

# 11

## Mettā Sahagata Sutta

The “Accompanied by Lovingkindness” Discourse | S 46.54  
or, Vism 4.49: **Halidda,vasana Sutta**, The Discourse at Halidda,vasana

Theme: How lovingkindness leads to awakening

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003

### 1 Introduction

This sutta is quoted by the **Visuddhi,magga**,<sup>1</sup> where it is called Haliddavasana Sutta, as a means to liberation by way of cultivating lovingkindness. The unique teaching of this sutta is that one could apply any of the four divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*) to the seven awakening-factors (*sambojjhaṅga*) to gain spiritual liberation. How this works is explained in **the Aṭṭhaka,nāgara Sutta** (M 52) thus:

He considers this and understands it thus: “This first..., second..., third..., fourth dhyana<sup>2</sup> is conditioned and willfully produced (*abhisaṅkhatam abhisañcetaṅgam*), and whatever is conditioned and willfully produced is impermanent, subject to cessation.” If he is steady in this, he attains the destruction of the cankers. But if he does not attain the destruction of the cankers because of that desire for the Dharma (*dhamma,rāga*), that delight in the Dharma (*dhamma,-nandī*), Then, with the destruction of the five lower fetters,<sup>3</sup> he becomes one spontaneously reborn [in the Pure Abodes]<sup>4</sup> and there attain final nirvana, without ever returning from that world. (M 53/1:349-353)

This famous passage explains a method for cultivating “insight preceded by calmness” (*samatha,-pubb’āṅgamā vipassanā*), that is, calmness followed by insight, one of the four methods of attaining “the direct knowledge of arhathood” mentioned in **the Yuganaddha Sutta** (A 4.170). Having first attained a dhyana, the meditator emerges from it and reviews it as a state arising from conditions, especially volition (*cetanā*). In this way, he ascertains its impermanence, and Then, contemplates the dhyana with insight into the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self. The four methods of attaining arhathood listed in the Yuganaddha Sutta are as follows:

- (1) Insight preceded by calmness (*samatha,pubbāṅgamā vipassanā*).<sup>5</sup>
- (2) Calmness preceded by insight (*vipassanā,pubbāṅgamā samatha*).
- (3) The twin cultivation of calmness and insight (*samatha,vipassanā yuganaddha*).

<sup>1</sup> Vism 9.119/324, where the “highest limit” of each of the divine abodes is discussed.

<sup>2</sup> On this new convention, see this Intro below.

<sup>3</sup> **The 10 fetters** (*saṃyojanā*) are: Self-identity view (*sakkāya,dīṭṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*), sensual lust (*kāma,rāga*), repulsion (*paṭigha*), greed for form existence (*rūpa,rāga*), greed for formless existence (*arūpa,rāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 5:13, Vbh 377). In some places, no. 5 (*paṭigha*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya*).

<sup>4</sup> That is, reborn in the Pure Abodes (*suddh’āvāsa*), the 5 highest heavens of the 4<sup>th</sup>-dhyana form world (*rūpa,-loka*) where only non-returners assume their last birth to become arhats and nirvana. These worlds are Āviha (“Non-declining”), Ātappa (“Unworried”), Sudassā (“Clearly Visible”), Sudassī (“Clear-visioned”) and Akaṇiṭṭhā (“Highest”) (D 3:237, M 3:103, Vbh 425, Pug 42-46).

<sup>5</sup> More literally, “Insight preceded by calmness.”

- (4) The mind is seized by restlessness caused by higher mental states (*dhamm'uddhacca, vigga-hitani manasani hoti*) but there comes a time when the mind becomes concentrated, leading to the cultivation of the path. (A 4.170/2:157), SD 41.5

The **Mahā Mālūṅkya,putta Sutta** (M 64.9-15) gives a slightly different way of cultivating insight on the basis of the dhyanas. On attaining any of the first 7 dhyanas, that is, up to the base of nothingness, the meditator Then, emerges from it and reviews whatever aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations, consciousness) within that dhyana to be “impermanent, suffering, a disease, a tumour, a barb, a calamity, an affliction, alien, disintegrating, void, non-self.” Here, the characteristic of **impermanence** is reflected in the words “impermanent” and “disintegrating”; **suffering** is reflected in the words “suffering, disease, tumour, barb, calamity, affliction”; and **non-self** in the words “alien, void, non-self.” After this reflection, he turns his mind to the “deathless element” (nirvana).

The two chief disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, attained awakening by applying both calmness and insight. Sāriputta, however, gained deliverance through wisdom while Moggallāna gained deliverance of mind. For this reason, the Buddha declares that “The difference here is in their faculties, I say!” (M 1:437), that is, between the predominance of the concentration faculty and of the wisdom faculty.

## 2 The 5 perceptions

The **Mettā Sahagata Sutta** only briefly mentions the 5 perceptions (on how to overcome the two primary mental hindrances: lust and hate) for each of the divine abodes [§§12-15]. The 5 methods are, however, discussed in detail in **the Tikaṇḍaki Sutta** (A 5.144).<sup>6</sup>

The word “unrepulsive” (*appaṭikkula*) in the sutta may refer to persons or things that are either attractive or indifferent. **The Paṭisambhidā, magga** explains the 5 perceptions thus:<sup>7</sup>

- (1) In the case of *an agreeable object* (eg a sensually attractive person), one either pervades it with the thought of foulness or regards it as impermanent.
- (2) In the case of *a disagreeable object* (eg a hostile person), one either pervades it with lovingkindness or regards it as physical elements.<sup>8</sup>
- (3) One pervades *both agreeable and disagreeable objects* with the thought of foulness or regards them as impermanent; thus one perceives both as repulsive.
- (4) One pervades *both disagreeable and agreeable objects* with lovingkindness or regards them as physical elements; thus one perceives both as unrepulsive.
- (5) *Avoiding both disagreeable and agreeable objects*, having seen a form with the eyes, heard a sound with the ears, smelt smells with the nose, tasted tastes with the tongue, felt a touch with the body, cognized a mind-object with the mind, one is neither glad nor sad, but abides in equanimity towards that, mindful and fully aware. (Pm 22.26/2:212 f; Vism 12.36/381 f)

Suttas like **the Indriya, bhāvanā Sutta** (M 152)<sup>9</sup> show that the arhats have fully mastered these 5 contemplations. In the Tikaṇḍaki Sutta, they are taught to unawakened monks for overcoming the 3 un-

<sup>6</sup> A 5.144/3:169 @ SD 2.12.

<sup>7</sup> Here arranged according to the Aṅguttara listing. See §12c & n. For diagram, see SD 2 (Table 4).

<sup>8</sup> “Elements,” *dhātu*. The analysis of the elements (*dhātu, vavatthāna*), the last of the 40 traditional meditation methods, is described in great detail at Vism 11.27-119/347-371. The method is given in brief in **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,6/2:294 f), SD 13.2, and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,12/1:57 f), SD 13.3, and in detail in **Mahā Hatthi, padūpamā S** (M 28,6-28/1:185-191), SD 6.16, **Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 62,8-17/1:421-425), SD 3.11, and **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140,13-18/3:240-243), SD 4.17.

<sup>9</sup> M 152,11-16/3:301, SD 17.13.

wholesome roots. The Aṅguttara Commentary says that the last item (5) is “the six-factored equanimity (*cha-ḷ-aṅ’upekkhā*), similar to, though not identical with, that possessed by the arhats.” (AA 3:290)

### 3 Liberation through the divine abodes

**3.1 THE 4 DIVINE ABODES AND THE 7 AWAKENING-FACTORS.** The closing section of the Metta,sahagata Sutta [§§12-15] shows how, when a monk (that is, a meditator) cultivates the awakening-factors—mindfulness, dharma-investigation, effort, zest, tranquillity, concentration and equanimity—“accompanied by” (*saha,gata*) by one of the divine abodes—lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity<sup>10</sup>—it can lead to liberation. Here **Bodhi** makes this interesting note:

This conjunction of the awakening-factors with the four divine abodes is unusual. On their own momentum the divine abodes lead to rebirth in the brahmā world rather than to Nibbāna (see M 2:82,24-27, 207-8; A 2:128-9). When integrated into the structure of the Buddha’s path, however, they can be used to generate concentration of sufficient strength to serve as a basis for insight, which in turn brings awakening. A striking instance is at M 1:351,18-352,2 [M 52.4-11, **Aṭṭhaka,nāgara S**]. [SA]: The monk develops the three jhānas based on lovingkindness, Then, takes this as a basis for developing insight and attains arahantship. The awakening factors are developed by insight and the path. (S:B 1911 n109)<sup>11</sup>

Each of these four practices comprises two further practices: the cultivation of the awakening factors (accompanied by the respective divine abode) by which one is freed, and a choice of either (a) one of the 5 perceptions, or (b) a dhyana (temporary liberation)—the scheme is here summarized:<sup>12</sup>

#### Awakening-factor

##### accompanied by

[§12] Lovingkindness  
[§13] Compassion  
[§14] Gladness  
[§15] Equanimity

##### (a) the 5 perceptions

one of the 5 perceptions  
"  
"  
"

##### (b) dhyanas (ie liberation, vimokkha)

the liberation by the beautiful.  
the base of infinite space.  
the base of infinite consciousness.  
the base of nothingness.

**3.2 THE BEAUTIFUL (SUBHA).** The “beautiful” (*subha*) here refers to dhyana, while the term “beauty element, or beautiful element” (*subha,dhātu*), refers to both the dhyana and its object, namely, a dhyana arisen on the basis of lovingkindness (Pm 2:39).

The Attha,sālinī, the Commentary on the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī, however, takes “the beautiful” here as referring to dhyana attainment through a colour device (*kaṣiṇa*) that is fully purified (DhsA 191).<sup>13</sup> As Analayo notes, this gloss goes against the teachings of the Paṭisambhidā,magga (2009:146 f).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For stock def see: **Cakka,vatti Sīha.nāda S** (D 26,28a(4)/3:48), SD 36.10 (said to be “in the wealth for a monk (*bhikkhuno bhogasmim*),” **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,1.11(6)/3:223); **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,31/1:297), SD 35.1, **Aṭṭhaka,nāgara S** (M 52,8-11/1:351 f), SD 41.2 (leading to either arhathood or non-returning), **Jīvaka S** (M 55,6/1:369), SD 43.4, **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97,32-33/2:195), SD 4.9, **Subha S** (M 99,24-27/2:207 f), SD 38.6, **Anuruddha S** (M 127,7/3:146), SD 54.10; **Go,datta S** (S 41.7/4:296); **(Saṅgha) Uposatha S** (A 4.190,4/2:184), SD 15.10b, **Dasama Gaha,pati S** (A 11.17,5-6/5:344), SD 41.2; **Pm 2:39**; **Vbh 13.1-2/272, 699/282**, see 272-284 for comy.

<sup>11</sup> Cf Aronson 1984:23 f, who is uncertain of this teaching.

<sup>12</sup> So noted in Upatissa’s **Vimutti.magga**: (Tr from Chin) N R M Ehara, Soma Thera & Kheminda Thera, Kandy, 1961; Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1977:195.

<sup>13</sup> See **Satta Dhātu S** (S 14.11/2:150 f. There are 10 kasinas, viz earth, water, fire, wind, blue, yellow, red, white, light and space: see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (9.2) & (Diag 8.1).

**3.2 THE 8 LIBERATIONS (AṬṬHA, VIMOKKHA).** The dhyana-states mentioned above form the third, fourth, fifth and sixth of the 8 liberations (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*), and are listed in **the Mahā Sakul’udāyi Sutta** (M 77):<sup>15</sup>

**The 1<sup>st</sup> liberation** is that of one with physical form who sees physical forms (*rūpī rūpāni passati*).

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> liberation** is that of one who does not see physical form internally, but sees physical forms externally (*ajjhataṃ arūpa, saññī bahiddhā rūpāni passati*).

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> liberation** is that of one liberated after contemplating the idea of the beautiful (*subhan’t’eva adhimutto hoti*). This is said in reference to the attainment of form dhyana (*rūpa jhāna*) by means of concentrating the mind on perfectly pure and bright colours as the *kaṣiṇa*-object. **The Paṭisambhidā, magga** says that this mental state is also produced through the cultivation of the divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*), as a result of which all beings appear perfectly pure and glorious, and thus the mind turns to the beautiful (Pm 5.20/2:39).

These first three are said in connection with *kaṣiṇa* meditation by way of the “bases of sovereignty” or “bases for transcendence” (*abhibhāyatana*), that is, one of the 8 stages of mastery over the senses through dhyana (*jhāna*).<sup>16</sup> The following four (4-7) are the formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*):

**The 4<sup>th</sup> liberation.** Through the utter transcending of the perception of physical form, the passing away of the perception of impingement [*paṭigha*, sense-contact], and non-attention to the perception of diversity, contemplating, “Space is infinite,” one enters and dwells in the base of infinite space.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> liberation.** Through the utter transcending of infinite space, contemplating, “Consciousness is infinite,” one enters and dwells in the base of infinite consciousness.

**The 6<sup>th</sup> liberation.** Through the utter transcending of the base of infinite consciousness, contemplating, “There is nothing,” one enters and dwells in the base of nothingness.

**The 7<sup>th</sup> liberation.** Through the utter transcending of the base of nothingness, one enters and dwells in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. This is the seventh liberation.

**The 8<sup>th</sup> liberation.** Through the utter transcending of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, one enters and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling.

The Commentary on **the Mahā Sakul’udāyi Sutta** (M 77)<sup>17</sup> says that these liberations are the mind’s full (but temporary) release from the opposing states and its full (but temporary) release by delighting in the object (MA 3:255, cf 255-259).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See §12 below & **Aṭṭha Vimokkha**, SD 62.5.

<sup>15</sup> M 77.22/2:12 f ; MA 3:255; the 4 dhyanas here are also listed in **Satta Dhātu S** (S 14.11/2:149-151). Only the 4 dhyanas mentioned here are noted in detail. For the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*), see **Mahā Nidāna S** (M 15), SD 5.17 (10).

<sup>16</sup> **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,3.24/2:110); **Mahā Sakuludāyi S** (M 77,22/2:13); **Abhibhāyatana S** (A 8.65/ 4:305), **Kosala S** (A 10.29/5:61). **Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** apparently regards the *abhibhāyatana* as being “concerned with the mastery and facility in certain aspects of *jhāna* practice” (Gethin, 2001:267). See Dhs 45-52 where the 8 *abhibhāyatana* (with slight variations from the Nikāya formulation) are treated as an aspect of *jhāna* that is of the form realm (*rūpāvacara*); cf DhsA 187-190. See BDict: abhibhāyatana.

<sup>17</sup> M 77,22/2:13.

<sup>18</sup> See **Aṭṭha Vimokkha**, SD 62.5.

#### 4 Textual convention

This sutta translation applies a new convention, namely, *a conflated headword* (in italics, may or may not be in bold) whose components should be listed out individually in the full reading, as in the following examples, both from §13 which in part repeats §12:

Here, bhikshus, a monk cultivates *the awakening-factors*<sup>19</sup> accompanied by compassion...  
 “May I dwell (practising one of) *the 5 perceptions*...”

In the first sentence, the 7 awakening-factors should be recited out individually [§12 for the list]. In the second, the five perceptions should similarly be listed out in their separate sentences [§12 for their list].

Alternatively, this convention could apply a computer programming technique by the use angle brackets, thus

Here, bhikshus, a monk cultivates <the awakening-factors> accompanied by compassion...  
 “May I dwell <practising one of the 5 perceptions>...”

However, some may regard this as being somewhat pedantically technical, so it is left to personal need and choice.

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## Mettā Sahagata Sutta

### The “Accompanied by Lovingkindness” Discourse

S 46.54

[115]

**1** At one time the Blessed One was dwelling among the Koliyas.<sup>20</sup> There was a town of the Koliyas named Halidda,vasana.<sup>21</sup>

**2** Then, in the morning, some monks, having dressed and taken their bowls and robes, entered Haliddavasana for alms.

**3** Then, it occurred to them:

“It is still too early<sup>22</sup> to walk for alms in Halidda,vasana. Let us go to the park of the wanderers of other sects.”

<sup>19</sup> This is a conflated headword whose components should be listed out individually in the full reading.

<sup>20</sup> The Koliyas were a tribe neighbouring on the east of the Sakyas, both of whom were separated by the river Rohinī (Tha 429). The Koliyas had two main towns, Rāmagama (the capital; identified with Rampur Deoriya in the district of Basti in Oudh) and the other Devadaha (Mahā Māyā’s home town).

<sup>21</sup> It is also at Halidda,vasana that the Buddha gives the teachings of **Kukkura,vatika S** (M 57/1:387-392), SD 23.11. MA explains that the town was so called because at the time of its building, people wore saffron coloured garments (*halidda,vattha,vatthā*) to celebrate a festival (*nakkhatta*) (MA 3:100). *Vasana* can mean either “clothing” or “habitat.”

<sup>22</sup> “Still too early,” *ati-p,pago kho*, D 1:178, 3:1; M 1:84, 481, 2:1, 3:7; S 11:32, 35, 5:108, 109, 115, 117; A 4:35, 378, 5:48, 49; this phrase parallels *ativikālo kho ajja*, D 1:108, 2:159.

## The wanderers' claim

4 Then, those monks went to the park of the wanderers of other sects. They exchanged greetings with those wanderers and, when they had concluded their greetings and cordial talk, sat down at one side.

The wanderers Then, said to them:

5 “Avuso [Friends], the recluse Gotama teaches the Dharma to his disciples thus:

‘Come, bhikshus, abandon the 5 hindrances, mental impurities that weaken wisdom,<sup>23</sup> and

(1) dwell with a heart of **lovingkindness**,<sup>24</sup> 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 oneself,

one dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness

that is vast, grown great [exalted],<sup>25</sup> immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.<sup>26</sup> [116]

that is vast, exalted, boundless, without hate, without ill-will.

(2) Dwell 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 oneself,

one dwells suffusing all the world with compassion

that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.

(3) Dwell 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 oneself,

one dwells suffusing all the world with gladness

that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.

(4) Dwell 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 oneself,

one dwells suffusing all the world with equanimity

<sup>23</sup> “Abandon the 5 hindrances, mental impurities that weaken wisdom,” *pañcanīvaraṇe pahāya cetaso upakkilese paññāya dubbhikāraṇe*. From the Pali here, it is clear that *upakkilese* qualifies *pañca, nīvaraṇe*. Otherwise, the *upakkilese* is a term for 16 mental impurities or lesser defilements explained in M 7.3, 128.27, 30; Vism 20.105. See BDict: upakkilese.

<sup>24</sup> This passage on lovingkindness and the other 3 on compassion, gladness and equanimity, constituting the 4 divine abodes, are stock: **Cakka, vatti Sīha, nāda S** (D 26,31/3:78), SD 36.10, says that it is “the wealth for a monk (*bhikkhuno bhogasmim*).” **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,1.11(6)/3:223), calls it “the immeasurables” (*appamañña*). **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,31/1:297), SD 35.1, (**Ceto, vimutti**) **Anuruddha S** (M 127,4-7/3:146 f), SD 54.10 & **Go, datta S** (S 41.7,5/4:296), SD 60.4, call it “the immeasurable freedom of mind” (*appamāṇā ceto, vimutti*). According to **Aṭṭhaka, nāgara S** (M 52,8-11/1:351 f) = **Dasama Gaha, pati S** (A 11.17/5:344), SD 41.2, if one stabilizes these states, reflecting on its impermanence, etc, one attains arhathood; if not, one attains non-returning. (**Majjhima**) **Jīvaka S** (M 55,6/1:369), SD 43.4, presents the Buddha as Brahmā. **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97,32-33/2:195), SD 4.9, and (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99,24-27/2:207 f), SD 38.6, call it the path to companionship with Brahmā (communion with God). (**Saṅgha**) **Uposatha S** (A 4.190,4/2:184), SD 15.10b, concerns one “attained to Godliness,” *brahma-p, patta*. **Pm** 5.20/2:39 calls it “freedom that is focussed on only the beautiful,” *subhan t’eva adhimutto hoti ti vimokkho*; **Vbh** 13/272-276 (*sutta, niddesa*), 276-282 (*abhidhamma, niddesa*), 282-284 (*comy*). For a table of refs, see SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

<sup>25</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>26</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. On the directions of lovingkindness, see SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.’

6 We, too, avuso, teach the Dharma to our disciples, thus:

- (1)  *dwell with a heart of **lovingkindness**, 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 oneself,  
 one dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness  
 that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.<sup>27</sup> [116]*
- (2)  *Dwell 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 oneself,  
 one dwells suffusing all the world with compassion  
 that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.*
- (3)  *Dwell 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 oneself,  
 one dwells suffusing all the world with gladness  
 that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.*
- (4)  *Dwell 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 oneself,  
 one dwells suffusing all the world with equanimity  
 that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.’*

7 So, avuso, what here is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the ascetic Gotama and us, that is, [117] in terms of Dharma teaching or in terms of instruction?<sup>28</sup>

7.2 Then, the monks neither approved of the wanderers’ word nor rejected it.

Neither approving of it nor rejecting it, they rose from their seats and left, thinking:

7.3 “We shall learn the meaning of this statement in the presence of the Blessed One.”

## The monks report to the Buddha

8 Then, when those monks had walked for alms in Haliddavasana and had returned from the alms-round, after their meal, they approached the Blessed One.

9 Having paid homage to him, they sat down at one side and said this to the Blessed One:

9.2 “Here, bhante, early in the morning, we, having dressed and taken their bowls and robes, entered Haliddavasana for alms.

9.3 Then, bhante, it occurred to us:

‘It is still too early to walk for alms in Haliddavasana. Let us go to the park of the wanderers of other sects.’

<sup>27</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. On the directions of lovingkindness, see SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

<sup>28</sup> SA on S 46.52 says that the teacher of other non-Buddhist sects do not have any original teachings on the five hindrances and the seven awakening-factors. When they teach their own disciples they resort to the Buddha’s teachings on these topics. **Rupert Gethin** points out, however, that the sutta itself does not go so far as the Comy, but only stresses the differences between the two ways of teaching (1992:180).

9.4 Then, bhante, we went to the park of the wanderers of other sects. We exchanged greetings with those wanderers and, when we had concluded their greetings and cordial talk, sat down at one side.

The wanderers then said to us:

9.5 'Avuso, the recluse Gotama teaches the Dharma to his disciples thus:

"Come, bhikshus, abandon the 5 hindrances, mental impurities that weaken wisdom,<sup>29</sup> and

- (1) dwell with a heart of **lovingkindness**, 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 oneself,  
one dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.  
that is vast, exalted, boundless, without hate, without ill-will.
- (2) Dwell 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 oneself,  
one dwells suffusing all the world with compassion  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.
- (3) Dwell 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 oneself,  
one dwells suffusing all the world with gladness  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.
- (4) Dwell 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 oneself,  
one dwells suffusing all the world with equanimity  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], [118] immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will."

9.6 We, too, avuso, teach the Dharma to our disciples, thus:

- (1) dwell with a heart of **lovingkindness**, 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 oneself,  
one dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.
- (2) Dwell 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 oneself,  
one dwells suffusing all the world with compassion  
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.
- (3) Dwell 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 oneself,  
one dwells suffusing all the world with gladness

<sup>29</sup> "Abandon the five hindrances, mental impurities that weaken wisdom," *pañcanīvaraṇe pahāya cetaso upakkilese paññāya dubbalīkaraṇe*. From the Pali here, it is clear that *upakkilese* qualifies *pañca, nīvaraṇe*. Otherwise, the *upakkilesa* is a term for 16 mental impurities or lesser defilements explained in M 7.3, 128.27, 30; Vism 20.105. See BDict: upakkilesa.



*that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.*

(4) *Dwell 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 oneself,*

*one dwells suffusing all the world with equanimity*

*that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.'*

9.7 *So, avuso, what here is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the ascetic Gotama and us, that is, in terms of Dharma teaching or in terms of instruction?"*

9.8 Then, bhante, we, neither approved of the wanderers' word nor rejected it.

Neither approving of it nor rejecting it, we rose from our seats and left, thinking:

9.9 "We shall learn the meaning of this statement in the presence of the Blessed One."

### The Buddha's answer

**10** "Bhikshus, when wanderers of other sects speak thus, they should be asked:

10.2 'Avuso, how is the liberation of mind by lovingkindness cultivated?

What does it have as its goal, its utmost, its fruit, its end?<sup>30</sup>

10.3 Avuso, how is the liberation of mind by compassion cultivated?

What does it have as its goal, its utmost, its fruit, its end?

10.4 Avuso, how is the liberation of mind by gladness cultivated?

What does it have as its goal, its utmost, its fruit, its end?

10.5 Avuso, how is the liberation of mind by equanimity cultivated?

What does it have as its goal, its utmost, its fruit, its end?'

10.6 Being asked thus, those wanderers would not be able to reply and, further, they would be annoyed.

**11** What is the reason for that? Because it would be beyond their ken (to answer the question).

11.2 I do not see anyone, bhikshus, in this world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers<sup>31</sup> and people,

11.3 who could satisfy the mind with an answer to these questions except the Tathāgata or a disciple of the Tathāgata or one who has heard it from them. **[119]**

### **(A) LIBERATION OF MIND BY LOVINGKINDNESS**

**12** And how, bhikshus, is **the liberation of mind by lovingkindness** cultivated?

What does it have as its goal, its utmost, its fruit, its end?<sup>32</sup>

### The 7 awakening-factors (1)

12.2 Here, bhikshus,

a monk cultivates the awakening-factor of **mindfulness** (*sati sambojjhaṅga*),

accompanied by lovingkindness,<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Kiriṅ, gatikā kiriṅ, paramā kiriṅ, phalā kiriṅ, pariyosanā*. "Utmost," *paramā*, alt tr "outmost," but the word is becoming dated.

<sup>31</sup> *deva*, here in the sense of "devas by convention" (*sammati, deva*), i.e. kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are "gods by rebirth" (*upapatti, deva*) and "gods by purification" (*visuddhi, deva*), i.e. the Buddhas, Pratyeka Buddhas and arhats. (Nc 307 KhA 123).

<sup>32</sup> See above Intro (2).

- supported by seclusion,  
 by the fading away (of lust),<sup>34</sup>  
 by the cessation (of suffering),<sup>35</sup> and  
 ripens in the letting go (of defilements).<sup>36</sup>
- 12.3 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **dharma-investigation** (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by lovingkindness,  
 supported by seclusion,  
 by the fading away (of lust),  
 by the cessation (of suffering), and  
 ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 12.4 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **effort** (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by lovingkindness,  
 supported by seclusion,  
 by the fading away (of lust),  
 by the cessation (of suffering), and  
 ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 12.5 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **zest** (*piṭi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by lovingkindness,  
 supported by seclusion,  
 by the fading away (of lust),  
 by the cessation (of suffering), and  
 ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 12.6 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **tranquillity** (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by lovingkindness,  
 supported by seclusion,  
 by the fading away (of lust),  
 by the cessation (of suffering), and  
 ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 12.7 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **concentration** (*samādhī sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by lovingkindness,  
 supported by seclusion,  
 by the fading away (of lust),  
 by the cessation (of suffering), and  
 ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 12.8 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **equanimity** (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by lovingkindness,  
 supported by seclusion,  
 by the fading away (of lust),  
 by the cessation (of suffering), and  
 ripens in the letting go (of defilements).

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<sup>33</sup> “Accompanied by lovingkindness,” *mettā, saḥagatāni*.

<sup>34</sup> *virāga*, also “dispassion.” See Intro above.

<sup>35</sup> That is, “cessation of suffering” (*nirodha*).

<sup>36</sup> MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (*vossagga*): “giving up” (*paric-cāga*), i.e. the abandonment of defilements, and “entering into” (*pakkhandana*), i.e. culminating in nirvana.

### The 5 perceptions (1)<sup>37</sup>

- 12.9 (1) If he wishes thus,  
 ‘May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,’  
 he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.
- (2) If he wishes thus,  
 ‘May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,’  
 he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.
- (3) If he wishes thus,  
 ‘May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,’  
 he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.
- (4) If he wishes thus,  
 ‘May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,’  
 he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.
- (5) If he wishes thus,  
 ‘May I dwell rejecting both the unrepulsive and the repulsive, and dwell in equanimity, mindful and fully aware,’  
 he dwells therein equanimously, mindful and fully aware.
- 12.10 Or else, he enters and dwells in **the liberation by the beautiful** (*subha vimokkha*).<sup>38</sup>
- 12.11 Bhikshus, the liberation of mind by *lovingkindness* has the beautiful as its highest point,<sup>39</sup> I say, for a wise monk here who has not penetrated to a higher liberation.<sup>40</sup>

### **(B) LIBERATION OF MIND BY COMPASSION**

**13** And how, bhikshus, is **the liberation of mind by compassion** cultivated?  
 What does it have as its goal, its utmost, its fruit, its end?

### The 7 awakening-factors (2)

13.2 Here, bhikshus,  
 a monk cultivates the awakening-factor of **mindfulness** (*sati sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by compassion,  
 supported by seclusion,

<sup>37</sup> These 5 perceptions occur at **Tikaṇḍaki S** (A 5.144.2/3:169), SD 2.12, where they are explained in some detail; see also **Indriya, bhāvanā S** (M 152.11-16/3:301 f), SD 17.13. For further details, see **Paṭisambhidā, magga** (Pm 22.26/2:212 f) and Vism 12.36/381 f. See Intro 2.

<sup>38</sup> See foll 2 nn.

<sup>39</sup> “Highest point,” *parama*, rendered as “utmost” above [§10].

<sup>40</sup> SA: This teaching is for the benefit of one who is unable to attain arhathood after reviewing formations based on dhyana through lovingkindness. In his long note, **Bodhi** discusses some problems in Comy and summarizes this cultivation in terms of the 4 divine abodes thus: “(1) one who abides in lovingkindness can easily apply his mind to a beautiful colour *kaṣiṇa* and quickly attain the beautiful liberation (ie, jhāna based on a colour *kaṣiṇa*); (2) one who abides in compassion recognizes the danger in form and thus cultivates the base of infinite space, which is the escape from form; (3) one who abides in gladness apprehends the joyful consciousness of beings and thus easily enters the base of infinite consciousness; and (4) one who abides in equanimity is skilled in diverting his mind from joy and pain, and thus can easily divert it to the absence of any concrete entity in the base of nothingness.” (S:B 1911 n111)

- by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 13.3 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **dharma-investigation** (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by compassion,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 13.4 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **effort** (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by compassion,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 13.5 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **zest** (*piṭi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by compassion,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 13.6 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **tranquillity** (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by compassion,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 13.7 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **concentration** (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by compassion,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 13.8 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **equanimity** (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by compassion,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).

### The 5 perceptions (2)

13.9 (1) If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.

(2) If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.

(3) If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.

(4) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(5) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell rejecting both the unrepulsive and the repulsive, and dwell in equanimity, mindful and fully aware,' he dwells therein equanimously, mindful and fully aware.*

13.10 Or else, with the complete transcendence of perceptions of form,  
with the passing away of perceptions of sensory impingement,  
with non-attention to perceptions of diversity,  
aware that '**space is infinite**,

*he enters and dwells in the base of infinite space. [120]*

13.11 Bhikshus, the liberation of mind by *compassion* has the base of infinite space as its highest point, I say, for a wise monk here who has not penetrated to a higher liberation.

### (C) LIBERATION OF MIND THROUGH GLADNESS

**14** And how, bhikshus, is **the liberation of mind by gladness** cultivated?  
What does it have as its goal, its utmost, its fruit, its end?

#### The 7 awakening-factors (3)

14.2 Here, bhikshus,  
a monk cultivates the awakening-factor of **mindfulness** (*sati sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by gladness,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).

14.3 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **dharma-investigation** (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by gladness,  
*supported by seclusion,*  
*by the fading away (of lust),*  
*by the cessation (of suffering), and*  
*ripens in the letting go (of defilements).*

14.4 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **effort** (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by gladness,  
*supported by seclusion,*  
*by the fading away (of lust),*  
*by the cessation (of suffering), and*  
*ripens in the letting go (of defilements).*

14.5 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **zest** (*piṭi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by gladness,  
*supported by seclusion,*  
*by the fading away (of lust),*  
*by the cessation (of suffering), and*  
*ripens in the letting go (of defilements).*

14.6 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **tranquillity** (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by gladness,  
*supported by seclusion,*

*by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).*

14.7 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **concentration** (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by gladness,  
supported by seclusion,  
*by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).*

14.8 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **equanimity** (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by gladness,  
supported by seclusion,  
*by the fading away (of lust),*

*by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).*

### The 5 perceptions (3)

14.9 (1) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.*

(2) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(3) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.*

(4) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(5) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell rejecting both the unrepulsive and the repulsive, and dwell in equanimity, mindful and fully aware,' he dwells therein equanimously, mindful and fully aware.*

14.10 Or else, completely transcending the base of infinite space,  
aware that 'consciousness is infinite,'

he enters and dwells in **the base of infinite consciousness**.

14.11 Bhikshus, the liberation of mind by *gladness* has the base of infinite consciousness as its highest point, I say, for a wise monk here who has not penetrated to a higher liberation.

### **(D) LIBERATION OF MIND THROUGH EQUANIMITY**

**15** And how, bhikshus, is **the liberation of mind by equanimity** cultivated?  
What does it have as its goal, its utmost, its fruit, its end?

### The 7 awakening-factors (4)

15.2 Here, bhikshus,  
a monk cultivates the awakening-factor of **mindfulness** (*sati sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by equanimity,  
supported by seclusion,  
*by the fading away (of lust),*

- by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 15.3 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **dharma-investigation** (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by equanimity,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 15.4 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **effort** (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by equanimity,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 15.5 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **zest** (*pīti sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by equanimity,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 15.6 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **tranquillity** (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by equanimity,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 15.7 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **concentration** (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by equanimity,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).
- 15.8 He cultivates the awakening-factor of **equanimity** (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*),  
accompanied by equanimity,  
supported by seclusion,  
by the fading away (of lust),  
by the cessation (of suffering), and  
ripens in the letting go (of defilements).

### The 5 perceptions (4)

15.9 (1) If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.

(2) If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.

(3) If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and in the repulsive,' he dwells perceiving the repulsive therein.

(4) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and in the unrepulsive,' he dwells perceiving the unrepulsive therein.*

(5) *If he wishes thus, 'May I dwell rejecting both the unrepulsive and the repulsive, and dwell in equanimity, mindful and fully aware,' he dwells therein equanimously, mindful and fully aware.*

15.10 Or else, completely transcending the base of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing,' he enters and dwells in **the base of nothingness**.

15.11 Bhikshus, the liberation of mind by equanimity has the base of nothingness as its highest point, I say, for a wise monk here who has not penetrated to a higher liberation."

— evaṃ —

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