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## Parivīmaṃsana Sutta

The Discourse on Thorough Investigation | S 12.51/2:80-84

Theme: How dependent arising leads to nirvana

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2003, 2023

### Introduction

**1 The Parivīmaṃsana Sutta** shows how a thorough investigation of dependent arising (*paṭicca,samuppāda*) leads to spiritual awakening. The manner in which the twelve-link dependent arising is presented is also found in a number of other suttas of the Saṃyutta Nikāya: **the Assaji Sutta** (S 22.88) = **the Gelañña Sutta 1** (S 36.7) = **the Gelañña Sutta 2** (S 36.8) = **the Dīpa Sutta** (S 54.8).<sup>1</sup> Sections 14-30, which concludes the Sutta, mention the arhat’s reviewing knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa,ñāṇa*) and constant dwelling (*sata-ta,vihāra*) (SA 2:78). These same passages recur with a different parable (that of an oil-lamp) in **the Assaji Sutta** (S 22.88) = **the Gelañña Sutta 1** (S 36.7) = **the Gelañña Sutta 2** (S 36.8) = **the Dīpa Sutta** (S 54.8).<sup>2</sup>

**2 The oil lamp parable** is this: “Just as an oil lamp burns depending on oil and wick, and with the exhaustion of the oil and the wick, it is extinguished through lack of fuel, even so, when a monk feels a feeling ending with the body, he understands, ‘I feel a feeling ending with the body.’ When he feels a feeling ending with life, he understands, ‘I feel a feeling ending with life.’ He understands, ‘With the breaking up of the body following the ending of life, all that is felt, not delighted in, will be cooled right here<sup>3</sup>—only physical bodies will remain.’” [1]

**3** This Sutta presents a good example where **dependent arising** is presented synchronically, that is, *within one lifetime*. The diachronic method (spanning over at least *3 successive lives*: the past, the present and the future) was introduced in the Commentaries, that is, as the “wheel of existence” (*bhava,cakka*).<sup>4</sup> The Suttas however treat the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*) both synchronically (within the one and same life) and diachronically (over many lives). The 5 aggregates are presented in a diachronic manner in such suttas as **the Samādhi Sutta** (S 22.5/3:13-15). They are examined from the standpoint of synchronic conditionality in **the (Upādāna) Parivaṅga Sutta** (S 22.56) and **the Satta-ṭṭhāna S** (S 22.57).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S 36.7/4:219-213 = S 36.8/4:213 f = S 54.8/5:316 = 320.

<sup>2</sup> S 22.88.22-25/3:126 = S 36.7.9-12/4:213 = S 36.8.7-12/4:214 = S 54.8.30-31/5:319 f.

<sup>3</sup> “Will be cooled right here,” *idh’eva ... sīti,bhavissati*. Comy: They will be cooled right here, without having gone elsewhere by way of rebirth, subject to no further occurrence, without the struggle and distress of their occurrence. (SA 2:80).

<sup>4</sup> Eg Vism 17.273-314/576-586.

<sup>5</sup> S 22.56/3:58-61) = SD 3.7 & S 22.57/3:61-65 = SD 29.2. See also S:B 743 n58, 1065 n81.

# Parivāraṃsana Sutta

## The Discourse on Thorough Investigation

S 12.51/2:80-84

[80]

1 Thus have I heard.

### Preamble

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's Park in Jeta's Grove near **Sāvattḥī**.

2 There the Blessed One addressed the monks:

"Bhikshus!"

"Bhante! [*bhadante*]" the monks answered the Blessed One in assent.

3 The Blessed One said this:

"Bhikshus, when a monk is thoroughly investigating (phenomena),

**how should he thoroughly investigate them**

**for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way?"**

"Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, [81] has the Blessed One as refuge. It would be good indeed if the Blessed One were to explain its meaning. Having heard the Blessed One, the monks would remember it."<sup>6</sup>

### Dependent arising<sup>7</sup>

4 "Then, listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak."

"Yes, bhante!" the monks replied the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

(1) SUFFERING

5 "Here,<sup>8</sup> bhikshus, when a monk is thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

'Whatever **suffering** (*dukkha*), in numerous forms and various aspects, such as decay-and-death, that arises in the world—

what is the cause, the arising, the birth,

the source of this suffering?<sup>9</sup>

When what exists

does this decay-and-death exist?

When what does not exist

does this decay-and-death not exist?

<sup>6</sup> Bhagavam,mūlakā no bhante dhammā, bhagavaṃ nettikā, bhagavaṃ paṭisaraṇā. Sādhu vata bhante bhagavata-ñ'eva paṭibhātu etassa bhāsītassa attho. Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressantīti. This is stock: **Mahā Dhamma-samādāna S** (M 46,2/1:309 f), SD 59.11; **Vīmaṃsaka S** (M 47,3/1:317), SD 35.6; **Naḷakapāna S** (M 68,8/1:465), SD 37.4; **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122,19/3:115), SD 11.4; **Bālena Paṇḍita S** (S 2:24), SD 21.1, **Parivāraṃsanā S** (S 12.51/2:81), SD 11.5, **Candūpama S** (S 16.3/2:199), SD 38.2; **Sammā,sambuddha S** (S 22.58/3:66), SD 49.10; **Sall'atthana S** (S 36.6/4:208), SD 5.5, **Ānanda S 2** (S 36.16/4:221); **(Tika) Añña Titthiyā S** (A 3.68/1:199), SD 16.4; **Loka,dhamma S** (A 8.6/4:158), SD 48.3; **Kiṃ Mūlaka S** (A 8.83/4:338), SD 32.10; **Sambodhi Pakkhika Dhamma S** (A 9.1/4:351), SD 82.1; **Bhagavā Mūlaka S** (A 10.58/5:106), SD 57.20; **(Ekādasaka) Samādhi S 2** (A 11.20/5:355).

<sup>7</sup> Cp the 12 links here (beginning with *suffering*) (the reverse cycle) with the 12 links beginning with *ignorance* (the forward cycle): SD 5.16 (1.4).

<sup>8</sup> "Here," *idha*, ie *idha dhamma,vinaye*," in this "teaching and discipline".

<sup>9</sup> Idam nu kho dukkham kin,nidānam kiṃ,samudayam kiṃ,jātikam kim,pabhavam.

## (2) BIRTH; DECAY AND DEATH

6 As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever suffering that is decay-and-death, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

this suffering has **birth** (*jāti*) as its cause, birth as its arising, birth as its birth,<sup>10</sup> birth as its source.

When there is birth, there is decay-and-death.

When there is *no* birth, there is no decay-and-death.

7 He understands **decay-and-death** (*jarā, maraṇa*);

and he understands *the arising* of decay-and-death;

and he understands *the ending* of decay-and-death;

and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of decay-and-death.<sup>11</sup>

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

8 This monk, bhikshu, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

## (3) EXISTENCE

9 Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of this birth (*jāti*)?<sup>12</sup>

When what exists does this birth exist?

When what does not exist does this birth not exist?

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever birth, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

this birth has **existence** (*bhava*) as its cause, existence as its arising, existence as its birth, existence as its source.

When there is existence, there is birth.

When there is no existence, there is no birth.

He understands **birth**;

and he understands *the arising* of birth;

and he understands *the ending* of birth;

and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of birth.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshu, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

## (4) CLINGING

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of this existence (*bhava*)?

When what exists does existence exist?

When what does not exist does existence not exist?

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever existence, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

<sup>10</sup> “Birth as its birth,” *jāti, jātikam*.

<sup>11</sup> “[H]e understands the path that conforms ... etc.,” *yā ca jarā, maraṇa, nirodha, sārūppa, gāminī paṭipadā taṃ ca pajānati*. Comy: This is the way leading on in conformity with the ending of decay-and-death, by way of its undefiled nature or purity. (SA 2:77).

<sup>12</sup> PTS omits *jāti panāyaṃ kin nidānaṃ* due to editorial oversight.

this existence has **clinging** (*upādāna*) as its cause, clinging as its arising, clinging as its birth, clinging as its source.

|                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| When there is clinging,    | there is existence.    |
| When there is no clinging, | there is no existence. |

He understands **existence**;  
and he understands *the arising* of existence;  
and he understands *the ending* of existence;  
and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of existence.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshu, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

(5) CRAVING

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of this clinging (*upādāna*)?’

|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| When what exists         | does clinging exist?     |
| When what does not exist | does clinging not exist? |

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever clinging, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

this existence has **craving** (*taṇhā*) as its cause, craving as its arising, craving as its birth, craving as its source.

|                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| When there is craving,    | there is clinging.    |
| When there is no craving, | there is no clinging. |

He understands **clinging**;  
and he understands *the arising* of clinging;  
and he understands *the ending* of clinging;  
and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of clinging.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshu, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

(6) FEELING

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of this craving (*taṇhā*)?’

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| When what exists         | does craving exist?     |
| When what does not exist | does craving not exist? |

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever craving, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

this existence has **feeling** (*vedanā*) as its cause, feeling as its arising, feeling as its birth, feeling as its source.

|                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| When there is feeling,    | there is craving.    |
| When there is no feeling, | there is no craving. |

He understands **craving**;  
and he understands the arising of craving;  
and he understands the ending of craving;  
and he understands the path that conforms to the leading to the ending of craving.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshus, is called one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way.

## (7) CONTACT

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of this **feeling** (*vedanā*)?

When what exists does feeling exist?

When what does not exist does feeling not exist?

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever feeling, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

this existence has **contact** (*phassa*) as its cause, contact as its arising, contact as its birth, contact as its source.

When there is contact, there is feeling.

When there is no contact, there is no feeling.

He understands **feeling**;

and he understands *the arising* of feeling;

and he understands *the ending* of feeling;

and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of feeling.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshus, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

## (8) THE 6 SENSE-BASES

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of this **contact** (*phassa*)?

When what exists does contact exist?

When what does not exist does contact not exist?

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever contact, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

this contact has **the 6 sense-bases** (*saḷ-āyatana*) as its cause, contact as its arising, contact as its birth, contact as its source.

When there are the 6 sense-bases, there is contact.

When there are no 6 sense-bases, there is no contact.

He understands **contact**;

and he understands *the arising* of contact;

and he understands *the ending* of contact;

and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of contact.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshus, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

## (9) NAME-AND-FORM

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of these **6 sense-bases** (*cha saḷāyatana*)?

When what exists do the 6 sense-bases exist?

When what does not exist do the 6 sense-bases not exist?

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever the 6 sense-bases, in numerous forms and various aspects, arise in the world—

these 6 sense-bases have **name-and-form** (*nāma,rūpa*) as their cause, contact as their arising, contact as their birth, contact as their source.

When there is name-and-form, there is the 6 sense-bases.

When there is no name-and-form, there is no 6 sense-bases.

He understands **the 6 sense-bases**;

and he understands *the arising* of the 6 sense-bases;

and he understands *the ending* of the 6 sense-bases;

and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of the 6 sense-bases.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshu, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

#### (10) CONSCIOUSNESS

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of this **name-and-form** (*nāma,rūpa*)?’

When what exists does name-and-form exist?

When what does not exist does name-and-form not exist?

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever name-and-form, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

this name-and-form has **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*) as their cause, consciousness as their arising, consciousness as their birth, consciousness as their source.

When there is consciousness, there is name-and-form.

When there is no consciousness, there is no name-and-form.

He understands **name-and-form**;

and he understands *the arising* of name-and-form;

and he understands *the ending* of name-and-form;

and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of name-and-form.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshu, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

#### (11) VOLITIONAL FORMATIONS

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause, the arising, the birth, the source of this **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*)?’

When what exists does consciousness exist?

When what does not exist does consciousness not exist?

As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Whatever consciousness, in numerous forms and various aspects, arises in the world—

this consciousness has **volitional formations** (*saṅkhārā*) as their cause, volitional formations as their arising, volitional formations as their birth, volitional formations as their source.

When there are volitional formations, there is consciousness.

When there are no volitional formations, there is no consciousness.

He understands **consciousness**;

and he understands *the arising* of consciousness;

and he understands *the ending* of consciousness;

and he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of consciousness.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshus, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

## (12) IGNORANCE

Furthermore, when thoroughly investigating (phenomena), he thoroughly investigates thus:

‘What is the cause the arising, the birth, the source of these **volitional formations** (*saṅkhārā*)?’

When what exists do these volitional formations exist?

When what does not exist do these volitional formations not exist?’

**10** As he thoroughly investigates, he understands thus:

‘Volitional formations have **ignorance** (*avijjā*) as their cause, ignorance as their arising, ignorance as their birth, ignorance as their source. [82]

When there is ignorance, there are volitional formations.

When there is no ignorance, there are no volitional formations.

**11** He understands **volitional formations**;<sup>13</sup>

he understands *the arising* of volitional formations;

he understands *the ending* of volitional formations;

he understands *the path* that conforms to the leading to the ending of volitional formations.

And thus he practises and conducts himself accordingly.

This monk, bhikshus, is called *one who is practising for the complete destruction of suffering in the right way*.

The 3 kinds of volitional formations

**12** Bhikshus, if a person, drowned in ignorance,<sup>14</sup> creates meritorious volitional formation,<sup>15</sup> his consciousness fares in merit.

If he creates demeritorious volitional formation, his consciousness fares in demerit.

If he creates imperturbable volitional formation, his consciousness fares in the imperturbable.<sup>16</sup>

**13** Bhikshus, when a monk has abandoned ignorance and true knowledge has arisen in him, then, with that very fading away of ignorance and the arising of true knowledge,

he does *not* create meritorious volitional formation,

he does *not* create demeritorious formation,

he does *not* create imperturbable formation.

<sup>13</sup> Since this dependent arising is explained in terms of the present life, we should note “volitional formations” (*saṅkhārā*) here—as in (**Kamma,vāda**) **Bhūmija S** (S 12.25,13-19), SD 31.2 (3) & **Sañcetanā S** (JA 4.171), SD 18.6—as denoting the 3 karma formations (*abhisāṅkhārā*), ie, the bodily (*kāya,saṅkhāra*), viz in-an-out-breathing (as the 4 elements = breath as contact, continuity, warmth and motion), the verbal (*vacī,saṅkhāra*), viz thinking and pondering, and the mental (*citta,saṅkhāra*), viz perception and feeling.

<sup>14</sup> “A person drowned in ignorance,” *āvijjā’gato*, lit “one gone to ignorance,” one engaged in ignorance.

<sup>15</sup> “Creates meritorious volitional activities,” *puññaṃ ... saṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti*.

<sup>16</sup> Comy: “Meritorious volitional formation” (*puññaṃ saṅkhāraṃ*) is one of the 13 kinds of volition (ie the volitions of the 8 wholesome sense-sphere cittas (*kāmāvacara,cittā*) and the 5 wholesome cittas of the form sphere (*rūpāvacara,cittā*)). “His consciousness fares in merit” (*puññūpagam hoti viññāṇam*) means that the karmic consciousness becomes associated with a meritorious karma, the resultant consciousness with the fruits of merit. “Demeritorious volitional formation” (*apuññaṃ saṅkhāraṃ*) is the 12 kinds of volition (ie in the 12 unwholesome cittas). “Imperturbable volitional formation” (*āneñjaṃ saṅkhāraṃ*) refers to the 4 kinds of volition (ie in the 4 wholesome cittas of the formless realms (*arūpāvacara,citta*)). (SA 2:78). For analysis of these 3 types of volitional activities, see Vbh 135. **The Āneñja,sappāya S** (M 106) explains in detail how consciousness “fares in the imperturbable” (*āneñjūpaga*) (M 106/2:261-266). On the tr of *saṅkhāra*, see S:B General Intro & 727 n7.

## The arhat's review knowledge

**14** When he neither creates nor forms<sup>17</sup> volitional formation, he does not cling to anything in the world.

Not clinging to anything in the world, he is not agitated.<sup>18</sup>

Not agitated, he attains nirvana by himself.<sup>19</sup> He understands,  
‘Destroyed is birth. The holy life has been lived. What needs to be done has been done.  
There is (for me) no more of arising in any state of being.’<sup>20</sup>

## The arhat's constant abiding<sup>21</sup>

**15** If he feels a pleasant feeling,

he understands, ‘It is impermanent’;  
he understands, ‘It is not hankered after’;  
he understands, ‘It is not delighted in.’

If he feels a painful feeling,

he understands, ‘It is impermanent’;  
he understands, ‘It is not hankered after’;  
he understands, ‘It is not delighted in.’

If he feels a neutral feeling,

he understands, ‘It is impermanent’;  
he understands, ‘It is not hankered after’;  
he understands, ‘It is not delighted in.’

**16** If he feels *a pleasant feeling*, he feels it in a detached manner.<sup>22</sup>  
If he feels *a painful feeling*, he feels it in a detached manner.  
If he feels *a neutral feeling*, he feels it in a detached manner. **[83]**

<sup>17</sup> “When he neither creates nor forms,” *anabhisankharanto anabhisañcetaṃto*. The word *abhisañcetaṃti* means “he thinks out, plans.”

<sup>18</sup> “He is not agitated,” *na paritassati*. There is wordplay on *paritassati* (Skt *paritṛṣyati*. “to crave, to thirst for,”) and *taṇhā*: both *-tassati* and *taṇhā* are rooted in √TRṢ, to thirst. However, in Pali (and MIA dialects generally) the verbal stem is conflated with *tasati*, “to fear, to tremble”; thus its noun derivatives such as *paritas-sanā* and *paritasita* gain the sense of nouns derived from *tasati*. This conflation is evident in the suttas and highlighted in the Comys. “Agitated” should be understood as polysemic, connoting both nuances; vb “to be agitated” and n “agitation,” and as Comy tells us that such a one is not agitated due to craving (*taṇhā, paritassanā*) nor due to fear (*bhaya, paritassanā*); meaning that he neither craves nor fears (SA 2:78). Comy is silent on *parinibbayati*, but the context here is clearly that of *kilesa, parinibbāna*, the total extinction of defilements. See S:B 265 n137 & General Intro S:B 49 f.

<sup>19</sup> “By himself,” *paccattam*, ie through his own effort, not through the power of another. (SA 2:78)

<sup>20</sup> This quote is the arhat's reviewing knowledge (*paccavekkana, ñāṇa*), for which, see S:B I n376.

<sup>21</sup> Comy: After the arhat's reviewing knowledge has been shown, this passage then shows his constant abiding (*satata, vihāra*) (SA 2:78). From hereon to the end, is a pericope with different figures in **Parivāraṃsana S** (S 12.52,-15-18/2:82 f), SD 11.5; **Assaji S** (S 22.88,22-26/3:126), SD 42.8; **Gelaṇṇa S 1** (S 36.7,9-12/4:213); **Gelaṇṇa S 2** (S 36.8,7-12/4:213); **Padīpōpama S** (S 54.8,30-31/5:319 f), SD 62.2.

<sup>22</sup> “Detached,” *visaṇṇuto*, alt tr “unyoked.”



**17** When he feels **a feeling ending with the body**, he understands,  
'I feel a feeling ending with the body.'<sup>23</sup>

When he feels **a feeling ending with life**, he understands, 'I feel a feeling ending with life.'<sup>24</sup>

He understands, 'With the breaking up of the body following the ending of life, all that is felt, not delighted in, will be cooled right here—only physical bodies<sup>25</sup> will remain.'

**18** Bhikshus, just as a person would remove a hot clay pot from the potter's kiln<sup>26</sup>  
and place it on level ground so that its heat would dissipate right there, leaving only earthenware,<sup>27</sup>  
even so, bhikshus, when a monk feels **a feeling ending with the body**,  
he understands, 'I feel a feeling ending with the body';

when he feels **a feeling ending with life**, he understands, 'I feel a feeling ending with life.'

He understands, 'With the breaking up of the body following the ending of life, all that is felt, not delighted in, will be cooled right here<sup>28</sup>—only physical bodies will remain.'<sup>29</sup>

## Nature of the arhat

**19** What do you think, bhikshus, can a monk **whose influxes are destroyed**  
create meritorious volitional formations,  
or create demeritorious volitional formations,  
or create imperturbable volitional formations?"  
"No, bhante."

<sup>23</sup> "A feeling ending with the body," *kāya,pariyantikam vedanam*. Comy: This means delimited by the body. As long as the body with its 5 sense-doors continues, the feelings arising there continue. (SA 2:78).

<sup>24</sup> "A feeling ending with life," *jivita,pariyantikam vedanam*. Comy: This means delimited by life. As long as life continues, the feelings arising at the mind-door continue. (SA 2:79).

<sup>25</sup> "Physical bodies," (pl) *sarirāni* (sg *sarira*). Comy glosses it as *dhātu,sarirāni*, "bodily elements," ie bones (*aṭṭhika,kaṅkala*, SAPT). *Kapilla* simply means a pot or a bowl, but Comy says the plural here denotes potsherds bound together along with the rim. (SA 2:80,30 f). Comy prob attempts to highlight the composite and fragile nature of our body, evoking how broken potsherds are stuck together again with gold; but this is a metaphor for embracing our flaws and imperfections. In other words, in Dharma terms, life is precious by its very fragility and interbeing, and is the path to awakening.

<sup>26</sup> **The pot parable**. Comy: The potter's fiery kiln represents the 3 realms of existence; the potter is the meditator; and his rod the knowledge of the path to arhathood. The level ground represents nirvana. The time when the potter removes the hot clay pot from the kiln and places it on the ground is like when the meditator, having attained the supreme fruit of arhathood, removes his individual form from the four realms of misery and places it on nirvana's plain through the attainment of fruition. Just like a clay pot (is not baked at once or is broken at once), even so the arhat does not attain (final) nirvana on the same day as he attains arhathood. He lives on for 40 or 50 years striving to sustain the Buddha's Dispensation. When he reaches his last thought-moment, with the break-up of the aggregates, he attains the nirvana-element without residue. Then, as with the potsherds, only inanimate bodily remains are left behind. (S 2:80 f). For the lamp parable, see Intro (2).

<sup>27</sup> "Earthenware," *kapallāni*, also "pot, bowl, pan". S:B (see also 766 n140) has "potsherds" which does not seem to fit here although Comy uses it in the sense of "potsherds" here (SA 2:80).

<sup>28</sup> "Will be cooled right here," *idh'eva...sīti,bhavissati*. Comy: They will be cooled right here, without having gone elsewhere by way of rebirth, subject to no further occurrence, without the struggle and distress of their occurrence. (SA 2:80).

<sup>29</sup> The pl "bodies," *sarirāni*, reflects plural *kapilliini* to mean potsherds. Spk glosses *saririini* as *dhiitusaririini*, bodily elements, which Spk-pt identifies as the bones (*aṭṭhikakankala*). *Kapilla* usually means a pot or a bowl, but Spk says the plural here denotes potsherds bound together along with the rim.

**20** Or when there are *no volitional formations* at all, with the ending of volitional formations, would **consciousness**<sup>30</sup> appear [arise]?”

“No, bhante.”

**21** “Or when there is *no consciousness* at all, with the ending of consciousness, would **name-and-form** appear?”

“No, bhante.”

**22** “Or when there is *no name-and-form* at all, with the ending of *name-and-form*, would **the 6 sense-bases** appear?”

“No, bhante.”

**23** “Or when there are *no 6 sense-bases* at all, with the ending of the 6 sense-bases, would **contact** appear?”

“No, bhante.” **[84]**

**24** “Or when there is *no contact* at all, with the ending of contact, would **feeling** appear?”

“No, bhante.”

**25** “Or when there is *no feeling* at all, with the ending of feeling, would **craving** appear?”

“No, bhante.”

**26** “Or when there is *no craving* at all, with the ending of craving, would **clinging** appear?”

“No, bhante.”

**27** “Or when there is *no clinging* at all, with the ending of clinging, would **existence** appear?”

“No, bhante.”

**28** “Or when there is *no existence* at all, with the ending of existence, would **birth** appear?”

“No, bhante.”

**29** “Or when there is *no birth* at all, with the ending of birth, would **decay-and-death** appear?”

“No, bhante.”

**30** “Excellent, excellent, bhikshus!

Thus it is, bhikshus, not otherwise! Have faith in me in this, bhikshus, be resolute! Have neither uncertainty nor doubt here! This is the very end of suffering!”<sup>31</sup>

— evaṃ —

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<sup>30</sup> “Consciousness,” *viññāṇa*, ie rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhi,viññāṇa*, SA 2:81) .

<sup>31</sup> Comy: “This is the very end of cyclic suffering, its ending, that is, nirvana” (*ayam eva vaṭṭa,dukkhassa anto ayam paricchedo, yad idaṃ nibbānaṃ* (SA 2:81,24-26).