

## SD 30.2

## Mahā Vedalla Sutta

The Discourse on the Greater Catechism | M 43

Theme: Sāriputta on the nature of wisdom and freedom

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006, 2010

### 1 Mahā Koṭṭhita

**1.1 Mahā Koṭṭhita** is one of the 80 great elders,<sup>1</sup> and who ranks foremost among the monks who are masters of the analytic insights (*paṭisambhida-p, patta*)<sup>2</sup> [1.3]. He comes from a very wealthy brahmin family of Sāvattihī, his father being Assalāyana<sup>3</sup> and his mother, Canda, vatī.<sup>4</sup> He is a master of the Vedas and, after hearing the Buddha teaching (AA 1:285) (to his father, says the Apadāna),<sup>5</sup> joins the order and, soon enough, after his meditations, becomes an arhat.

**1.2** In the time of **Padum'uttara Buddha**, (the 16<sup>th</sup> buddha before our Buddha),<sup>6</sup> he was a rich householder, and, hearing the Buddha praise a monk as foremost among those skilled in analytic knowledge, he himself aspired to the same eminence. To this end, he visited the Buddha and his monks and attended to them for 7 days, giving them three robes each at the end of his almsgiving.<sup>7</sup>

#### 1.3 THE 4 ANALYTIC INSIGHTS (*PAṬISAMBHIDĀ*) are those of:<sup>8</sup>

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. meanings,           | attha, paṭisambhidā;     |
| 2. teachings [truths], | dhamma, paṭisambhidā;    |
| 3. language, and       | nirutti, paṭisambhidā;   |
| 4. ready wit.          | paṭibhāṇa, paṭisambhidā. |

Using his **analytic insights**, Mahā Koṭṭhita bases all his questions to the Buddha and his own colleagues. Such a dialogue with Sāriputta is recorded in **the Mahā, vedalla Sutta** (M 43).<sup>9</sup> Owing to the skill showed by him in this Sutta, the Buddha declares him as the foremost among monks skilled in analytic insight.<sup>10</sup>

**1.4** Several instances are given of discussions between Koṭṭhita and other eminent elders, especially Sāriputta. All these discourses are catechetical dialogues (*pucchā vissajjanā*) in which usually Mahā Koṭṭhita questions Sāriputta.<sup>11</sup> C A F Rhys Davids thinks (S:RD 2:79 n1) that these discourses were not so much

<sup>1</sup> PmA 1:6; ThaA 3:205; VbhA 388: see SD 15.10a (7).

<sup>2</sup> A 1.218/1:24; MA 2:337. For details, see (**Samyojana**) **Koṭṭhita S** (S 35.232), SD 28.4 (4); SD 56.15 (1.2.1.5).

<sup>3</sup> He is unlikely to be the Assalāyana of **Assalāyana S** (M 93/2:147-157) who is only 16, and who is also mentioned in a list of eminent brahmin youths (*māṇava*) in SnA 1:372. As such, we know nothing else about Assalāyana, except that he is Mahā Koṭṭhita's father.

<sup>4</sup> Ap 534.23/2:480; qu at ThaA 1:32.

<sup>5</sup> Ap 534.23/2:480; qu at ThaA 1:32.

<sup>6</sup> Padum'uttara is the 13<sup>th</sup> of the 24 Buddhas: see **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14), SD 49.8 (2).

<sup>7</sup> MA 2:336 f; AA 1:285; PmA 1:6; DhSA 388.

<sup>8</sup> SD 28.4 (4); SD 41.6 (2.2); SD 58.1 (5.4.2.13).

<sup>9</sup> M 43/1:292-298 (SD 30.2).

<sup>10</sup> *Etad-aggam sāvakanāṃ mama bhikkhūnaṃ paṭisambhidā, pattānaṃ* (A 1:24); see also Tha 2; ThaA 1:33-34; MA 2:341; AA 1:285; Ap 534.30/2:480; also Avadś 2.195.

<sup>11</sup> For a list of such discourses, see (**Samyojana**) **Koṭṭhita S** (S 35.232), SD 28.4 (2). The term occurs at PvA 2; cf Miln 89 (where unrehearsed questions and answers are meant).

inquiries by Koṭṭhita, but serve as catechetic<sup>12</sup> lessons for the monks. The pre-eminent monks were “playing” at teacher and pupil in order to aid Koṭṭhita to win proficiency as a teacher.

**1.5** In a set of 3 discourses—the **(Anicca) Koṭṭhita Sutta** (S 35.162), the **(Dukkha) Koṭṭhita Sutta** (S 35.163) and the **(Anattā) Koṭṭhita Sutta** (S 35.164)—the Buddha gives Koṭṭhita “sample lessons” on the 3 characteristics of the 6 senses, and their respective sense-objects, consciousnesses, contacts, and feelings.<sup>13</sup>

**1.6 The Kāya,sakkhī Sutta** (A 3.21) records a discussion amongst Savittha, Koṭṭhita and Sāriputta, regarding which of these is the best: the body-witness (*kāya,sakkhī*), one who has personally tasted the truth; the view-attainer (*diṭṭhi-p,patta*), one who has attained right view; or the faith-freed (*saddhā,vimutta*), one freed by faith.<sup>14</sup>

**1.7 The Citta Hatthi,sāriputta Sutta** (A 6.60) records how, once when Mahā Koṭṭhita is conversing with elder monks at Isi,patana, the monk Citta Hatthi,sāriputta constantly and rudely interrupts them. Despite Mahā Koṭṭhita’s protest, Citta’s friends claim that Citta is well qualified to join the discussion. Mahā Koṭṭhita, however, declares that, far from being wise enough, Citta would soon leave the order, which actually happens.<sup>15</sup>

**1.8** Sāriputta evidently has a great regard for Mahā Koṭṭhita; Sāriputta’s Thera,gāthā contains three stanzas in which Sāriputta proclaims Mahā Koṭṭhita’s excellence:

<b>1006</b>	<i>Upasanto uparato manta,bhāṇī<sup>16</sup> anuddhato; dhunāti pāpake dhamme duma,pattaṃ va māluto.</i>	Stilled and quiet, a wise speaker, not arrogant. He shakes off evil states like the wind shakes leaves off a tree.
<b>1007</b>	<i>Upasanto uparato manta,bhāṇī anuddhato; appāsi<sup>17</sup> pāpake dhamme duma,pattaṃ va māluto.</i>	Stilled and quiet, a wise speaker, not arrogant. He has plucked off evil states like the wind plucks leaves off a tree.
<b>1008</b>	<i>Upasanto anāyāso, vipasanno anāvilo; kalyāṇa,sīlo medhāvī dukkhass’anta.karo siyā.</i>	Stilled, trouble-free, clear-minded, undisturbed, beautiful in conduct, wise, He should be an end-maker of suffering.

(Tha 1006-1008; ThaA 3:104)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> “Catechetic” (kætɪˈketɪk, rhymes with “pathetic”) belongs to a family of the most troublesome English words (insidious in more ways than one). I had earlier used non-existent “catechical,” which is easier to pronounce than “catechistical” and the rest (except for artful snobs). The OED gives the shorter, existent form which I chose, so that we are undistracted by language.

<sup>13</sup> S 35.162-164/4:145 f.

<sup>14</sup> A 3.21/1:118-120. On these types of saints, see **Kiṭṭa,giri S** (M 70/1:473-481), SD 11.1 (5.2).

<sup>15</sup> A 6.60/3:392-399.

<sup>16</sup> So Be Ee Se; Ce *matta,bhāṇī* (“speaker in moderation”).

<sup>17</sup> Se *abbahi*.

<sup>18</sup> On further details on Mahā Koṭṭhita, see SD 28.4 (2).

## 2 The Mahā Vedalla Sutta

### 2.1 NAV'ĀṄGA SATTHU,SĀSANA

The Mahā Vedalla Sutta (M 43) belongs to a genre of Buddhist literature known as *vedalla*, which is the last of the traditional ninefold teachings of the Teacher (*nav'āṅga satthu,sāsana*).<sup>19</sup> The 9 divisions (*āṅga*) of the Buddha's teaching, according to genre, are as follows:

<b>sutta</b>	the discourses, ie prose passages; eg Sutta Nipāta prose passages, Niddesa, Vinaya, Vibhaṅga, and texts with "Sutta" in their titles;
<b>geyya</b>	the mixed prose and verse, such as the Sagāthā Vagga of Saṃyutta (S 1), Kasi Bhāra,dvāja Sutta (Sn 1.4);
<b>veyyākaraṇa</b>	the expositions, ie elaboration of brief teachings of the Buddha; <sup>20</sup>
<b>gāthā</b>	the verses, eg Dhammapada, Thera,gāthā, Therī,gāthā, Sutta Nipāta verses;
<b>udāna</b>	the inspired utterances, especially Udāna, also M 1:171, V 1:1 ff, etc;
<b>iti,vuttaka</b>	the sayings, ie the Iti,vuttaka;
<b>jātaka</b>	the birth stories, such as those in Kūṭa,danta Sutta (D 5,10-20), Mahā Sudassana Sutta (D 17), Mahā,govinda Sutta (D 19,29-61), and the Jātaka verses;
<b>abbhuta,dhamma</b>	the marvels, special qualities of disciples; <sup>21</sup> and
<b>vedalla</b>	the answers to questions (catechetical suttas): see below. <sup>22</sup>

As evident from this explanation, these names are not so much titles of discourse, as they are *genres* or classes of texts. This ancient list of genres was apparently already forgotten by the time of Buddhaghosa, who interpreted them in terms of the Buddhist canon of his time,<sup>23</sup> that is, the Tipiṭaka as accepted by the Mahāvihāra, the dominant Buddhist sect or "church" then.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.2 VEDALLA

The term *vedalla* is obscure, probably dialectical. Buddhaghosa says that it refers to teachings delivered "in answer to questions asked through knowledge and joy" (*sabbe pi vedaṇ ca tutthiṇ ca*

<sup>19</sup> Pār 1.3.3= V 3:8; M 22.10a/1:133; A 4.6/2:7, 4.102/2:103, 4.186/2:178, 5.73.6/3:86, 5.155/3:177, 6.51/3:361 f, 7.64.3/4:113; Pug 43; DA 1:24; PvA 22; DhA 26; cf *vedalla,kathā* (A 5.79.4/3:107).

<sup>20</sup> Eg the discourses of Vibhaṅga Vagga (M 131-142) of Majjhima, viz, **Bhadd'eka,ratta S** (M 131/3:187-189), **Ānanda Bhadd'eka,ratta S** (M 132/3:189-191), **Mahā Kaccāna Bhadd'eka,ratta S** (M 133/3:192-199), **Lomasak'aṇḍiya Bhadd'eka,ratta S** (M 134/3:199-203, taught by the Buddha himself), **Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 135/3:202-206), **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136/3:207-215), **Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137/3:215-222), **Uddesa Vibhaṅga S** (M 138/3:223-229), **Araṇa,vibhaṅga S** (M 139/3:230-237), **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140/3:237-247), **Sacca Vibhaṅga S** (M 141/3:248-252), **Dakkhiṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 142/3:253-257).

<sup>21</sup> eg D 16,5.15-16/2:144 f; VA 1:28. Here, the example refers to the Buddha's speaking of Ānanda's charisma as a "marvel" (*abbhuta,dhamma*). Very likely, it is such passages (as D 16,5.15-16/2:144) that constitutes "marvels" (*abbhuta,dhamma*), rather than miraculous stories: see eg **Abbhuta,dhamma Ss** (eg **Acchariya,abbhūta S**, M 123) mentioned in nn there. It is possible to incl lion-roars (*sīha,nāda*) here, too: see SD 36.10 (3). See also Ency Bsm: Aṅga (under abbhutadhamma).

<sup>22</sup> On these 9 factors (*āṅga*), see **Language and discourse**, SD 26.11 (3.2.1).

<sup>23</sup> VA 1:28, where Buddhaghosa only briefly mentions the list, and often wrongly defines their components, eg, he says that the *veyyākaraṇa* was the "whole" of the Abhidhamma (which was non-existent in the Buddha's time)! See Ency Bsm: Aṅga (1:616-619).

<sup>24</sup> See eg E W Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism In Ceylon*, 1946:105 f; Ency Bsm: Mahāvihāra (6:508-511).

*laddhā pucchita, suttantā*, DA 1:24). Hence, he relates *vedalla* to *veda* in the sense of knowledge or inspired religious feeling.<sup>25</sup>

The Sanskrit form of *vedalla* is probably *vaipulya*, which means “abundant, flourishing” (or “development,” BHSD).<sup>26</sup> The fact is that both the Mahā Vedalla Sutta (M 43) and the Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta (M 44), and the other examples given below [2.2] are catechetical in style. In other case of these two discourses, Mahā Koṭṭhita acts as the questioner and Sāriputta is the answerer.

The catechetical method between living performers is known as *pucchā, visajjanā* (“questioning and answering”) or *saṅgāyanā* (recital). In cultures where the oral tradition is popular, this teaching method acts as a kind of radio talk show. It was still used teaching method in Thailand when I was a monk there in the 1970s.

## 2.3 THE MAHĀ VEDALLA SUTTA AND RELATED DISCOURSES

The Mahā Vedalla Sutta (M 43) belongs to the Vedalla class of early Buddhist literature. Examples of discourses of the Vedalla class often quoted are the following:<sup>27</sup>

<b>Mahā Vedalla Sutta</b>	M 43/1:292-298	SD 30.2
<b>Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta</b>	M 44/1:299-305	SD 40a.9
<b>Sammā, ditthi Sutta</b>	M 9/1:46-55	SD 11.14
<b>Sakka, pañha Sutta</b>	D 21/2:263-289	SD 54.8
<b>Saṅkhāra, bhājanīya Sutta</b>	unidentified <sup>28</sup>	
<b>Mahā, punnāma Sutta</b>	M 109/1:15-20	SD 17.11

These discourses, as already noted, are delivered “in answer to questions asked through knowledge and joy” (DA 1:24).

**The Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43) is a catechetical dialogue between Mahā Koṭṭhita and Sāriputta. Mahā Koṭṭhita asks series of questions on psychological topics, namely, knowledge, consciousness, feeling, perception, mind-consciousness (*mano, viññāna*), the 5 physical faculties, wisdom, right view, the first dhyāna, and the various freedoms.<sup>29</sup>

## 3 *Ceto, vimutti* and related terms

### 3.1 CETO, VIMUTTI PAÑÑĀ, VIMUTTI

The term “**freedom**” (*vimutti*) appears almost 50 times in the Mahā, vedalla Sutta, especially in the compounds, “**freedom of mind**” (*ceto, vimutti*) and “**freedom by wisdom**” (*paññā, vimutti*) [§14]. In the highest sense, *ceto, vimutti* refers to the perfect freedom of mind attained by following the noble eightfold path or living the holy life (*brahma, cāriya*). In this context, the term is almost always coupled

<sup>25</sup> On *veda* as religious joy, see (Agata, phala) Mahānāma S (A 6.10), SD 15.3 (4).

<sup>26</sup> Dharmasaṅgraha (Muller 1885) 62; Mahāvīyutpatti 1276.

<sup>27</sup> V 3:8; M 1:133; Pug 4.9; Miln 263; Gandhv 27.

<sup>28</sup> DhsA:PR (Expositor) 1:33 n4 identifies this as **Saṅkhār’upapatti S** (M 120/3:99-103). However, the similarity is only in the titles. The discourse is not catechetical.

<sup>29</sup> M 43/1:292-298 (SD 30.2).

with *paññā, vimutti*, to read as the stock phrase ***ceto, vimutti paññā, vimutti***.<sup>30</sup> The Commentary says that this stock phrase refers to **the fruit of arhathood** (MA 2:346).<sup>31</sup>

It is “freedom of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*) because **the samādhi** is free from *lust*;<sup>32</sup> it is “freedom by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*) because of **the wisdom** is free from *ignorance*.<sup>33</sup> *Samādhi* or concentration is usually the result of meditative calm (*samatha*), while *wisdom*, the result of meditative insight (*vipassanā*).

But when they are coupled and described as “**influx-free**” (*anāsava*), they jointly result from the destruction of the influxes<sup>34</sup> by the supramundane path of arhathood. When the 5 factors of right view—moral virtue, learning, discussion, meditative calm, and meditative insight [§14]—are fulfilled, then the path of arhathood arises and fruits. Such a person is said to be **mentally freed** (*vimutta, citta*, M 1:140), and his mind is like a diamond (*vajirūpama citta*, A 1:124).

### 3.2 OTHER KINDS OF CETO, VIMUTTI

**3.2.1 The term *ceto, vimutti*** is also used in different contexts referring to different degrees or levels of freedom, below that of arhathood, and these terms are found in the Mahā Vedalla Sutta, which defines and differentiates them [§§27-37].

The first of such terms related to freedom mentioned in the Mahā, vedalla Sutta is “**the signless freedom of mind**” (*animitta ceto, vimutti*), which is attained by “the non-attention to all signs,” (that is, disregarding all mental objects) and “the attention to the signless element” (that is, nirvana) [§27].

This freedom is then contextualized as *the last* of a set of 4 freedoms, namely,<sup>35</sup>

- |  |                                 |           |            |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| (1) the immeasurable freedom of mind,        | <i>appamāṇā ceto, vimutti</i>   | [3.2.2]   |            |
| (2) the freedom of mind through nothingness, | <i>ākāṅkheyya ceto, vimutti</i> | [3.2.3.2] |            |
| (3) the freedom of mind through emptiness,   | <i>suññatā ceto, vimutti</i>    | [3.2.3.3] |            |
| (4) the signless freedom of mind.            | <i>animittā ceto, vimutti</i>   | [3.2.3.5] | [§§30, 34] |

### 3.2.2 The immeasurable freedom of mind (*appamāṇā ceto, vimutti*)

**3.2.2.1 The “immeasurable freedom of mind”** or “freedom of mind through the immeasurable” (*appamāṇā ceto, vimutti*) [§§30-31] is attained through the cultivation of the 4 immeasurables or boundless states (*appamāṇā* or *appamaññā*), that is, the 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*), cultivated to the

<sup>30</sup> D 1:156, 3:78; S 1:120; A 1:123; Vbh 344.

<sup>31</sup> See **Ākaṅkheyya S** (M 6,19/1:35 f), SD 59.1, for a related passage, where Comy says that “mind” and “wisdom” refers respectively to the concentration and wisdom associated with the fruit of arhathood.

<sup>32</sup> *Samādhi rāgato vimuttattā ceto, vimutti* (MA 1:164,31 f).

<sup>33</sup> *Paññā avijjāya vimuttatā paññā, vimutti* (MA 1:164,32 f).

<sup>34</sup> The older list is perhaps the set of 3 influxes (*āsava*)—of sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), of existence (*bhav’āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 33.1.10(20)/3:216; M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63)—which are essentially the same as the 3 graspings (*ti, gaha*) of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and views (*diṭṭhi*), on account of which arise, respectively, the notions, “this is mine,” “this I am,” and “this is my self”: see **Vatthūpama S** (M 7,18/1:38), SD 28.12. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards or inwards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untr. The Abhidhamma lists **4 āsavas**, which is also found in the Nikāyas: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 16,1.12/2:82, 16.2.4/2:91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). See BDict: āsava.

<sup>35</sup> The monk Go,datta, questions Citta the houselord regarding these 4 freedoms. For Citta’s answer, see **Go,datta S** (S 41.7/4:295-297), SD 60.4.

point of “breaking the barriers” between self and other, that is, not seeing any selfhood. Such a vision is best attained through the calm and clarity of a mind that has experienced dhyana.<sup>36</sup>

**3.2.2.2 The immeasurables** comprise the 4 “abodes” (*vihāra*), namely, lovingkindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), gladness (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*), and the full attainment of each abode is named after itself, that is to say:

the freedom by lovingkindness,	<i>mettā ceto,vimutti</i>	
the freedom by compassion,	<i>karuṇā ceto,vimutti</i>	
the freedom by gladness, and	<i>muditā ceto,vimutti</i>	
the freedom by equanimity.	<i>upekkhā ceto,vimutti</i>	(D 33,2.3(16)/3:248 f)

**3.2.2.3** Initially, these states are cultivated to full mental absorption, that is, as **dhyana**. Having mastered such a dhyana, we emerge from it and reflect on it as being *impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self*, which leads to the arising of meditative insight, and to freedom in due course.<sup>37</sup> As such a freedom of mind is basically *mind-made*, it is still liable to cease (A 5:344). However, its proper cultivation can lead to the attainment of non-returning, but not arhathood, as the subtler defilements still need to be transcended (A 5:300).

### 3.2.3 The 3 other kinds of freedom

**3.2.3.1** Of the 4 freedoms mentioned in the Sutta, we have already mentioned the immeasurable freedom of mind (*appamāṇā ceto,vimutti*) [3.2.2]. There are three other freedoms.

**3.2.3.2 The freedom of mind through nothingness** (*ākiñcaññā ceto,vimutti*) is attained through full concentration in “the sphere of nothingness” (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), one of the formless attainments [§32]. A meditator who has attained such a state experiences a pervasively profound joy and inner stillness. When such a calm and clear mind is directed towards seeing true reality, such as impermanence, it easily sees it. This empowers him to renounce ideas about “things,” or to stop identifying with them in any way,<sup>38</sup>

**3.2.3.3 The freedom of mind through emptiness** (*suññatā ceto,vimutti*) is attained by reflecting on existence to be empty (*suñña*) of self (*attā*), or of what is owned by the self (*attaniya*) [§33]. Here, the mind is free by seeing the conditionality (*paccayatā*) and nonselfhood (*anattatā*)<sup>39</sup> of all life and things. Nothing exists in or by itself, but all arise and persist through numerous conditions, many causes producing many effects, bringing about countless possibilities. Conditionality is best understood through the teaching of dependent arising (*paṭicca,samuppāda*).<sup>40</sup>

**3.2.3.4** Finally, there is **the signless freedom of mind** (*animittā ceto,vimutti*), as we have mentioned above, is attained by “the non-attention to all signs” (that is, disregarding all mental objects) and “the

<sup>36</sup> See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

<sup>37</sup> The 4 immeasurables make up meditations nos 33-36 in the list of 40 traditional methods: see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (8.1) & diag.

<sup>38</sup> See **I: The nature of identity**, SD 19.1.

<sup>39</sup> On nonself, see **is there a soul?** SD 2.16.

<sup>40</sup> See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16.



attention to the signless element” [§§27, 34]. The “signs” (*nimitta*) here refers to the various sense-objects, such as forms and so on. The “signless element” (*animitta, dhātu*) is nirvana itself (MA 2:355).

Greed, hate and delusion are “sign-makers” (*nimitta, karaṇa*) in the sense that they make our mind project ideas of beauty, pleasure and self when none exists. Those caught up with craving and ignorance (hate is inherent in craving), falsely perceive what are really impermanent, suffering, nonself and impure as being permanent, pleasurable, self and beautiful. There is, in reality, neither truth nor beauty in such false perceptions. Truth and beauty only arise when we see directly see true reality with an open mind of acceptance.

Simply, this means that the meditator has attained such a mental level that he is not distracted or controlled by any sense-object or thought, but is naturally disposed to goodness. Such a being is an **arhat**: one who has uprooted the conditions for suffering, karma and rebirth. He has awakened just like the Buddha (although the Buddha’s wisdom is supreme) but he does not need to become a Buddha himself.<sup>41</sup>

### 3.2.4 One in meaning, different in name

**3.2.4.1** These 3 freedoms can be seen as being identical, differing only in name [§§35-37]. They differ only by *the way* they are used so that we are liberated from the unwholesome roots (lust, hate, delusion), as follows:

<u>Being freed from the unwholesome roots</u>	<u>it is called</u>	
as a measuring tendency, <i>pamāṇa, karaṇa</i> <sup>42</sup>	the immeasurable freedom of mind	[§§31, 35]
as something or “things,” <i>kiñcana</i> <sup>43</sup>	the freedom of mind through nothingness	[§§32, 36]
as any of the three here, <sup>44</sup> ( <i>suññatā</i> )	the freedom of mind through emptiness	[§33]
as signs, <i>nimitta</i> <sup>45</sup>	the signless freedom of mind	[§§34, 37]

**3.2.4.2** In terms of awakening to nirvana, all the 4 freedoms have a common name: “the unshakable freedom of mind” (*akuppa ceto, vimutti*)<sup>46</sup> [§§35-37]. In this sense, they have the same meaning and purpose. In other words, the immeasurable (*appamāṇa*), nothingness (*ākiñcañña*), the void (*suññatā*) and the signless (*animitta*), are all names for **nirvana**, which is the object of the fruition of arhathood (MA 2:355).

## 4 Cessation of perception and feeling

**4.1** Detailed canonical discussions on the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā, vedayita, nirodha*) [§25], that is, the attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*),<sup>47</sup> are found in **the Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M

<sup>41</sup> It is important to stress this last point, as later Buddhist theologians and sectarians tend to falsely claim that arhats still need to become Buddhas.

<sup>42</sup> That is, through conceit (*māna*): see **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a.

<sup>43</sup> That is, the craving that reifies: see **Atammayātā**, SD 19.13.

<sup>44</sup> Although “emptiness” (*suñña*, or Comy, *suññatā*) is not mentioned here, it is implied by the triad, since emptiness underlies the activity of the other 3 kinds of freedoms.

<sup>45</sup> That is, as an external object: see **Nimitta & anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14.

<sup>46</sup> See also S 4:297. On *ceto, vimutti*, see SD 4.25 (2.2 + 4.5).

<sup>47</sup> S 14.11/2:151.

43.25) and the **Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta** (M 44.16-21), especially the latter.<sup>48</sup> According to the **Kathāvatthu Commentary**, the attainment of cessation is of 2 kinds:<sup>49</sup>

the merely mundane (*lokiya*), practised by the worldling, and the supramundane (*lok'uttara*), practised by the saints. While mundane cessation conduces to rebirth in the sphere of non-conscious beings (*asañña,satta*), the supramundane does not. (KvuA 155; see Kvu:AR 300)

**4.2** The absolute necessary preconditions to this attainment are the perfect mastery of all the 8 attainments (that is, the 4 dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments). And in the case of the supramundane cessation, the meditator should have already attained the paths of non-returning or of arhathood.<sup>50</sup>

**4.3** On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainment (Vism 708), that is, there arises the fruition of non-returning (*anāgāmi,phala*) in the non-returner, and the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta,phala*) in the arhat (PmA 1:41, 321). As such, it is one possible way for experiencing nirvanic bliss.<sup>51</sup>

**4.4** According to the **Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta** (M 44), the heart-beat and breathing stop,<sup>52</sup> but a residual metabolism keeps the body alive for up to 7 days (Vism 23.42/707). The **Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43) explains the difference between death and cessation, thus:

In the case of one who is dead, his bodily, verbal and mental functions have ceased, life is exhausted, the vital heat extinguished, the faculties destroyed. In the case of one who has entered the cessation of perception and feeling his bodily, verbal and mental functions have ceased, but his life is not exhausted, the vital heat is not extinguished, the faculties are purified. (M 43,25/1:296 abridged; see M 44,16-21 & also M 43,42 & cf SD 1.11 (4.1))

While a dead person has neither vitality nor heat, and their sense-faculties “broken up,” a person in cessation still has vitality and bodily heat, and his sense-faculties are “purified.”<sup>53</sup>

This anomalous state, fully described in the **Visuddhi,magga**,<sup>54</sup> is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight where all mental states temporarily shut down,<sup>55</sup> “devoid of even subtle feeling and cognition, due to turning away from even the very refined peace of the fourth formless level” (Harvey 1993).<sup>56</sup> Here the heart-beat and breathing stop (M 1:301 f), but a residual metabolism keeps the body alive for up to seven days (Vism 23.42/707). The Commentaries say that this state may last for 7 days or even longer.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Respectively, M 43,25/1:296 + SD 30.2 (4) & M 44,16-21/1:301 f + SD 40a.9 (2.5).

<sup>49</sup> *Iti dve saññā,vedayita,nirodha,samāpattiyo lokiyā ca lok'uttarā ca. Tattha lokiyā puthujjanassa asañña,sattupikā hoti, loku'ttarā ariyānaṃ, sā na nāsañña,sattupikā.*

<sup>50</sup> A 5.166/3:193 f; Vism 23.18/702, 23.49/708.

<sup>51</sup> See P Harvey, “The mind body relationship in Pali Buddhism: A philosophical investigation.” [1992] *Asian Philosophy* 3,1 1993: 29-41; p10 digital ed.

<sup>52</sup> M 44,16-17/1:301 f (SD 40a.9).

<sup>53</sup> M 43,25/1:296; D 2:334; Vism 23.51/709,

<sup>54</sup> Vism 23.16-52/702-709; for a brief note, see M:ÑB 41.

<sup>55</sup> Vism 23.43/707 f.

<sup>56</sup> “The mind body relationship in Pali Buddhism: A philosophical investigation” [1992], *Asian Philosophy* 3,1 1993: 29-41; digital ed p10.

<sup>57</sup> MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163.



While a dead person has neither vitality nor heat, and their sense-organs “broken up,” a person in cessation still has vitality and heat, and his sense-organs are “purified.”<sup>58</sup>

**4.5** According to Buddhaghosa, **cessation** is “the non-occurrence of the mind (*citta*) and mental states as a result of their progressive cessation” (Vism 23.18/702). Such a person is “without mind” (*acitta*, Vism 23.43/707). Even the subconscious (*bhavaṅga*), present in dreamless sleep, is absent; such a person is *effectively only body without any mental states whatsoever*. In modern terms, “deep hibernation” or “suspended animation” might give some idea of this state of cessation.<sup>59</sup>

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## Mahā Vedalla Sutta

### The Discourse on the Greater Catechism

M 43

[292] Thus have I heard.

#### Mahā Koṭṭhita approaches Sāriputta

**1** At one time the Blessed One was straying in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s grove near Sāvattthī. Then, in the evening, the venerable **Mahā Koṭṭhita**,<sup>60</sup> having emerged from his solitary retreat, approached the venerable **Sāriputta** and exchanged greetings with him.

When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, the venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita sat down at one side. Sitting thus as one side, the venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita said this to the venerable Sāriputta,

#### Wisdom

**2** “‘**The unwise**, the unwise (*duppañña*),’ avuso, so it is said. In reference to what is it said, ‘The unwise’?”

SĀRIPUTTA: “‘One does not understand, one does not understand (*na-p, pajānāti*),’ avuso, therefore one is said to be ‘unwise.’

<sup>58</sup> M 1:296; D 2:334; Vism 23.51/709.

<sup>59</sup> On “the progressive cessation of formations” (*anupubba, saṅkhārānaṃ nirodha*), see S 36.11/4:217. On the philosophical problems related to how the meditator emerges from cessation, see P Griffiths, *On Being Mindless*, 1986. On P Harvey’s response to Griffiths, see “The mind-body relationship in Pāli Buddhism: A philosophical investigation” in Summary Report, International Association of Buddhist Studies 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference (ed A W P Guruge), Paris, 1992:30. Also G A Somaratne, “The sutta pericope of ‘the cessation’ and its interpretation” in *Journal of Buddhist Studies*, Kelaniya, 2003: 207-228. See **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (2).

<sup>60</sup> See Intro (1).

## NOT KNOWING THE 4 NOBLE TRUTHS

And what does one *not* understand?<sup>61</sup>

One does not understand, 'This is suffering.'  
 One does not understand, 'This is the arising of suffering.'  
 One does not understand, 'This is the ending of suffering.'  
 One does not understand, 'This is the way to the ending of suffering.'

'One does not understand, one does not understand,' avuso, therefore one is said to be 'unwise.'

"Sadhu, avuso!" said the venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita, joyfully approving of the venerable Sāriputta's word.<sup>62</sup>

Then he asked another question:

**3** "The wise, the wise (*paññavā*),' avuso, so it is said. In what way, avuso, is one said to be wise?"

"One understands, one understands (*pajānāti*),' avuso, therefore, one is said to be 'wise.'<sup>63</sup>

## KNOWING THE 4 NOBLE TRUTHS

3.1 And what does one *understand*?

One understands 'This is suffering.'  
 One understands 'This is the arising of suffering.'  
 One understands 'This is the ending of suffering.'  
 One understands 'This is the way leading to the ending of suffering.'

'One understands, one understands avuso, therefore one is said to be wise.'<sup>64</sup>

Consciousness

**4** "Consciousness, consciousness (*viññāṇa*),' avuso, so it is said. In what way, avuso, is it called 'consciousness'?"

"It cognizes, it cognizes (*vijānāti*),' avuso, therefore, it is called 'consciousness.'<sup>65</sup>

And what does it cognize?

It cognizes, '(This is) pleasant.'  
 It cognizes, '(This is) painful.'  
 It cognizes, '(This is) neutral.'

'It cognizes, it cognizes,' avuso, therefore, it is called **consciousness**.'<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Comy points out that the first 2 noble truths refer to the samsaric rounds (*vaṭṭa*), while the last two with what is not the round (*vivaṭṭa*). (MA 2:338). For details on the 4 noble truths, see **Dhamma, cakka-p, pavattana S** (S 56.-11/5:420-424), SD 1.1.

<sup>62</sup> This is the only time, as recorded, that Mahā Koṭṭhita says sadhu here, which understandable, as a repetition of this after each answer would appear contrived.

<sup>63</sup> *Pajānāti pajānātīti kho, āvuso, tasmā paññavā'ti vuccati*. The adj **paññava** ("wise, intelligent" Tha 70) (technically, *paññavant*," with reduction of ā to a, Geiger, *Pāli Grammar*, §23) is derived from the verb **pa-jānāti** ("he understands," Sn 626, Dh 402), which is itself resolved as **pa** (an intensifier, showing a marked degree, beyond the ordinary) + **VIÑĀ**, to know. Hence, here *pajānāti* can be explained as "knows well, beyond the ordinary."

<sup>64</sup> Comy discusses *paññavā* and related terms in some detail. The 4 noble truths discussed here is the attainment of the supramundane path. Thus, the lowest level of person described as "the wise" (*paññavā*) is the one on the path of streamwinning. (MA 2:337-339). See M:B 1136 n429.

<sup>65</sup> *Vijānāti vijānātīti kho, āvuso, tasmā viññāṇan,ti vuccati*. The noun **viññāṇa** ("consciousness") is derived from the verb **vi-jānāti** ("he cognizes"), which is itself resolved as **vi** (showing duality or division) + **VIÑĀ**, to know. Cf *sañ-jānāti*, "he recognizes" [§8]. For consciousness as an aggregate (*khandha*), see **Viññāṇa**, SD 17.8a.

## Wisdom and consciousness

5 “**Wisdom** (*paññā*) and **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*), avuso: are these states associated<sup>67</sup> or dissociated? And is it possible to separate these states in order to describe their difference?”

“Wisdom and consciousness, avuso—these states are associated, not dissociated. And it is impossible to separate these states to describe their difference.

For what one understands (*pajānāti*), that one cognizes (*vijānāti*), and what one cognizes, that one understands. [293]

Therefore these states are associated, not dissociated, and it is impossible to separate these states in describe their difference.”<sup>68</sup>

6 “And what, avuso, is the difference between wisdom and consciousness, these states that are associated, not dissociated?”

“Wisdom and consciousness, avuso, these states that are associated, not dissociated—their difference is this: **wisdom** is to be cultivated, **consciousness** is to be fully understood.”<sup>69</sup>

## Feeling

7 “**Feeling**, feeling (*vedanā*),’ avuso, so it is said. In what way, avuso, is it called ‘feeling’?”

“It feels, it *feels* (*vedeti*),’ avuso, therefore, it is called *feeling* (*vedanā*).”<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Comy: Having examined formations with that consciousness, one is called “wise,” that is, the question is about that the mind hard at meditation, and whose consciousness arrives at insight (MA 2:339). The phrase “(This is) pleasant,” *sukhan’ti pi vijānāti*, says Bodhi, “indicates that the feeling is being treated as a direct object of consciousness rather than as an affective tone of the experience; to show this the words ‘this is’ have been supplied in brackets and the entire phrase set in quotation marks” (M:NB 1237 n431). Comy says that Sāriputta alludes to the well known phrase, “Feeling a pleasant feeling, he understands ‘I feel a pleasant feeling’” (*sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyāmaṇo, sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyāmiti*) (*Satipaṭṭhāna S*, M 10,32/1:59 (SD 13.3); also *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S*, D 22,11/-2:298; *Dhātu Vibhaṅga S*, M 140,19/3:242 f; Kvu 61-63). Comy notes that it is the meditator (*yogāvacara*) who knows this, not the untutored ordinary person (KvuA 32).

<sup>67</sup> “Associated” (*saṃsaṭṭha*). Comy explains as “associated by way of arising together, ceasing together, sharing the same basis (sense-faculty), sharing the same sense-object” (*ek’uppāda,eka,nirodha,eka,vatthuka,ek’ārammaṇatāya saṃsaṭṭhā*) (MA 2:342).

<sup>68</sup> Comy says that this statement refers to the wisdom and consciousness on the occasions of both insight and the supramundane path. The two are associated in that they arise and cease simultaneously [an Abhidhamma notion], and share a single sense-base and object. However, the two are not totally associated in that while wisdom always needs consciousness, consciousness can occur by itself (without wisdom) (MA 2:342).

<sup>69</sup> *Paññā bhāvetabbā, viññāṇaṃ pariññeyyaṃ*. Wisdom should be *cultivated* because it is a path-factor of right view, should be cultivated as such. Consciousness, one of the 5 aggregates pertaining to the noble truth that is suffering, needs to be *fully understood* as being impermanent, suffering, non-self. (MA 2:342; M:NB 1237 n433). For some useful teachings on consciousness in this connection, see 2004 (2):147-159, 2010 (6):556.

<sup>70</sup> *Vedeti vedeti ti kho, āvuso, tasmā vedanā ti vuccati*. The noun *vedanā* (“feeling”) is derived from the verb *vedeti* = *vedayati* (“he feels”), which is itself a denominative\* or causative\* form of *vid*, to know: cf *veti* (Tha 497). *Vedeti* has 2 senses: (1) he knows, (2) he feels; the exact sense is known from the context. More specifically, *vediya-ti* (caus) means “he is made to experience, feels” (M 1:59,12): cf *paṭisaṃvedeti*, “he experiences, feels” (A 1:157); its by-form, *paṭisaṃvediyati* (S 2:18, 256; It 38). Ind 1 sg *vediyāmi* (“I feel,” V 3:37,25); opt 1 sg *vediyeyyāṃ* (“I should, or have to, feel,” M 2:70,13); fut pass participle (with optative sense), *vedaniya*, ‘to be [can be] felt’ [§23]: see A K Warder, *Pāli Grammar*, 1974:104-107. \*On -y- denominatives forms of *vid*, see Geiger, *Pāli Grammar* §136(4); on its causative forms, see §§ 176(1) & 179(3). See PED: *vedeti*, for more examples. On feeling as an aggregate (*khandha*), see *Vedanā*, SD 17.3.



“Avuso, by the purified mind-consciousness that is freed of the 5 sense-faculties, it should be known thus:

the sphere of infinite space	should [can] be known thus,	‘Space is infinite’;
the sphere of infinite consciousness	should [can] be known thus,	‘Consciousness is infinite’;
the sphere of nothingness	should [can] be known thus,	‘There is nothing.’” <sup>78</sup>

### Purpose and nature of wisdom

**11** “But by what means, avuso, does one understand *that which should be known* [the knowable]?”<sup>79</sup>

“What should be known, avuso, is understood by **the wisdom eye**.”<sup>80</sup>

**12** “What, avuso, is the purpose of wisdom?”

“The purpose of wisdom, avuso, is **direct knowledge**,<sup>81</sup> its purpose is full understanding, its purpose is *letting go*.”<sup>82</sup> [294]

### Conditions for right view

**13** “Avuso, how many conditions are there from which right view arises?”

“Avuso, right view arises from 2 conditions, that is: **the voice of another** and **wise attention**.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Comy: The purified mind-consciousness (*parisuddha mano, viññāṇa*) is the 4<sup>th</sup>-dhyana consciousness. It can know the formless attainments for one established in the fourth dhyana who is capable of attaining them. The sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is excluded here because it is so subtle that it is not within the range of the contemplation for insight (MA 2:345).

<sup>79</sup> *Neyyaṃ paṇāvuso, dhammaṃ kena pajānātī ti.*

<sup>80</sup> **Paññā, cakkhu**. Comy says that this is wisdom itself, called an “eye” in the sense that it is a faculty of spiritual vision. There are 2 kinds of wisdom: (1) samadhi wisdom (*samādhi paññā*), through which we understand by way of duty [function] and by non-delusion (*kiccatō ca asammohato ca pajānātī*); and (2) insight wisdom (*vipassanā paññā*) refers to the knowing on account of the object through the penetration of the characteristics (*lakkhaṇa, paṭivedhena ārammaṇato jānanam kathitam*) (MA 43.43/2:345). The Tīkā here explains that “duty” (*kicca*) is meditation (*bhāvanā*) and “non-delusion” as the realization that is right view (MAṬ:Be 2:306). Regarding “samadhi wisdom,” Tīkā further qu “One who is mentally concentrated understands things as they really are” (*samāhito yathā, bhūtaṃ pajānātī*) (S 22.5/3:13 (SD 7.16), 35.99/4:80 (SD 93.13), 56.1/5:414; Nett 58; Miln 84), and this arises on account of internal mental range (*tattha kiccatō ti gocar’ajjhatte ārammaṇa, karaṇa, kiccatō*), and “non-delusion” refers to the destruction of states related to delusion, so that one feels zest, etc (*asammohatō ti sampayutta, dhammesu sammoha, vidhamanato yathā pīti, paṭisaṃvedan’ādisu*), ie, the attaining of dhyana (MAṬ:Be 2:267). On the 5 eyes, see SD 9 (7e.ii).

<sup>81</sup> **Direct knowledge, abhiññā**, also “superknowledge.” Comy says that the Buddha talks of the ridding of the notions regarding the eternal, regarding the partially eternal, and regarding form, through the direct knowledge of these things (MA 3:208). Elsewhere, we often find mention of the attaining of the “6 superknowledges” (*cha-l-abhiññā*), a term not found in the Majjhima. The 6 superpowers are: (1) psychic powers, (2) the divine ear (clairaudience), (3) mind-reading (telepathy), (4) past-life recollection (retrocognition), (5) the divine eye (clairvoyance), and (6) the knowledge of the destruction of the influxes [*āsava*: see Intro (3.1) n]. Only the last is supramundane, as it is the knowledge of an arhat, the liberated saint. For pericope: **Ākaṅkheyya S** (M 6,14-19/1:34 f), **Mahā Vaccha, gotta S** (M 73,19-24/1:494 f), **Mahā Sakul’udāyi S** (M 77,31-36/2:18-22), **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108,18-23/-3:11 f). For a study, see **Miracles**, SD 27.5a(5).

<sup>82</sup> *Paññā kho, āvuso, abhiññ’atthā pariññ’atthā pahān’atthā ti.* “Direct knowledge” (*abhiññā, aññā*) is the understanding of both learners (*sekha*) and the arhat [prec n], but “full understanding” (*pariññā*) is that of only the arhat, as he has fully abandoned all defilements. See **Mūla, pariya S** (M 1,27/1:4), SD 11.8.

<sup>83</sup> **“The voice of another,” parato, ghoso; “wise attention,” yoniso manasikāra.** Comys say that **parato, ghosa** is “listening to the proper Dharma” (*sappāya, dhamma, savana*), ie, listening to the good Dharma, such as (Sāriputta) hearing the verse beginning *ye dhammā hetu-p, pabhavā ...* [Whatever things that arise from a cause ...] (V 1:40),

These, avuso, are the 2 conditions from which right view arises.”

## Right view and the 2 freedoms

**14** “Avuso, by how many factors is right view assisted when it has *freedom of mind*<sup>84</sup> for its fruit, and *the benefit* of the fruit of the freedom of mind;<sup>85</sup> and has *freedom by wisdom* for its fruit, and *the benefit* of the fruit of the freedom by wisdom?”<sup>86</sup>

14.2 “Avuso, right view is assisted by 5 factors when it has the fruition of freedom of mind, the benefit of the fruition of freedom of mind, the fruition of freedom by wisdom, and the benefit of the fruition of freedom by wisdom.

### CONDITIONS SUPPORTING RIGHT VIEW

14.3 Right view, avuso, which has freedom of mind for its fruit, and the benefit of the fruit of the freedom of mind; and has freedom by wisdom for its fruit, and the benefit of the fruit of the freedom by wisdom, is assisted by 5 factors.

14.4 Here, avuso, right view is assisted<sup>87</sup>

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| (1) by moral virtue, | <i>sīlânuggahitā</i>                     |
| (2) by learning,     | <i>sutânuggahitā</i>                     |
| (3) by discussion,   | <i>sāḱacchā’nuggahitā</i>                |
| (4) by calm, and     | <i>samathânuggahitā</i>                  |
| (5) by insight.      | <i>vipassanā’nuggahitā</i> <sup>88</sup> |

whereby we gain spiritual penetration. “Wise attention” is our own skill of minding (*attano upāya, manasikāra*) (MA 43,45/2:346). These 2 conditions are necessary for disciples to gain right views of insight and of the supramundane path. But pratyeka-buddhas gain awakening and fully self-awakened buddhas gain “omniscience” solely depending on wise attention: **Āsā Vagga** (A 2.11.10,8/1:87). (DA 1:107; MA 2:12, 346). Simply, **yoniso manasikāra** means reflecting on every sense-object or experience *as being impermanent*: see **Meghiya S** (A 9.3), SD 34.2 (2.5). Wise attention is said to be the “internal condition” for the noble eightfold path: **Meghiya S** (A 9.3), SD 34.2 & **Virtue ethics**, SD 18.11(6.4). On practical aspects of wise attention, see **Nimitta & anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14.

<sup>84</sup> These 2 kinds of freedom (*vimutti*) refer to the two kinds of arhats (although “freedom of mind” can also refer to a mind in dhyana, temporarily but fully freed of hindrances). Here, “mind” and “wisdom” refers respectively to the concentration and wisdom associated with the fruit of arhathood. *Concentration* is called “freedom of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*) because it is freed from lust. *Wisdom* is called “freedom by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*) because it is freed from ignorance. The former is usu the result of calmness (*samatha*), ie, the attaining of dhyana while the latter, the result of insight (*vipassanā*), ie, the calm mind directly seeing true reality. When they are coupled and described as “influx-free” (*anāsava*), they are the common result of the destruction of the influxes by the supramundane path of arhathood. In **Kiṭṭhagiri S** (M 70), there is a basic distinction between arhats who are “freed both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*) and arhats who are “freed by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutta*). While the former are capable of dwelling in the formless attainments, the latter do not: see M 70,14-21/1:477-4790 + SD 11.1(5).

<sup>85</sup> This & foll II: *ceto, vimutti, phalā ca hoti ceto, vimutti, phal’ānisaṃsā ca, paññā, vimutti, phalā ca hoti paññā, vimutti, phal’ānisaṃsā ca ti*. My tr follows Comy: ~ refers to the benefit of this very fruit that is reckoned as the freedom of mind (*tad eva ceto, vimutti, saṅkhātāṃ phalaṃ ānisaṃsaṃso assā ti ceto, vimutti, phal’ānisaṃsā*, MA 2:346). M:ÑB takes *ceto, vimutti, phal’ānisaṃsā* erroneously as a dvandva.

<sup>86</sup> Cf Sn 256.

<sup>87</sup> This set forms its own sutta as **Anuggahita S** (A 5.35), SD 41.11.

<sup>88</sup> “Insight” (*vipassanā*) here is clearly not a kind of meditation, but the various meditation-based knowledges into true reality that bring about the path of fruit of arhathood (MA 2:346).



14.5 Right view, avuso, which  
has freedom of mind for its fruit, and the benefit of the fruit of the freedom of mind; and  
has freedom by wisdom for its fruit, and the benefit of the fruit of the freedom by wisdom,  
are assisted by these 5 factors.”<sup>89</sup>

## Existence and rebirth

### THE 3 WORLDS

15 “How many kinds of existence, avuso, are there?”

“Avuso, there are these 3 kinds of existence, namely,<sup>90</sup>

- |                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) the sense existence,     | <i>kāma,bhava</i>  |
| (2) the form existence, and  | <i>rūpa,bhava</i>  |
| (3) the formless existence.” | <i>arūpa,bhava</i> |

### THE ROOTS OF REBIRTH

16 “How, avuso, is there further rebirth [continued existence into the future]?”<sup>91</sup>

“Avuso, further rebirth is on account of beings’ *being fettered by ignorance and hindered by craving*,  
delighting now here, now there [in this and that].”<sup>92</sup>

17 “But how, avuso, is there *no* further rebirth [no more continued rebirth into the future]?”

“Avuso, with the fading away of ignorance, with the arising of true knowledge.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, there is no further rebirth.”

<sup>89</sup> Comy: Here, right view pertains to the path of arhathood, and both “freedom of mind” and “freedom by wisdom” refer to the fruit of arhathood (MA 43.46/2:436). When these 5 factors are fulfilled, the path of arhathood arises and fruits. See **Ākaṅkheyya S** (M 6,19/1:35 f), SD 59.1, for a related passage, where Comy says that “mind” and “wisdom” refers respectively to the concentration and wisdom associated with the fruit of arhathood. Concentration is called “freedom of mind” (*ceto,vimutti*) because it is freed from *lust*; wisdom is called “freedom by wisdom” (*paññā,vimutti*) because it is freed from *ignorance* (MA 1:164 f). The former is usu the result of meditative calm (*samatha*), while the latter, the result of meditative insight (*vipassanā*). But when they are coupled and described as “influx-free” (*anāsava*), they jointly result from the destruction of the influxes by the supramundane path of arhathood.

<sup>90</sup> Cf V 3:3; S 2:3, 65, 101; A 1:223. For a summary table of Buddhist cosmology, see SD 1.7 Appendix.

<sup>91</sup> *Kathaṃ pan’āvuso, āyatim punabbhavābhiniṃbhatti hotī ti.*

<sup>92</sup> *Avijjā,nīvaraṇānaṃ kho, āvuso, sattānaṃ taṇhā,samyojanānaṃ tatra,tatrābhinandanā: evaṃ āyatim puna-b,-bhavābhiniṃbhatti hotī ti.* The special expression here for “rebirth” is *puna-b,bhavābhiniṃbhatti*, which more generally also refers to the cycle of births and deaths, which as such is syn with samsara (*saṃsāra*). According to Bodhi (M:NB 1238 n442), this question and the next may be regarded as “synoptic” (present-life) approaches to the entire twelvefold formula of dependent arising laid out in **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 38,17/1:261 & 20/1:362), SD 7.10. Cf A 1:223.

<sup>93</sup> *Vijjā*, which Comy says is the true knowledge of the fruit of arhathood (*arahatta,magga,vijjā*, MA 2:347). With this, one is an arhat who rises above all karma, bad or good (VbhA 146; Vism 17.64/532 for details). This is a stock phrase: **Jana,vasabha S** (D 18,25/2:215×2), SD 62.3; **Cūḷa Sīha,nāda S** (M 11,17/1:67), SD 49.2; **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,17/1:294), SD 30.2; **Parivīmaṃsana S** (S 12.51/2:82), SD 11.5; **Samanupassanā S** (S 22.47,7.2/3:47, self-identify views overcome), SD 26.12; **Vappa S** (A 4.195/2:196, 197, 198), SD 77.12.

## The 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana

**18** ‘What, avuso, is the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana?’

“Here, avuso, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, attains and dwells in the **1<sup>st</sup> dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and joy born of solitude.<sup>94</sup>

This, avuso, is called the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana.”

### THE 5 DHYANA-FACTORS (1)

**19** “And, avuso, how many factors does the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana have?”

“The 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, avuso, has **5 factors**. Here, avuso, for a monk who has attained the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, there is

- |                              |                                     |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) initial application,     | <i>vitakka</i>                      |
| (2) sustained application,   | <i>vicāra</i>                       |
| (3) zest,                    | <i>pīti</i>                         |
| (4) joy, and                 | <i>sukha</i>                        |
| (5) one-pointedness of mind. | <i>citt’ek’aggatā</i> <sup>95</sup> |

Thus, avuso, the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana is five-factored.”<sup>96</sup>

### THE 5 MENTAL HINDRANCES

**20** “How many factors, avuso, are abandoned in the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, and how many factors attained?”

“In the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, avuso, 5 factors are abandoned, 5 factors are attained.

Here, avuso, for a monk who has attained the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana,

- |                            |                              |                             |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) sensual desire         | <i>(kāma-c, chanda)</i>      | is abandoned;               |
| (2) ill will               | <i>(vyāpāda)</i>             | is abandoned;               |
| (3) sloth and torpor       | <i>(thīna, middha)</i>       | are abandoned;              |
| (4) restlessness and worry | <i>(uddhacca, kukkuccha)</i> | are abandoned; <b>[295]</b> |
| (5) doubt                  | <i>(vicikicchā)</i>          | is abandoned. <sup>97</sup> |

### THE 5 DHYANA-FACTORS (2)

And there is

- (1) initial application,
- (2) sustained application,
- (3) zest,
- (4) joy [happiness], and
- (5) mental oneness.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, avuso, thus are 5 factors abandoned, 5 factors attained.”<sup>98</sup>

<sup>94</sup> “Born of solitude,” *viveka, ja*; ie 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” (*samādhi*) here, see **The layman and dhyana**, SD 8.5. But see **§19**, where it is mentioned.

<sup>95</sup> *Idh’āvuso, paṭhamañ jhānañ samāpannassa bhikkhuno vitakko ca vattati, vicāro ca pīti ca sukhañ ca citt’ekaggatā ca*. Notice that here *citt’ekaggatā* (one-pointedness of mind) is used, but not mentioned in the pericope, but where it is implicit. See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4(6.5).

<sup>96</sup> “Five-factored” (*pañc’aṅgika*): for another def, see **(Samādhy-aṅga) Pañc’aṅgika S** (A 5.28/3:25-29), SD 33.13.

<sup>97</sup> *Idh’āvuso, paṭhamañ jhānañ samāpannassa bhikkhuno kāma-c, chando pahīno hoti, vyāpādo pahīno hoti, thīna, middhañ pahīnañ hoti, uddhacca, kukkucchañ pahīnañ hoti, vicikicchā pahīnā hoti*.

<sup>98</sup> For details, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

## The 5 faculties (*pañc'indriya*)

### RANGES AND FIELDS OF THE SENSES

**21** “These 5 faculties, avuso, have 5 different ranges, 5 different fields. They do not experience each others’ range or field,<sup>99</sup> that is to say:

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| (1) the eye-faculty,    | <i>cakkhu'ndriya</i> |
| (2) the ear-faculty,    | <i>sot'indriya</i>   |
| (3) the nose-faculty,   | <i>ghan'indriya</i>  |
| (4) the tongue-faculty, | <i>jivh'indriya</i>  |
| (5) the body-faculty.   | <i>kāy'indriya</i>   |

Now, avuso, these 5 faculties have 5 different ranges, 5 different fields; they do not experience each others’ range or field.<sup>100</sup>

So what is it that they resort to?<sup>101</sup> What is it that experiences their range or field?

### THE RANGE OF THE 5 FACULTIES

**21.2** “Avuso, these 5 faculties have 5 different ranges, 5 different fields. *They do not experience each others’ range or field*, that is to say:

- the eye faculty,
- the ear faculty,
- the nose faculty,
- the tongue faculty, and
- the body faculty.

Now, avuso, these 5 faculties have 5 different ranges, 5 different fields, and they do not experience each others’ range or field.

Avuso, they have the mind as resort,<sup>102</sup> and the mind experiences their range and field.”<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> *Pañc'imāni, avuso, indriyāni nānā, visayāni nānā, gocarāni, na aññam-aññassa gocara, visayaṃ paccanubhonti.* Here, in **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,21/1:295), clearly the *physical* faculties are meant; for, its foll **§22** (“On what do these 5 faculties stand dependent on?” *Imāni āvuso pañc'indriyāni kiṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhanti*), the answer is that they stand mutually dependent on vitality (*āyu*) and heat (*usmā*) (M 43,22/1:295). In **Brāhmaṇa Uṇṇābha S** (S 48.42), they seem to correspond to the 5 sense-consciousnesses, “for the physical sense faculties cannot properly be said to experience (*paccanubhoti*) an objective field (*visaya*) or resort (*gocara*) [“range or field”] [S 48.42,3/5:217], SD 29.3]. Their function is only to serve as the media through which consciousness cognizes objects.” (S:B 1936 n225)

<sup>100</sup> Each of the 5 sense-faculties (*pañc'indriya*) has its own object, ie, the eye sees forms, the ear hears sounds, the nose smells odours, the tongue tastes, and the body touches; but the mind-faculty (*man'indriya*) is able to experience all such objects, as well as its own mental objects. Hence, the 5 faculties have “the mind as their resort” (*mano, paṭisaraṇa*), which Comy says is the “impulsion” (*javana*) stage of the 5-door mental process (MA 2:349): see **Nimitta & Anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14 (3); also **Uṇṇābha Brāhmaṇa S** (S 48.42/5:217-219), SD 29.3. See **Sāmañña-phala S** (D 2,64/1:70), **Cūḷa Hathi, padôpama S** (M 27/1:180), **Pamāda, vihārī S** (S 35.78/4:78 f), **Apaṇṇaka S** (A 3.16/1:113). For a scholastic expl, see Dhs §17/11; Abhs 7.18 (Abhs:SR 188f; Abhs:BRS 273 f).

<sup>101</sup> *Paṭisaraṇa*; here used in a psychological sense; see M 46,2/1:311 & 108,7/1:310, where it simply means “refuge.”

<sup>102</sup> *Mano, paṭisaraṇa*: see **Brāhmaṇa Uṇṇābha S** (S 48.42), SD 29.3 (1).

<sup>103</sup> Be *mano paṭisaraṇaṃ, mano va* [vl ca] *n'esaṃ gocaravisayaṃ paccanubhoti*. Saṃyutta Comy (to S 48.42) explains that *mano* here is the mind-door impulsion (*javana*), which experiences the object by way of lust, hate or delusion (SA 3:245). **Bodhi**: “In my view, this introduces an unnecessary ethical slant on the passage, which I take to be primarily epistemic in import. I interpret the sentence simply to mean that mind-consciousness has access to the data provided by the 5 types of sense-consciousnesses, which it collates, categorizes, and interprets with its own stock-in-trade, namely, concepts.” (S:B 1936 n226).

## Conditions for life

### THE CONDITIONS FOR LIFE

**22** “Avuso, as to these 5 faculties, that is to say,  
the eye faculty,  
the ear faculty,  
the nose faculty,  
the tongue faculty, and  
the body faculty—

dependent on what do these 5 faculties *persist* [exist]?”<sup>104</sup>

“Avuso, as to these 5 faculties, that is to say,  
the eye faculty,  
the ear faculty,  
the nose faculty,  
the tongue faculty, and  
the body faculty—

they persist [exist] dependent on life [vitality] (*āyu*).”<sup>105</sup>

“Avuso, dependent on what does life exist?”

“Life exists dependent on heat.”<sup>106</sup>

“Avuso, dependent on what does heat exist?”

“Heat exists dependent on life [vitality].”

22.2 “Just now, avuso, we understood the venerable Sāriputta to have said, ‘Life exists dependent on heat.’ How should the meaning of these statements be taken?”

### THE LAMP PARABLE

“In that case, avuso, I shall give you a parable, for some wise persons here understand the meaning of a statement by means of a parable.”<sup>107</sup>

Avuso, just as in an oil-lamp that is burning, its light is described as being dependent on its flame, and its flame is described as being dependent on its light; even so, life exists dependent on heat, and heat exists dependent on life.”

## Life and death

### LIFE-FORMATIONS

**23** “Avuso, these very life-formations (*āyu, saṅkhārā*), can these states be felt, or are life-formations different from states that can be felt?” **[296]**

“Life formations, avuso, are *not* states that can be felt.”<sup>108</sup>

<sup>104</sup> The last question: *Kim paṭicca tiṭṭhati*, lit “dependent on what, does it stand [remain]?”

<sup>105</sup> Comy: Vitality (*āyu*) is the life-faculty itself (*āyū eva*, MA 2:350), which maintains and vitalizes the other material phenomena of the living body (MA 2:351). Cf D 2:106; S 2:266; A 4:311; U 64.

<sup>106</sup> “Heat” (*usmā*, also *usumā*; Skt *uṣman*) is the karma-born heat (of the living body) (MA 2:351): D 2:335,15; M 1:295,24 ≈ S 2:97,10 = 4:215,23 = 5:212,22; S 2:83,9, 3:143,4\*, 4:294,21.

<sup>107</sup> *Tena h’āvuso, upamaṃ te karissāmi; upamāya p’idhekacce viññū purisā bhāsitaṃ atthaṃ ājānanti*, stock, as at M 24,14/1:148.

<sup>108</sup> *Na kho, āvuso, t’eva āyu, saṅkhārā te vedaniyā dhammā*. Comy says that vital formations (*āyu, saṅkhārā*) is life [vitality] itself. They cannot be states of feeling because they have to keep the body alive when one attains the cessation of perception and feeling (MA 2:350). “The cessation of perception and feeling,” *saññā, vedayita niro-*

If, avuso, life formations were states that can be felt, then a monk who has entered the cessation of perception and feeling would not be seen to emerge from it.

Because life formations are different from states that can be felt, a monk who has entered the cessation of perception and feeling would be seen to emerge from it.”

#### DEFINITION OF DEATH

**24** “Avuso, when this body loses how many states<sup>109</sup> is it then discarded, cast aside, lying like a lifeless log?”<sup>110</sup>

“Avuso, when this body loses 3 states, that is—

- |                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) vitality,      | <i>āyu</i> <sup>111</sup>     |
| (2) heat, and      | <i>usmā</i> <sup>112</sup>    |
| (3) consciousness. | <i>viññāṇa</i> <sup>113</sup> |

—it is then discarded, cast aside, lying like a lifeless log.”

#### THE DECEASED AND THE CEASED<sup>114</sup>

**25** “What is the difference, avuso, between the *dead*, his time done, and a monk *who has attained to the cessation of perception and feeling*?”<sup>115</sup>

“Avuso, for the dead, his time done,  
his bodily formation (*kāya,saṅkhāra*)<sup>116</sup> has ceased, subsided;

**dha**, ie, the attainment of cessation (*nirodha,samāpatti*, S 14.11/2:151) can only be attained by non-returns and arhats who have mastered the 8 attainments (A 5.166/3:193 f; Vism 23.18/702, 23.49/708). It is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight where all mental states temporarily shut down (Vism 23.43/707 f). Comys say that this state may last for 7 days or even longer (MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163). Immediately at the arising of the state, however, there arises in the non-returner, the fruition of non-returning (*anāgāmi,phala*), and in the arhat, the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta,phala*) (PmA 1:41, 321). On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainments (Vism 708). See **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,6/1:301), SD 40a.9; **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (2); **Animitta Ceto,samādhī Pañha S** (S 40.9/4:268 f), SD 24.19; Vism 23.16-52/702-709; M:ÑB Intro 41. Cf D 2:106; S 2:266; A 4:311; U 64. See Intro (4).

<sup>109</sup> *Yadā nu kho āvuso imaṃ kāyaṃ kati dhammā jahanti*, lit, “Avuso, how many states are lost (*jāhanti*) by the body ... ”

<sup>110</sup> Here a dead body is meant. The lack of consciousness in a body is necessary, but not sufficient, to constitute death; vitality (*āyu*) and vital heat (*usmā*) must also disintegrate, all at once. Quoted at MA 2:351; cf S 3:143; Dh 41; Tha 468.

<sup>111</sup> *Āyu* usu means “life-span, age, longevity,” but here means “life, vitality, life-force.” Comy explains *āyu* as “the form life-faculty” (*rūpa,jīvit’indriya*); *usmā*, “heat,” as “karma-generated heat element” (*kammaja,tejo,dhātu*), and *viññāṇa*, “consciousness,” as “the mind” (*citta*) (MA 2:351), but in modern terms, see SD 48.2 (2.3.1.4). Comy also qu **Pheṇa,piṇḍa S** (S 22.95): “When vitality, heat and consciousness | leave this physical body, | then it lies there cast away, | without volition, food for others.” (S 22.95(4)/3:143), SD 17.12. This **Mahā Vedalla S** statement is qu at PmA 1:153). Cf “In no long time, this body, alas, | will lie on the earth, | cast away, bereft of consciousness, | like a useless log (*aciraṃ vat’ayaṃ kāyo | paṭhaviṃ adhisessati | chuddho apeta,viññāṇo | niratthaṃ va kalinga-ram*, Dh 41).

<sup>112</sup> Heat (*usmā*,also *usumā*; Skt *uṣman*) is the life-faculty itself, karma-born heat (of the living body) (MA 2:350): D 2:335,15; M 1:295,24# S 2:97,10 = 4:215,23 = 5:212,22; S 2:83,9, 3:143,4\*, 4:294,21.

<sup>113</sup> Comy says “consciousness” here is “the mind” (*citta*) (MA 2:351,7). On consciousness, see **Viññāṇa**, SD 17.8a.

<sup>114</sup> This whole catechism section recurs in **Kāma,bhū S** (S 41.6) where the questioner is Citta the houselord and the answerer is the monk Kāma,bhū (S 41.6/4:294,11-23), SD 48.7. Interestingly, in both texts, the questioner is a layman non-returner.

<sup>115</sup> *Yvāyaṃ, āvuso, mato kālaṃ,kato, yo cāyaṃ bhikkhu saññā,vedayita,nirodhaṃ samāpanno, imesaṃ kiṃ nā-nā,karaṇa’ti*. See Intro (4).

his speech formation ( <i>vāci,saṅkhāra</i> ) <sup>117</sup>	has ceased, subsided;
his thought formation ( <i>citta,saṅkhāra</i> ) <sup>118</sup>	has ceased, subsided;
his life-span ( <i>āyu</i> )	has ended;
his body heat ( <i>usmā</i> )	has cooled down [dissipated];
his faculties are all broken up ( <i>paribhinna</i> ).	

However, for a monk who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling,

his bodily formation	has ceased, subsided;
his verbal formation	has ceased, subsided;
his thought formation	has ceased, subsided;
but his life-span	is <i>not</i> exhausted;
his body heat	has <i>not</i> dissipated [ <i>not</i> cooled down]; and
his faculties	are purified [lucid]. <sup>119</sup>

This, avuso, is the difference between the dead, whose time is up, and a monk who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling.”

## The neutral freedom of mind

**26** “How many conditions, avuso, are there for the attainment of **the neutral freedom of mind** [the freedom of mind that is neither pleasant nor painful]?”<sup>120</sup>

“There are, avuso, 4 conditions for the attainment of the neutral freedom of mind.

### THE 4<sup>TH</sup> DHYANA

Here, avuso, a monk,<sup>121</sup>  
 with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,<sup>122</sup> and  
 with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,  
*attains and dwells in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana* that is neither painful nor pleasant,

<sup>116</sup> Comy: *Kāya,saṅkhāra* is the in-and-out breath (*assāsa,passāsa*) (MA 2:351), as in **Kāma,bhū S** (S 41.6/4:294), SD 48.7. Note that these 3 terms—*kāya,saṅkhāro*, *vacī,saṅkhāro*, *citta,saṅkhāro*—are in the sg, and that that the third is *citta,saṅkhāro* (sg), not *mano,saṅkhārā* (pl). See also **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.13/1:301) + SD 40a.9 (2.4).

<sup>117</sup> Comy: *Vacī,saṅkhāra* is thinking and pondering (*vitakka,vicāra*) (MA 2:351). The verbal formation (*vacī,saṅkhāro*), comprising initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*) (S 4:293), stop in the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana, which is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuṇhī,bhāva*). When initial application and sustained application (thinking and discursion, *vitakka,vicāra*) cease, speech cannot occur (S 2:273).

<sup>118</sup> Note that *citta,saṅkhāro* is sg, while *mano,saṅkhārā* (“mental formations”) is pl: see SD 40a.9 (2.4). Comy: *Citta,saṅkhāra* is perception and feeling (*saññā,vedanā*) (MA 2:351), which is also stated in **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,-15/1:301), SD 40a.9.

<sup>119</sup> “Purified,” *vipassanna*. Comy: In life, the faculties, stimulated by sense-objects, are afflicted and grimed like a mirror standing at a crossroads. The 5 sense-faculties, as it were, are radiant. (MA 2:351 f)

<sup>120</sup> *Adukkham-asukha ceto,vimutti*. On *ceto,vimutti*, See Intro (3.1).

<sup>121</sup> Foll para: *Idh’āvuso, bhikkhu sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubb’eva somanassa,domanassānaṃ atthaṇ-gamā adukkhham-asukhaṃ upekkhā,satī,pārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati*. Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana—equanimity (*upekkhā*), mindfulness (*satī*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittas-sa ek’aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4(5.4).

<sup>122</sup> “Joy ... pain,” *sukha ... dukkha*: this refers to *physical* feelings. The next phrase—“pleasure and displeasure,” *domanassa ... somanassa*—refers to *mental* feelings, transcended earlier. Mental feelings must be overcome first so that the mind is not distracted by itself, as it were. Then, all the other feelings (arising from the physical sense-contacts) are transcended. On the significance of this, see **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.



and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.<sup>123</sup>

These, avuso, are the 4 conditions for the attainment of the neutral freedom of mind.”

### The signless freedom of mind

**27** “How many conditions, avuso, are there for **the attainment of the signless freedom of mind**?”<sup>124</sup>

“There are, avuso, 2 conditions for the attainment of the signless freedom of mind, that is,

(1) the non-attention to all signs, and

(2) the attention to the signless element.<sup>125</sup>

These, avuso, are the 2 conditions for the attainment of the signless freedom of mind.”<sup>126</sup>

**28** “How many conditions, avuso, are there for **the persistence of the signless freedom of mind**?”<sup>127</sup>

“There are 3 conditions, avuso, for the persistence of the signless freedom of mind, that is, **[297]**

(1) not attending to any of the signs,

(2) attending to the signless element, and

(3) prior determination (of its duration).<sup>128</sup>

These, avuso, are the 3 conditions for the persistence of the signless freedom of mind.”

**29** “How many conditions, avuso, are there for **emerging from the signless freedom of mind**?”<sup>129</sup>

“There are, avuso, 2 conditions for the emerging from the signless freedom of mind, that is,

(1) attending to any of the signs, and

(2) *not* attending to the signless element.

These, avuso, are the 2 conditions for the emerging from the signless freedom of mind.”

### Mental freedoms: Different in meaning and in name

**30** “And, avuso, these states—

the immeasurable freedom of mind,<sup>130</sup> and

the freedom of mind through nothingness, and

*appamāṇā ceto, vimutti*

*ākiñcaññā ceto, vimutti*

<sup>123</sup> **Bahu, vedanīya S** (M 59) speaks of the carpenter Pañcak’aṅga as holding the view that “2 kinds of feeling have been spoken by the Blessed One, that is, pleasant feeling and painful feeling. Regarding the feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful, bhante, the Blessed One has spoken that it is in peaceful and sublime pleasure.” (M 59,3/-1:396 f; also 59.10/1:399), SD 30.4. Its Comy (**MA**) says that by speaking of the neutral feeling of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana as a kind of *feeling*, the Buddha is implicitly endorsing Pañcak’aṅga’s view (MA 3:114 f). **SA**: From the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana upwards, there is neutral (neither pleasant nor painful) feeling, called “happiness” (or pleasure) in that it is peaceful and sublime (*sāpi sant’aṭṭhena pañīt’aṭṭhena ca sukhan ti vuttā*) (SA 3:79). See Intro (2.2) & also **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,83/1:75), SD 8.10.

<sup>124</sup> *Animitta ceto, vimutti*.

<sup>125</sup> The signless element is nirvana (MA 2:352), which is said to be “signless” (*animitta*) because nirvana has nothing to do with signs (*nimitta*), here referring to mental grasping of phenomena. See also **Go, datta S** (S 41.7/-4:296).

<sup>126</sup> Comy: The signless freedom of mind (*animitta ceto, vimutti*) is the attainment of fruition. The signs (*nimitta*) are objects such as forms, etc. The “signless element” (*animitta, dhātu*) is nirvana in which all signs of conditioned things are absent. (MA 2:352)

<sup>127</sup> *Kaṭi pañāvuso, paccayā animittāya ceto, vimuttiyā ṭhitiyā ti*.

<sup>128</sup> I.e., the prior determination of the duration of the meditation (MA 353).

<sup>129</sup> *Kaṭi pañāvuso, paccayā animittāya ceto, vimuttiyā vuṭṭhānāyā ti*.

<sup>130</sup> See Intro (3.2).

the freedom of mind through emptiness, and  
the signless freedom of mind.

*suññatā ceto, vimutti*  
*animittā ceto, vimutti*

—do they differ in meaning and in name, or they are one in meaning, differing only in name?”<sup>131</sup>

“The states, avuso—

the immeasurable freedom of mind, and  
the freedom of mind through nothingness,<sup>132</sup> and  
the freedom of mind through emptiness, and  
the signless freedom of mind—

in a manner of speaking, can be explained as differing both in meaning and in name; and

in a manner of speaking, these states can be explained as being one in meaning, differing only in name.”<sup>133</sup>

#### THE 4 IMMEASURABLES<sup>134</sup>

**31** “And, in what way, avuso, in a manner of speaking, do these states **differ both in meaning and in name**?”<sup>135</sup>

“Here, avuso, a monk,<sup>136</sup>

- (1) with a heart of **lovingkindness**, dwells suffusing one quarter;  
so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth;  
thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself,  
he dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness  
that is vast, grown great [exalted],<sup>137</sup> immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.<sup>138</sup>
- (2) With a heart of **compassion**, he dwells suffusing one quarter,  
so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth;  
thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself,  
he dwells suffusing all the world with compassion  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.

<sup>131</sup> Cf **Anuruddha S** (M 127), where this is asked in connection with the immeasurable freedom of mind and the freedom of mind grown great. (M 127.4/3:145 f). These questions, the full answers, right up the end are mutatis mutandis identical as at **Go, datta S** (S 41.7), where they are spoken by Citta the householder to the monk Go, datta (S 41.7,3-14/4:296 f), SD 60.4.

<sup>132</sup> Comy: So called because of the non-existence of any meditation-object (*ārammaṇa, kiñcanassa abhāvato*, MA 2:353). Cf Sn 1113-1115.

<sup>133</sup> *Yā cāyaṃ, āvuso—appamāṇā ceto, vimutti, yā ca ākiñcaññā ceto, vimutti, yā ca suññatā ceto, vimutti, yā ca animittā ceto, vimutti—atthi kho, āvuso, pariyāyo yaṃ pariyāyaṃ āgama ime dhammā nānāthā c’eva nānā, byañjanā ca; atthi ca kho, āvuso, pariyāyo yaṃ pariyāyaṃ āgama ime dhammā ek’atthā, byañjanam-eva nānaṃ.*

<sup>134</sup> This whole section on the 4 divine abodes is stock: for a table of comprehensive refs, see SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

<sup>135</sup> *Katamo c’āvuso, pariyāyo yaṃ pariyāyaṃ āgama ime dhammā nānāthā c’eva nānā, byañjanā ca?*

<sup>136</sup> Comys: “Monk” (*bhikkhu*) here may refer to either an ordained monastic or anyone who is meditating (DA 3:756; MĀ 1:241; VbhA 216 f; cf SnA 251). Even a lay person, properly meditating, attains the state of monkhood (*bhikkhu, bhāva*): **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) +n, SD 13.3; SD 13.1 (3.1.1.5); SD 16.7 (1.1.1.2). For similes, see **Te, vija S** (D 13,76-79/1:251), SD 1.8; see also: **D 2**:185, 250, **3**:49, 78, 223; **M 1**:38, 283, 297, 335×2, 351, 369, **2**:76, 77, 78, 81, 195, 207, **3**:146; **S 4**:296, 322, 351, 352×2, **5**:115, 116, 117, 118; **A 1**:183, 192, **2**:172, 175, 184, **3**:225, **4**:390, **5**:299, 343, 344.

<sup>137</sup> The mind “grown great” (*maha-g, gatā*) or exalted perception refers to the mind in dhyana, ie in the form sphere (*rūpāvacara*). See **Catuttha Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.4), SD 24.14 (4).

<sup>138</sup> The recurrence of these last two phrases—“without hate, without ill will”—attests to the fact that lovingkindness is the basis for all the other three abodes, ie, they are actually a refinement of lovingkindness applied on deeper and broader levels.

- (3) With a heart of **gladness**, he dwells suffusing one quarter,  
so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth;  
thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself,  
he dwells suffusing all the world with gladness  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.
- (4) With a heart of **equanimity**, he dwells suffusing one quarter,  
so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth;  
thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself,  
he dwells suffusing all the world with equanimity  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.
- This, avuso, is called the immeasurable freedom of mind.

## FREEDOM OF MIND THROUGH NOTHINGNESS

**32** “And what, avuso, is the freedom of mind through nothingness?”

“Here, avuso, a monk, by fully transcending the sphere of the infinity of consciousness, mindful thus, ‘There is nothing,’ attains and dwells in **the sphere of nothingness**.

This, avuso, is called the freedom of mind through nothingness.”

## FREEDOM OF MIND THROUGH EMPTINESS

**33** “And what, avuso, is the freedom of mind through emptiness?”

“Here, avuso, a monk, having gone to a forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty abode, reflects thus:

‘**This<sup>139</sup> is empty of self or what belongs to self<sup>140</sup> [298]**

This, avuso, is called the freedom of mind through emptiness.<sup>141</sup>

## SIGNLESS FREEDOM OF MIND

**34** And what, avuso, is the signless freedom of mind?

Here, avuso, a monk, not attending to any of the signs, attains and dwells **the signless concentration of mind**.<sup>142</sup>

This, avuso, is called the signless freedom of mind.<sup>143</sup>

This, avuso, is the way of explaining by which these states are *different in meaning and different in name*.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>139</sup> “This” (*idaṃ*). From Comy (MA 43.71/2:353; see foll n), “this” refers to either what we “are” (*attā*) (physically and mentally), which should be reflected on by way of the 5 aggregates (eg S 22.59/3:66-68 @ SD 1.2), or what we “have” (*attaniya*), which should be reflected by way of the 4 elements (eg M 140/3:237-247 @ SD 4.17).

<sup>140</sup> *Suññam idaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā ‘ti*. Comy explains *attena* as referring to the self regarded as personality, person, or individual, and *attaniyena* as referring to such things as the monk’s requisites, such as robes, etc (MA 43.71/2:353): on a psychological level, this means there really no abiding entity (such as “self,” “soul,” “person,” “thing”) nor real ownership of things or states. See also M 2:26,27; S 35.85/4:54,6. Cf Kvu 67, 579.

<sup>141</sup> Comy says that this freedom of mind through emptiness is insight into the emptiness of selfhood in persons and things (MA 2:353). See (3.2.3.3).

<sup>142</sup> *Idha bhikkhu sabba, nimittānaṃ amanasikārā animittaṃ ceto, samādhim upasampajja viharati*. See **Animitta Ceto, samādhī Pañha S** (S 40.9/4:268 f) + SD 24.19 (2) & **Citta Hatthi, sārīputta S** (A 6.60,42/3:397), SD 51.9.

<sup>143</sup> *Animitta ceto, vimutti*. Comy: This is the attainment of fruition. The “signless” (*animitta*) is nirvana itself (*nibbānam pi animittam eva*, MA 2:354). Of the 4 freedoms of mind—the immeasurable (divine abodes), through nothingness (3<sup>rd</sup> formless attainment), through emptiness, and the signless—as mentioned in §30 of the Sutta, only *the signless freedom of mind* is supramundane. The first three—the divine abodes, the 3<sup>rd</sup> formless attainment, and insight into the emptiness of formations—all pertain to the mundane level (M:ÑB 1240 n451).

## Mental freedoms: Same in meaning, differing only in name

**35** “And in what way, avuso, are these states **same in meaning, differing only in name?**”

(1) THE UNSHAKABLE FREEDOM OF MIND THAT IS FREE OF MEASURING

35.2 Avuso,

lust	is <b>a measure-maker;</b>	<i>rāgo kho āvuso pamāṇa, karaṇo</i>
hate	is a measure-maker;	<i>doso pamāṇa, karaṇo</i>
delusion	is a measure-maker.	<i>moho pamāṇa, karaṇo</i> <sup>145</sup>

For a monk whose influxes<sup>146</sup> are destroyed, they are cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, done away with so that they are not subject to further growth.

Avuso, of all the immeasurable freedoms of mind, **the unshakable freedom of mind**<sup>147</sup> is declared as the foremost.<sup>148</sup>

Now, that unshakable freedom of mind is empty of lust, empty of hate, empty of delusion.<sup>149</sup>

(2) THE UNSHAKABLE FREEDOM OF MIND THAT IS FREE OF “THINGS”

**36** Avuso,

lust	is <b>a something;</b>	<i>rāgo kho āvuso kiñcano</i>
hate	is a something;	<i>doso kiñcano</i>
delusion	is a something.	<i>moho kiñcano</i> <sup>150</sup>

For a monk whose influxes are destroyed, they are cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, done away with so that they are not subject to further growth.

Of all the freedoms of mind through nothingness, the unshakable freedom of mind is declared as the foremost.<sup>151</sup>

Now, that unshakable freedom of mind is empty of lust, empty of hate, empty of delusion.

<sup>144</sup> *Ayaṃ kho, āvuso, pariyāyo yaṃ pariyāyaṃ āgamma ime dhammā nānāttā c’eva nānā, vyañjanā ca.* Comy: All the 4 freedoms [prec n] are *one in meaning* in that they refer to the fruition attainment of arhathood. They are all synonymous because the terms—the immeasurable (*appamāṇa*), of nothing (*ākiñcañña*), empty (*suññata*), and the signless (*animitta*)—are all names for nirvana, the object of the fruition attainment of arhathood (MA 2:355). Here the two different terms—the signless freedom of mind and the signless concentration of mind—are also different in meaning. The former is the *freedom*, while the latter is the *means* to that freedom. See (3.2.3.4).

<sup>145</sup> Comy: Defilements are what makes us measure a person as a worldling, a streamwinner, a once-returner, or a non-returner (MA 2:354). However, more broadly, lust, hate and delusion are called “measuring” (*pamāṇa, karaṇa*) because they limit the openness of our minds and prevent freedom itself. On “measuring,” cf *anumīyati* in **Aññātara Bhikkhu S 2** (S 22.36/3:36), SD 31.14. A synonym for “measure” (*pamāṇa*) is “conceit” (*māna*): see **Anu-saya**, SD 31.3(4).

<sup>146</sup> “Influxes,” *āsava*: see Intro (3.1) n & SD 4.11 (2.5).

<sup>147</sup> “Unshakable freedom of mind,” *akuppa ceto, vimutti*. Comy: There are 9 freedoms of mind through nothingness: the sphere of nothingness, and the 4 paths and 4 fruits. (MA 2:354)

<sup>148</sup> Comy: There are 12 immeasurable freedoms of mind: the 4 divine abodes, the 4 paths and 4 fruits. The unshakable freedom of mind (*akuppa ceto, vimutti*) here is the fruit of arhathood. (MA 2:354)

<sup>149</sup> This sentence, recurring at §§36+37, shows that they are supramundane freedom of mind through emptiness.

<sup>150</sup> “Something” (*kiñcana*), which Comy explains, when a defilement arises, it “crushes, tramples, impedes” (*kiñcati maddati palibujjhati*) us (MA 2:354). Cf the 3 “somethings” (*tayo kiñcanā*), ie, lust as *something*, hate as *something*, delusion as *something* (*rāga kiñcana, dosa kiñcana, moha kiñvana*) (D 3:217). *Kiñcana* refers to a defilement that arises through the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala mūla*) of greed, hate, and delusion, inducing us to reify (make “something” of) persons and states, and so to try to *own* them, thus allowing suffering to arise. See (3.2.4.1).

<sup>151</sup> Comy: There are 9 freedoms of mind through nothingness: the sphere of nothingness, and the 4 paths and 4 fruits. (MA 2:354)

## (3) THE UNSHAKABLE FREEDOM OF MIND THAT IS FREE OF SIGNS

## 37 Avuso,

lust	is a sign-maker;	<i>rāgo kho āvuso nimitta,karaṇa</i>
hate	is a sign-maker;	<i>doso nimitta,karaṇa</i>
delusion	is a sign-maker.	<i>moho nimitta,karaṇa</i> <sup>152</sup>

For a monk whose influxes are destroyed, they are cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, done away with so that they are not subject to further growth.

Of all the signless freedoms of mind, *the unshakable freedom of mind* is declared as the foremost.<sup>153</sup>

Now, that unshakable freedom of mind is empty of lust, empty of hate, empty of delusion.

This, avuso, is the way of explaining by which these states *same in meaning, differing only in name*.<sup>154</sup>

38 The venerable Sāriputta said this. The venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita joyfully approved of the venerable Sāriputta's word.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>152</sup> Comy: The expression "sign-maker" (*nimitta,karaṇa*) means that it is lust, hate and delusion that label a person as a worldling or a noble one, as lustful, hating, or deluded or not (MA 2:354). It also means that these defilements cause the mind to falsely regard things as being permanent, pleasurable, self or beautiful.

<sup>153</sup> Comy: There are 13 signless freedoms of mind: insight, because it removes the signs of permanence, pleasure and self; the 4 formless attainments, because they lack the sign of form; and the 4 paths and 4 fruits, because of the absence of the sign of defilements. (MA 2:355)

<sup>154</sup> I.e., same in the spirit, different only in the letter; same in connotation, different only in denotation. All the 4 freedoms of mind are one in meaning in that they all refer to the fruition attainment of arhathood. Comy points out that the 4 freedoms are one in meaning because the terms—immeasurable, nothingness, emptiness, and the signless—are all names for nirvana, which is the object of the fruition attainment of arhathood (MA 2:355). See (3.2.4).