of empty places)” (causative) *vaḍḍhetāro*, ItA 1:168); hence: to promote, develop, practise, put or devote oneself to; to look after, foster, enjoy. It is practically a synonym of *sevati*, “associates with, enjoys.”<sup>14</sup>

The commentary to the **(Duka) Paṭisallāna Sutta** explains that in the phrase *brūhetāro suññāgārānaṃ*, the agent noun *brūhetā* or *brūhetāra* means someone who “cultivates by means of empty places” (*vaḍḍhetāro suññāgārānaṃ*, ItA 1:168). In other words, such places are remote, quiet, beautiful and suitable for mental cultivation. The place is “remote,” away from the crowd and people so that we can meditate or live undisturbed and undistracted by them. “Quiet” means peaceful enough so as not to be distracted by noise. However, natural sounds—such as those of nature (rain, thunder, wind) and cries of animals—as a rule helps us to meditate. A “beautiful” place quickly brings a sense of peace to us, so that this is conducive to our practice. “Suitable” means that it is not too far away from water (such as a stream), shelter (in case of a storm) and sources of almsfood, and so on.

More vital than *external* environment is our internal environment, our mind. We need to have some level of peace, or able to positively respond to the wholesomeness of solitude and a solitary place.<sup>15</sup> In order to live in a remote place, especially a lonely forest, we need to have moral virtue so that fear does not arise and distract us.<sup>16</sup> And we need to be generally healthy to be able to live alone. In other words, we need to develop in body, too. [2.1.4]

**2.1.3 Preparing for meditation.** The (Duka) Paṭisallāna Sutta is one of the Buddha’s numerous calls to us to personally devote ourselves to mental stillness: *ajjhataṃ ceto,samatham anuyuttā* [§3]. The

<sup>6</sup> See **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39, 10/1:273 f), SD 10.13; also SD 37.7 (2.1.3).

<sup>7</sup> See **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,4-7/1:272 f), SD 10.13; also SD 30.3 (2.0.1).

<sup>8</sup> See **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,8/1:273), SD 10.13; also SD 17.13 (3.1).

<sup>9</sup> See **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,9/1:273), SD 10.13; also SD 37.13 (1.2).

<sup>10</sup> See **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,11/1:274), SD 10.13. On *sati*, see SD 13.1 (3.1c). On *sampajañña* or *sampajāna*, see SD 13.1 (3.6).

<sup>11</sup> M 39,4-11/1:272-274 @ SD 10.13.

<sup>12</sup> On “empty places” (*suññāgāra*), see SD 48.9 (9.1.4).

<sup>13</sup> M 1:33,12 = 213,17 = It 39,11 *brūhetā suññāgārānaṃ*, 15 *brūhetānaṃ suññāgārānaṃ*.

<sup>14</sup> *Brūheti*: S 1:198 *saddhamā* ~; Sn 124 *kammāni* ~; Dh 285 imp *brūhaya* = *vaḍḍhaya*, DhA 3:429; U 72,16 *navamā bandhanaṃ brūhayanti* (pl); J 1:289,11 *vivekaṃ brūhento*; Miln 313 *saddena sotamā* ~; PvA 168 (as a gloss) *ābhāvetvāti vaḍḍhetvā brūhetvā*, “having cultivated.”

<sup>15</sup> Cf **Subhā Thī** (Thī 366-399), SD 20.7, where the drunken youth intent on seducing the nun Subhā sees nature as a source of sensuality.

<sup>16</sup> See **Bhaya,bherava S** (M 4/1:16-24), SD 44.3, which instructs on how to overcome fear during solitary practice.

word *ajjhata* in this phrase has two senses—“inwardly” and “oneself”—and can thus be rendered as “inwardly intent on mental calm” or “intent on our own mental stillness” (ItA 1:168). This means that meditation is entirely a *personal* effort (like breathing) and it has to do with cultivating total peace within ourselves (which is true peace).

A true follower of the Buddha or anyone intent on true happiness should be one “not neglecting meditation” (*anirākata-j,jhāna*) [§3]. This is an interesting phrase with an uncommon word, *a-nirākata*, derived from *na* (“not”) + *nirākata* (or *niraṅkata*; Skt *nirākṛta*), “repudiated, rejected, removed,”<sup>17</sup> which is the past participle of *niraṅkaroti* (or *nirākaroṭi*, ts), meaning “to separate oneself, repudiate, reject, remove; neglect, disregard; throw away, ruin, destroy.”<sup>18</sup>

Now we come to the Sutta’s phrase *a-nirākata-j,jhāna* (mfn), which means “one who is uninterrupted or undisturbed in his meditation”<sup>19</sup> [3]. In this connection, there are 2 senses to this important phrase, namely,

- (1) the practitioner does *not neglect* his practice: he puts in every effort he can;
- (2) on account of his efforts, his practice does *not decline*, that is, he progresses in his meditation.<sup>20</sup>

By (1) is meant that he cultivates his body, that is, being devoted to wakefulness, being restrained on account of moral virtue, guarded in his sense-doors, moderate in food, and keeping mindfulness and clear comprehension (ItA 1:168) [2.1.1]. Such a person is said to be bodily cultivated (*bhāvita,kāya*).<sup>21</sup> [2.1.4]

#### **2.1.4 Samatha and vipassana**

2.1.4.1 (2) The second sense of *a-nirākata-j,jhāna* is that his practice is a harmonizing of samatha and vipassana [2.1.3]. While the body-cultivation (*kāya,bhāvanā*) can here be regarded as not only the cultivation of **moral virtue**, but doing so with the purpose of stilling the whole apparatus of the body and speech, so as to bring about mental concentration, that is, inner stillness (*samatha*).

2.1.4.2 When the body is cultivated, it means that all the 5 mental hindrances<sup>22</sup> have been overcome. In this connection, moral virtue or proper conduct refers to proper conduct of body and speech which is said to be “unbroken, untorn, unmixed, spotless, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, bringing about concentration.”<sup>23</sup> All this means that the mind readily moves into the blissful still of dhyana.<sup>24</sup> In

<sup>17</sup> *Niraṅkata*, *nirākata* (mfn, & n?): V 5:148,15 *saddhammehi ~o* qu at VA 260,4 Be Se *saddhamā hi ~o*; Ce Ee *saddhammābhi ~o*; ThA 1112 *cittena nīṭa niraye ~ā*, so Ee Se, Be Ce *nirākata*; cf ThA 3:155,3 *hita,sukhato nira-katā hutvā*; J 5:378,8\* *adhammo me ~o*; MA 2:116,6 *tesam ~tta bhinnattā*, so Ce Ee, Be Se *nirākattatā*; It A 1:168 *nīharaṇam vināso vā’ti idaṃ nirākatam nāma* ≈ MA 1:157,7 *idaṃ nirākaraṇam nāma*. Cf *nirākaraṇa* (DPL).

<sup>18</sup> *Niraṅkaroti* (v): Sn 315 *jāti,vādiṃ niraṅkatvā*, so Ce Ee Se, Be *nirākavā*, 326 *thambham niraṅkatvā nivāta,-vutti*: see above; It 83,6\* *nirākare*; ItA 2:94,28; ThA 478 *tato satthā niraṅkatvā paṭisallāna,vuṭṭhito*, so Ce Ee Se, Be *nirākavā*; ThA 200,23 *attanā samāpannam phala,samāpattim apantevā tato vuṭṭhāya*; cf ThA:N (2007) 225, *niraṅkatvā*; ThA 3:191,30; Pv 34.6 *attham dhammam niraṅkatvā*, so Ce Ee, Be *nirakatvā*, Se *nirakatvā*; Pv 3:96 (= *chaddeti pajahati*); PvA 211,20 *chaddetvā pahāya*; VvA 109,22 *micchācāram niraṅkatvā*; J 3:280,4\* = 5:498,19\* *attam niraṅkatva*, so Se mc, Be Ce Ee *niraṅkatvā*, 280,9\* *attānam chaddetvā*, 466,2\* *na katam ca niraṅkatvā*, so Be Ce Se, Ee *nikatvāna*, prob wr, 466,10’ *katam pana nipphāditam jhāna,sukham niraṅkatvā vināsetvā*, 4:302,8’ f *nir-antaram katvā aggim gahetvā paricarati*, 5:252,1’ *yo ca dhammam niraṅkatvā adhammam anuvattati*, 252,6’ *niraṅkatvā’ti atta,bhāvato nīharitvā*; Sadd 509,11.

<sup>19</sup> *A-nirākata-j,jhāna* (mfn): It 39,11 (*ajjhataṃ ceto,samatham anuyuttā ~ā*, etc; = *bahi anīhata-j,jhānā avināsita-j,jhānā vā*, ItA) ≈ M 1:33,10 (*bahi anīhata-j,jhāno avināsita-j,jhāno vā* MA 1:157,6) ≈ 216,31 ≈ A 5:131,14 ≈ Nm 1:375,5.

<sup>20</sup> Masefield in ItA:M 1:416 f mentions only this aspect.

<sup>21</sup> See eg **Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja S** (S 35.127.7/4:111 f), SD 27.6a. This is the first of the 3 cultivations (*bhāvanā*) of the body (*kāya,bhāvanā*), of mind (*citta,bhāvanā*) and of wisdom (*paññā,bhāvanā*) (D 33,1.10(48)/3:219), which is essentially the same as the 3 trainings (*sikkhā*), ie, in moral virtue (*sīla,sikkhā*), in mental concentration (*samādhi,-sikkhā*) and in wisdom (*paññā,sikkhā*): see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (2).

<sup>22</sup> On the 5 mental hindrances, see **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.

<sup>23</sup> “Unbroken, ... giving rise to concentration,” *akhaṇḍehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññūpa-satthehi aparāmaṭṭhehi samādhi,samvattanikehi*: D 16,1.11/2:80, 33,2.2(14)/3:245 = 34,1.7(1)/3:280; M 48,6/1:322, 104,21/2:251; S 55.14,7/5:364, 55.16,4/5:364, 55.26,9/5:382; A 5.32,3/3:36, 5.105,2/3:132, 5.179,7/3:213, 6.10,5/-

short, the term *jhāna* here has the pregnant senses of both “meditation” in general (some level of samadhi) and also may refer to dhyana.

2.1.4.3 At this point, mind-cultivation (*citta,bhāvanā*)<sup>25</sup> or **mental concentration** (that is, meditation) begins in earnest. **Buddhaghosa**, in his commentary on the **Mahā Saccaka Sutta** (M 36), however, curiously takes the “cultivation of the body” (*kāya,bhāvanā*) to mean the “cultivation of insight” (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) and “cultivation of the mind” (*citta,bhāvanā*) to be the “cultivation of calmness” (*samatha bhāvanā*) (MA 2:285).

If we are familiar with early Buddhist meditation, it is natural that bodily cultivation would mean the settling of the physical senses so that we are not distracted by external stimuli. When the physical senses are stilled, we are able to fully direct our attention to our mind. This sort of stillness is certainly *samatha*, as we are enjoying the mind in dhyana, or at least some level of peaceful stillness. Hence, it would be more correct and useful to reverse the commentarial notion.

2.1.4.4 **Dhammapāla**, in his Iti,vuttaka commentary, seems to support Buddhaghosa’s view of *kāya,bhāvanā* = *samatha*, by explaining the key phrase, “accomplished in insight” (*vipassanāya saman-nāgatā*) here as constituting the “sevenfold contemplations” (*satta,vidhā anupassanā*).<sup>26</sup> Since contemplation is a volitional act, this has to be done after emerging from dhyana. If we note and accept this, then our meditation process should be true and smooth.

The sevenfold contemplations listed by Dhammapāla are as follows:

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| (1) the contemplation on impermanence, <sup>27</sup>       | <i>aniccānupassanā</i>                     |
| (2) the contemplation on unsatisfactoriness, <sup>28</sup> | <i>dukkhānupassanā</i>                     |
| (3) the contemplation on non-self, <sup>29</sup>           | <i>anattā’nupassanā</i>                    |
| (4) the contemplation on revulsion, <sup>30</sup>          | <i>nibbidā’nupassanā</i>                   |
| (5) the contemplation on letting go [on dispassion],       | <i>virāgānupassanā</i>                     |
| (6) the contemplation on cessation (of suffering),         | <i>nirodhānupassanā</i>                    |
| (7) the contemplation on relinquishment.                   | <i>paṭinissaggānupassanā</i> <sup>31</sup> |

(ItA 1:168;<sup>32</sup> Vism 20.4/607 = Pm 1:58, Vism 21.11-18/641-643)

The first three contemplations are well known as the perceptions of the 3 characteristics,<sup>33</sup> while the fourth is actually the *result* of such contemplations, that is, when we see and understand the true reality of existence, we are *revulsed* at the impermanence, sufferings and non-self that pervades all conditioned existence. This kind of realization empowers us to *let go* of any craving or clinging to the world. In other words, we become *less dependent* on our physical senses, and begin to work on refining our mind or mental faculties. We go on to know the mind, tame it, and *free* it in due course.

3:286, 6.11,6/3:289, 6.12,5/3:290, 6.15,5/3:313, 6.26,6/3:316, 11.12,6/5:330; Pm 1:43, 44. On the recollection of moral virtue, see *Sīlānussati*, SD 15.11. See also UA 268. For details, see Vism 1.143-161/51-58 & 7.101-106/221 f.

<sup>24</sup> See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

<sup>25</sup> On mind-cultivation (*citta,bhāvanā*), see above (2.1.2) n on *bhāvita,kāya*. For a contrast btw body-cultivation and mind-cultivation, see **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,4-10/1:237-240), SD 49.4.

<sup>26</sup> On *anupassanā*, see SD 13.1 (3.5).

<sup>27</sup> See eg **Araka S** (A 7.70/4:136-139), SD 16.17; see also (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1/3:225), SD 16.7 The perception of impermanence.

<sup>28</sup> See **Mahā Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 13/1:83-89), SD 6.9.

<sup>29</sup> See **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59/3:66-68), SD 1.2; see also **Self & selves**, SD 26.9.

<sup>30</sup> On “revulsion,” see *Nibbidā*, SD 20.1.

<sup>31</sup> On the last 3 items (letting go, cessation and relinquishment), see *Viveka,nissita*, SD 20.4.

<sup>32</sup> Comy here refers to Vism for details.

<sup>33</sup> The 3 characteristics (*ti,lakkhaṇa*), fully “universal characteristics” (*sāmañña,lakkhaṇa*), are, viz, impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). For these characteristics in the “full aggregates formula,” see **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59,12-16/3:67 f), SD 1.2. A shorter version of this is found in **Arahatā S 1** (S 22.76/3:82 f @ SD 26.7) = **Arahatā S 2** (S 22.77/3:84, without verse).

The last three teachings are especially important as they constitute the core of the “dependent on solitude” (*viveka,nissita*) formula. Here “solitude” (*viveka*) refers to the mental and spiritual levels, while the “solitude” (*paṭisallāna*) of our Sutta refers to the more physical, environmental and social aspects of meditation (that is, the preparations and preliminaries).

2.1.4.5 The *viveka,nissita* pericope is one of the most important formulas commonly found in the suttas.<sup>34</sup> It shows the progress from solitude by way of external environment, internal (mental) discipline and their results. The full *viveka,nissita* formula runs thus (with an alternative translation):

...dependent on solitude,<sup>35</sup> dependent on fading away (of lust) [on dispassion],<sup>36</sup> dependent on cessation (of suffering),<sup>37</sup> ripening in letting go (of defilements).<sup>38</sup>

[...based on solitude, on dispassion, on cessation, maturing in release.]

*viveka,nissitaṃ virāga,nissitaṃ nirodha,nissitaṃ vossagga,pariṇāmiṃ.*

(M 118,42/3:88), SD 7.13<sup>39</sup>

**2.1.5 The spirit of true meditation.** The Sutta commentary (ItA 1:168) goes on to quote a line from the **Kim,sīla Sutta** (Sn 2.9), beginning with the words, “putting aside stubbornness, humble in his ways” (Sn 326b), the full verse of which runs thus:

At the right time, he should go before the teacher,	<i>kālena gacche garunaṃ sakāsaṃ</i>
putting aside stubbornness, humble in his ways:	<i>thambhaṃ niraṅkatvā nivāta,vuttī</i>
the meaning, the teaching, restraint, the holy life,	<i>atthaṃ dhammaṃ saññamaṃ brahma,cariyaṃ</i>
he should recall and practise.	<i>anussare c’eva samācare ca</i> (Sn 326)

In this connection, too, for those intent on meditation in quest of inner peace and liberating wisdom, the Buddha declares a similar sentiment in the **Ākaṅkheyya Sutta** (M 6), thus:

Bhikshus, if a monk should wish, “May I become one to attain at will, without trouble, without difficulty, the 4 dhyanas, the higher mind, and dwelling happily here and now,” let him fulfill moral virtue, be inwardly devoted to mental stillness, not neglect meditation, be possessed of insight, and dwell in empty abodes.<sup>40</sup> (M 6,9/1:33), SD 59.1

This famous pericope serves as a useful summary, the essence of which has been discussed so far.

<sup>34</sup> For a detailed study of *viveka,nissita* formula, see Gethin 2001:9, 147, 162-168, 254 & S:B 1891 n7.

<sup>35</sup> Here “solitude” (*viveka*), or seclusion, has a special reference to the overcoming of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇā*). According to **Paṭisambhidā,magga**, there are 5 kinds of “solitude” (*viveka*), ie overcoming of the hindrances: (1) solitude through suppression (*vikkhambhana viveka*); (2) solitude through the substitution of opposite or displacement by opposites (*tad-aṅga viveka*); (3) solitude through cutting off (*samuccheda viveka*); (4) solitude through tranquillization (*paṭipassaddhi viveka*); and (5) solitude through escape (*nissaraṇa viveka*) (Pm 1:27, 2:219-224; Vism 13.12/410, 22.110/693). On the 3 kinds of solitude, see **Viveka,nissita**, SD 20.4 (4.2). See also **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1 (4.2.3).

<sup>36</sup> *Virāga*, also tr as “dispassion.”

<sup>37</sup> *Nirodha*, ie, “non-arising of suffering.”

<sup>38</sup> MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (**vossagga**): “giving up” (*pariccāga*), ie the abandonment of defilements, (*kilesa*), and “entering into” (*pakkhandana*), and it is the way itself (*maggo eva vossagga,pariṇāmi*), culminating in nirvana (MA 1:85 f= SA 1:159 = VbhA 316). **Gethin** notes that this phrase is not unique to the 7 *bojjhaṅgā*, but is also found in connection with the factors of the noble eightfold path, the *indriya* and *bala* (2001:162 f). This formula shows that that each *bojjhaṅga* is to be developed successively “as dependent on solitude, dispassion [fading away] and cessation” (Gethin 2001:166).

<sup>39</sup> For a study, see **Viveka,nissita**, SD 20.4.

<sup>40</sup> *Ākaṅkheyya ce bhikkhave, catunnaṃ jhānānaṃ ābhicetasikānaṃ diṭṭha,dhamma,sukha,vihārānaṃ nikāma,lābhī assa akicchā,lābhī akasīra,lābhī ti, sīlesv’ev’assa paripūra,kārī ajjhataṃ ceto,samatham anuyutto anirākata-j,jhāno vipassanāya samannāgato brūhetā suññ’āgārānaṃ.*

## 2.2 THE TWO POSSIBLE FRUITS

**2.2.1 “Trace of clinging.”** Such practitioners who meditate, harmonizing dhyana with insight [§3], would gain either arhathood or non-return [§4].<sup>41</sup> The (Duka) Paṭisallāna Sutta says that if the meditator still has a “trace of clinging” (*upādi,sesa*), he would become a non-returner (instead of an arhat) [§4]. This “trace” refers to a subtle attachment that prevents the arising of arhathood. However, it is a matter of time before such a person attains arhathood if he is diligent in his efforts.

**The Aṭṭhaka,nāgara Sutta** (M 52) states that the attainment of non-return arises on account of the practitioner’s “desire in dharma” (*dhamma,raga*), that is, some level of subtle attachment to his meditative state, a regard for the teaching, or some wholesome longing.<sup>42</sup> Such a subtle restlessness (*uddhacca*) may arise out of concern for the Dharma and how others could benefit from it. He might still have a thought for rebirth in the form or the formless realms.

Moreover, on account of his high attainment, he might feel that other beings are somehow less fortunate, that is, a subtle sense of conceit or measuring against others. All these in fact, constitute the 5 higher fetters,<sup>43</sup> fully overcome only by the arhat.<sup>44</sup> Ironically, this is seen as a virtue in Mahāyāna Buddhism, where a Bodhisattva is said to be able to “postpone” or forego awakening (an idea foreign to early Buddhism). This notion of hesitation and world-saving poses a huge theological problem of its own, such as what is meant by “saving all beings”?

**2.2.2 Overcoming sensual lust.** Why is it that only the last two path fruitions—non-return and arhathood—are mentioned here? This has to do with how the 10 fetters are broken [2.2.1]. Such discourses as **the Kīṭā,giri Sutta** (M 70) [prec n] tell us that with the destruction of the 5 lower fetters (which includes sensual lust), a practitioner gains non-return, and with the destruction of all the 10 fetters, arhathood. Sensual lust can only be overcome through full mastery of the dhyanas, as evident from such teachings as those given in **the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta** (M 75).

The (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta records the Buddha as saying that he has enjoyed every sensual pleasure as the Bodhisattva. Later, on seeing their true nature, he is able to be free of them, so that he is inwardly still. This is because he has attained divine bliss (through meditation). Using a parable, the Buddha shows how he, like a Tāvatiṃsa devaputra who enjoys divine bliss would not be enticed by any worldly pleasure. In fact, says the Buddha, he has himself attained a wholesome pleasure, that is, the dhyanas and nirvana, which surpass even the divine.<sup>45</sup>

**2.2.3 Enjoying higher pleasures.** When a meditator is able to overcome sensual lust—which can only be fully uprooted through dhyanic meditation—he becomes a non-returner, and if he is able to overcome the 5 higher fetters [2.2.1], he would become an arhat. Either way, both the non-returner and the arhat have uprooted sensual lust, desire for physical pleasures by way of attaining dhyana.

<sup>41</sup> **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,22/2:314,12); **Sati’paṭṭhāna S** (M 10,46/1:62); **Kīṭā,giri S** (M 70,27/1:481); **Aññātara S** (S 46.57/5:129); **Nirodha S** (S 46.76/5:133); **Dve Phalā S** (S 48.65/5:236); **Phalā S 1+2** (S 54.4+5/5:313 f); **Iddhi,pāda S** (A 5.67/3:82); **Sati Supaṭṭhita S** (A 5.122/3:143); **Pabbajjā S** (A 10.59/5:108); **Paṭisallāna S** (It 2.2.8/39,15); **Sikkhānisamsa S** (It 2.2.9/40,12); **Jāgariyo S** (It 2.2.10/41,11); **Dvayatānupassanā S** (Sn pp140,13, 148,13).

<sup>42</sup> M 52,4.5/1:350 + SD 41.2 (2.2). Piṅgiya, on listening to the Buddha, would have become an arhat, but he thinks if only his teacher Bāvāri were present to benefit from the teaching, too. As a result, Piṅgiya attains only non-return (SnA 603 f): see also SD 45.11 (2.2.2.3).

<sup>43</sup> **The 10 fetters** (*dasa samyojana*): (1) self-identity view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma,rāga*), (5) aversion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa,rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa,rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*): see **Kīṭā,giri S** (M 70), SD 11.1 (5.1); (**Sekha**) **Uddesa S** (A 4.85), SD 3.3(2); also S 5:61; A 5:13; Vbh 377.

<sup>44</sup> See SD 45.18 (2.5.5).

<sup>45</sup> M 75,10-12/1:504 f @ SD 31.5. On the Buddha’s enjoying various kinds of higher bliss, see eg **Venāga,pura S** (A 3.63/1:180-185), SD 21.2.

The dhyanas are the space and pleasure of deep meditation, that is, of the 4 form dhyanas,<sup>46</sup> and of each and every one of them, the Buddha declares,

This is called the joy of renunciation, the joy of solitude, the joy of peace, the joy of self-awakening, to be engaged in, to be cultivated, to be developed—I say of this happiness that *it is not to be feared*. (M 66,21/1:454), SD 28.11

The Commentary explains **dhyana**

- as the “joy of renunciation” (*nekkhamma,sukha*)  
because it turns us away from sense-pleasures (*kāmato nikkhanta,sukha*);
- as the “joy of solitude” (*paviveka,sukha*)  
because it is a bliss independent of the crowd and away from defilements;
- as the “joy of peace” (*upasama,sukha*)  
because it is the bliss for the sake of stilling lust, etc; and
- as the “joy of self-awakening” (*sambodha,sukha*)  
because it is a bliss that brings about the path to awakening. (MA 3:171)<sup>47</sup>

The Buddha specifically mentions that this joy or bliss “is not to be feared,” especially where the thinkers and religious of his days think that the body is evil or bad, and that all pleasures are body-based, and as such, they are evil or bad, too. The Buddha however points to a higher form of joy, that of the mind, a joy that is both pleasant and liberating.<sup>48</sup>

### 2.3 THE CLOSING VERSES

**2.3.1 The first verse [§6].** The Buddha closes his admonition [§5] in two verses. The first verse essentially says that mindful meditators—“**the discerning whose hearts are calm | and who are mindful meditators**”—who cultivate insight, would free themselves from sense-pleasures, in other words, overcome the mental hindrances [§6; 2.1.4]. Dhammapāla, in his commentary, says that the meditator’s defilements are here removed by “displacement” or “substitution” (*tad-aṅga*, here, dhyanic bliss displaces the unwholesome mental states) and by “suppression” (*vikkhambhana*, that is, mentally sustaining that wholesome effort) (ItA 1:169).<sup>49</sup> In other words, his latent tendencies (lust, aversion and ignorance) are still there: he is not yet an arhat.

The meditator continues his efforts by keeping up his calm state of mind so that it is clear. Then, directing insight to examine the 3 characteristics of his meditative experiences and of things in general, he goes deeper into the root-conditions for their arising. He maintains this mindfulness in all the 4 postures: standing, walking, sitting and reclining. Thus, he is one of those who “**rightly see things with insight.**”

As his mindfulness deepens and becomes clearer, he is able to reject sense-desires, recalling to mind the Buddha’s various parables illustrating the frivolity of sense-pleasures, such as that on the skeleton and so on.<sup>50</sup> He sees them as either objective sensuality (*vatthu,kāma*) or as subjective sensuality (*kilesa,-kāma*).<sup>51</sup> He sees them as nothing other than the 5 aggregates of clinging (*pañcūpādāna-k,khandha*)—

<sup>46</sup> See **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,77-84/1:73-76), SD 8.10

<sup>47</sup> These 4 joys (*sukha*) also occur as **Yasa S** (A 8.86/4:341-342). See also **Salāyatana S** (M 137,16/3:220), SD 29.5; **Pañcak’aṅga S** (S 36.12-15/4:225 f), SD 30.1. See also SD 31.7 (1.6.2) A pleasure beyond the body.

<sup>48</sup> See **Vedanā @** SD 17.3 (2.2.5).

<sup>49</sup> ItA 1:169; ThaA 1:14 f. These are the first 2 of 3 methods of abandoning defilements; the third is by “eradication” or “uprooting” (*samuccheda*) the latent tendencies themselves. See SD 21.6 (5.2) abandoning the defilements.

<sup>50</sup> *Atthi,kaṅkalūpamā kāmā...* (A 1:169), see **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22/1:130, 131, 132, 133×2), SD 3.13; **Potaliya S** (M 54/1:364), SD 43.8; **Yodh’ajīva S 2** (A 5.76/3:97, 98), SD 69.3; **Aṭṭhi,puñja S** (It 24/17); Nm 1:6, 19; Nc:Be 282; V 2:25, 26, 4:134, 135, 138; cf (**Samsāra**) **Puggala S** (S 15.10/2:185).

<sup>51</sup> These, according to Comy, are the 2 kinds of sensuality (*kāma*): (1) sensuality based on sense-objects (*vatthu,-kāma*) or objective sensuality, ie, the states themselves (as they arise at the sense-doors), while (2) sensuality as mental defilements (*kilesa,kāma*) are the thoughts resulting from them, or a preoccupation with sensual thoughts, ie subjective sensuality (VbhA 74). See SD 38.4 (3.1.2) & SID: kāma 2.

form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness<sup>52</sup>—and that they are all impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self.<sup>53</sup> In this way, he is “**free from regard for sense-pleasures.**”

As he reflects in this manner, he understands with insight in the manner described in such discourses as **the Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha Sutta** (A 3.101), thus:

Bhikshus, before my awakening, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me ... “Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha,somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape (*nissaraṇa*) from the world.” A 3.101/1:258,24-30), SD 14.6

**2.3.2 The second verse [§7].** True meditators are those “**delighting in diligence,**” that is, enjoying their meditation, taking great care to do so, would not fail in their efforts. In fact, they are close to nirvana [§7]. In terms of practice, “diligence” here, according to the Commentary, refers to the cultivating of samatha and vipassana (*samatha,vipassāna,bhāvanā*), and doing so diligently night and day (ItA 1:169).

An important motivation for keeping up such a wholesome practice is that of “**seeing danger in heedlessness,**” that is neglecting a moral and upright life, and cultivating the mind. In this way, we are “**incapable of falling away,**” that is, falling into subhuman states (those of asuras, pretas, animals and hell-beings).<sup>54</sup> When such a wholesome practice and way of life is habitually and properly practised, it is a matter of time before we “**are truly in nirvana’s presence.**”

### 3 Meaning of *jhāna*

**3.1** In the (Duka) Paṭisallāna Sutta, we see the phrase, “not neglecting meditation, accomplished in insight” (*anirākata-j.jhānānaṃ vipassānāya samannāgatānaṃ*) [§3; 2.1.2]. In the suttas, we often see the word *jhāna* used in both its basic Buddhist senses: the general sense of “meditation,” and as “dhyana” or “mental absorption,” such as in this **Eka,dhamma Accharā Saṅghāṭa Sutta** (A 1.20):

If a monk cultivates the first dhyana (*jhāna*) for even the duration of a mere finger-snap, then, bhikshus, he is called a monk who dwells as one whose meditation is not in vain (*aritta-j.jhāna*): a doer of the Teacher’s teaching, a follower of his advice. He does not eat the country’s alms in vain [for nothing].<sup>55</sup> (A 1.20/1:38) = A:B 1.394

**3.2** This passage is actually the first of a series of 191 variations (Gethin 2001:269) or 181 variations (A:B 1.394-574) of the formula, each substituting the reading “cultivates the first dhyana” for a meditation-related subject. These include the other 3 dhyanas, the mental liberation of the 4 divine abodes, the 4 satipatthanas, the 4 right efforts, and various other forms of meditation, that is, the whole of **the Accharā Saṅghāṭa Vagga** (A 1:38-43).<sup>56</sup>

*Jhāna*, as such, has both the senses of any kind of Buddhist meditation as well as the well known sense of deep meditative absorption. We also noted above that “meditation” here covers a whole range of practices related to mind-training, the second of the 3 trainings.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

<sup>53</sup> On the 3 characteristics, see **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59/3:66-68), SD 1.2, esp §§12-21.

<sup>54</sup> As realms, see SD 29.6a (4.1.2) The subhumans and human birth. As psychological states, see SD 36.1 (1.3.3) Momentary beings.

<sup>55</sup> *Accharā,saṅghāṭa,mattam pi ce bhikkhave bhikkhu paṭhamam jhānam bhāveti ayam vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu aritta-j.jhāno viharati satthu sāsana,karo ovāda,paṭikaro amogham raṭṭha,piṇḍam bhuñjati.* Cf *anirākata-j.jhāna*, “not neglecting dhyana”: M 6/1:33,10 @ SD 59.1; It 45/39,11 @ SD 41.4.

<sup>56</sup> See **Accharā Saṅghāṭa Vg** (A 1:38-43 = A:B 1.394-574; A:Se 20:20, 50-55; Thai tr A:MMR 32:106 f, 33:214-219). For the full list, see A 1.20; see also Gethin 2001: 269.

<sup>57</sup> On the 3 trainings, see **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6.

# The Discourse on Solitude

It 45

1 This was spoken by the Blessed One, spoken by the arhat, as heard by me.<sup>58</sup>

## The Buddha's admonition on meditation

2 “Bhikshus, you must dwell enjoying solitude, delighting in solitude, inwardly intent on mental calm,<sup>59</sup> not neglecting meditation,<sup>60</sup> accomplished in insight, frequenting empty places.

*Paṭisallān'ārāmā bhikkhave viharatha  
paṭisallāna, ratā  
ajjhataṃ ceto, samatham anuyuttā  
anirākata-j, jhānā vipassanāya samannāgatā  
brūhetā<sup>61</sup> suññāgārānaṃ*

## The benefits of meditation

3 For those who dwell enjoying solitude, delighting in solitude, inwardly intent on mental calm, not neglecting meditation, accomplished in insight, frequenting empty places,

*Paṭisallān'ārāmānaṃ bhikkhave viharataṃ  
paṭisallāna, ratānaṃ  
ajjhataṃ ceto, samatham anuyuttānaṃ  
anirākata-j, jhānānaṃ vipassanāya samannāgatānaṃ  
brūhetānaṃ suññāgārānaṃ*

4 one of two fruits is expected:<sup>62</sup> either direct knowledge here and now, or, non-return, if there is some trace of clinging.”<sup>63</sup>

*dvinnāṃ phalānaṃ aññataraṃ phalaṃ pāṭikaṅkham:  
diṭṭhe'va dhamme aññā,  
sati vā upādi, sese anāgāmitā'ti.*

## The Buddha's verse of uplift [udana]

5 The Blessed One spoke on this matter. Then he said this:<sup>64</sup>

6 The discerning whose hearts are calm and who are mindful meditators— they rightly [40] see things with insight free from regard for sense-pleasures.

*Ye santa, cittā nipakā  
satimanto ca jhāyino,  
sammā [40] dhammaṃ vipassanti  
kāmesu anapekkhino.*

7 Being those delighting in diligence, seeing danger in heedlessness,

*Appamāda, ratā santā<sup>65</sup>  
pamāde bhaya, dassino,<sup>66</sup>*

<sup>58</sup> *Vuttam h'etaṃ bhagavatā. Vuttam arahatā'ti me sutam.*

<sup>59</sup> This line can be alt tr as “intent on his own mental calm”: Comy glosses “inwardly” (*ajjhataṃ*) as *attano*, “one-self” (ItA 1:168). This and the foll 2 lines also at **Ākaṅkheyya Sutta** (M 6.9/1:33), SD 59.1. See Intro (2.1.2).

<sup>60</sup> Here, “meditation” includes dhyana: on *anirākata-j, jhāna*, see SD 33.1b (4.4.3.2); SD 41.4 (2.1.2).

<sup>61</sup> So Ce Ee Se; Be *brūhetāro*.

<sup>62</sup> This and foll 2 lines are stock: **D 22**, 22/2:315,6; **M 10**, 46/1:63,12, **70**, 1:481,6; **S 46.57**/5:129,29, **46,76**/5:133,-19, **47.36**/5:181,16, **48.65**/5:236,22, **51.25**/5:285,5, **54.4**/5:314,2; **A 5.47**/3:982, **5.122**/3:143,18, **10.59**/5:108,14; **It 45**/39 f, **46**/40, **47**/41; **Sn 3.12**/pp140,13+148,13.

<sup>63</sup> The “trace” (*sesa*) here refers to *uddhacca* [2.2.1]. On the tr of *upādi, sesa*, see SD 45.18 (2.5.2.4).

<sup>64</sup> *Etam attham bhagavā avoca. Tatth'etaṃ iti vuccati.*

<sup>65</sup> *Santā* is omitted in parallel passages: Dh 32a: *appamāda, ratā bhikkhū*; Dh:G 73 *apramdaradu yo khikhu*; Dh:-Patna 22 *apramāda, garu bhikkhū (garu, “heavy, having respect for”); Uv 4.32 apramādarato bhikṣuḥ*. Here *santā* (pl), according to comy means “being” (*samānā*), and also says that it can be read as *satta* (“beings”) or “persons” (*puggala*) (ItA 1:170). However, if we disregard comy, it is possible to render *santā* (pl) as “at peace” (esp where line a of the prec verse also has *santa*, “calm”) as in It:W 144, It:I 141.

<sup>66</sup> Dh 32b: *pamāde bhata, dassī vā*; Dh:G 73 *pramadi bhayadaśima*; Dh:Patna 22 *pramāde bhayadamāsino*; Uv 4.32 *pramāde bhayadarśakaḥ*. Here *dassī (vā) = daśima = damāsino = darśakaḥ* in different languages.

they are incapable of falling away—  
they are truly in nirvana's presence.

*abhabbā parihānāya*  
*nibbānass'eva santike'ti.*

(cf Dh 32)

8 This, too, is a matter spoken by the Blessed One. Thus it was heard by me.<sup>67</sup>

— evaṃ —

121224 130108 130110 130324 130901 141024 150215 161207

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<sup>67</sup> *Ayam pi atthe vutto bhagavatā. Iti me sutan'ti.*