

Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta

The Greater Discourse to Māluṅkyā,putta | M 64/1:432-437

Theme: The 5 mental fetters and the latent tendencies

Translated by Piya Tan ©2007

Introduction

1 TITLE. The **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** is also called “Mahā Māluṅkyā Sutta.” However, if we are to accept that his mother’s name is Māluṅkyā, then the more correct reading would be “Māluṅkyā,putta,” that is, “the son of Māluṅkyā.” However, in compounds, the long terminal vowel may be shortened, as in “Metta,sutta.”¹ The Siamese Tipiṭaka has the title as “Mahā Māluṅky’ovāda Sutta,” “the discourse on the advice to Māluṅkyā.” The sutta has a parallel in the Madhyama Āgama (MĀ 205 = T1.-778c-780b), entitled “the five lower fetters” (五下分結).²

2 MĀLUṅKYĀ,PUTTA was a typical man of the world, possessive, pleasure-loving and intellectually-inclined, but religious by nature.³ The following discourses are given on account of Māluṅkyā,putta:

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| • Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta | M 63/1:426-432 | The 10 undeclared questions. |
| • Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta | M 64/1:432-437 | The 5 mental fetters & the latent tendencies. |
| • (Taṇhā) Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta | A 4.254/2:248 f | Four ways how craving arises. |
| • Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta | S 35.95/4:72-76 | Māluṅkyā,putta goes into solitary retreat. |
| • Thera,gāthā | Tha 794-817 | Satipatthana = S 35.95. |
| • Thera,gāthā | Tha 399-404 | As an arhat, he visits his relatives. |

In the **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** (M 64), Māluṅkyā,putta’s response to the Buddha’s question on the five lower aggregates becomes the occasion for the Buddha’s teaching on the five lower fetters [§2]⁴ and the latent tendencies (*anusaya*).⁵

The Commentaries distinguish the mental fetters as occurring on three levels:

- (1) the latent tendency (*anusaya*), where they remain *dormant* until the right conditions arise [§3];
- (2) the obsessive level (*pariyuṭṭhāna*), where they arise and *habitually* seize the mind [§5];
- (3) the transgressive level (*vītikkama*), where they *motivate* unwholesome bodily action and speech.⁶

The point of the Buddha’s rebuke is that the fetters, even when not active, lie dormant as latent tendencies (*anusaya*), as long as they have not been destroyed by supramundane path.⁷

The significance of this Sutta highlights the difference between theoretical understanding of Buddhist teachings (the five mental fetters) and a direct personal experience of liberation from them (through the dhyanas and mindfulness). While Māluṅkyā,putta has a good grasp of the five mental fetters as *theory*, he has yet to experience the *liberation* from them as practice.

It is also interesting that while the Buddha’s admonitions begins with his questioning of Māluṅkyā,putta, the closing is actually addressed to Ānanda (and to us today). Nothing is lost to Māluṅkyā,putta,

¹ Sn 1.8/25 f = Kh 9/8 f.

² See Thich Minh Chau 1991:64, 103 f & Analayo 2005 under M 1:432.

³ For details on Māluṅkyā,putta, see **Māluṅkyā,putta S** (S 35.95) = SD 5.9 Intro (1).

⁴ There are **the 10 fetters**, namely: self-identity view (*sakkāya,dīṭṭhi*), persistent 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 (*kāma,rāga*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya*). The lower fetters are so called because they lead to birth in the sense-spheres.

⁵ The latent tendencies (*anusaya*) are so called because they always lie dormant in the mental continuum (*bhav-aṅga*), and arise whenever the conditions are right. On the latent tendencies, see **Sallatthana S** (S 36.6) = SD 5.5 Intro (3 kinds); **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18.8) = SD 6.14 (7 kinds); & **Anusaya** = SD 31.3.

⁶ See eg **Mūla S** (A 3.69/1:201-205) = SD 18.2.

⁷ See **Sīla Samādhi Paññā** = SD 21.6(5).

however, as **the Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** (S 39.95) records that, in due course, he goes into solitary retreat and becomes an arhat.⁸

3 THE LOWER MENTAL FETTERS. The sutta opens with the Buddha asking the assembled monks if they remember his teachings on the five lower fetters, that is, breaking which we attain non-return.⁹ Māluṅkyā,putta replies that he remembers and lists them correctly [§2]. The Buddha, however, chides him for merely saying so: for, if his answer were correct, even an infant lying on his back would not have the five fetters, but yet even an infant have them as latent tendencies [§3].

This is an interesting occasion when the Buddha gives an appropriate teaching after reading the listener's mind. The Commentary explains that the Buddha corrects Māluṅkyā,putta because he has assumed that bondage occurs only when the fetters are actually present in the mind (MA 3:144).

4 SEVEN WAYS OF LIBERATION. Ānanda then at once invites the Buddha to give teachings on the five lower fetters and the latent tendencies [§4]. The Buddha begins by distinguishing the ignorant worldling from the wise disciple [§§5-6], illustrating it with two parables [§§7-8]. The main teaching is quite straightforward: the practitioner may attain liberation by reflecting on the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self characteristics of the dhyanas [§§9-12], or of the first three attainments [§§13-15].

The Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta thus gives seven ways of attaining liberation, by the attainment of calm (*samatha*), leading to the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*), or “insight preceded by calm” (*samatha,pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*), that is, on emerging from dhyana, one contemplates on it as an object of insight, reflecting it as having arisen through conditions, especially volition.¹⁰

The Buddha declares that in doing so—that is, applying insight to our experience of the dhyanas or the attainments—we will attain liberation in one of two ways: either as an arhat, if all his influxes¹¹ are destroyed, or as a non-returner, by the destruction of the five lower fetters, “if he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas”¹² [§9 etc].

5 FORMLESS DHYANAS. Interestingly, the last attainment—the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*n’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatana*)—is not mentioned here. **The Anupada Sutta** (M 111) repeats all the stages of **the Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** [§§9-15], but adds this last formless attainment.¹³ A similar method of liberation by applying insight to a dhyana or attainment as here (§§9-15) is found in **the Aṭṭhaka,nagara Sutta** (M 52), but where “deliverance of mind” through the four divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*)¹⁴ replaces the usual form-dhyanas, followed by the three formless attainments.¹⁵

6 LIBERATION OF MIND AND LIBERATION BY WISDOM. The Commentary says that the Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta is an example of a discourse on “calm and insight” (*samatha,vipassanā*) (MA 3:146). The sutta closes with the Buddha, in answer Ānanda's question, explaining that the arhat liberated of mind and the arhat liberated by wisdom differ only by way of their faculties [§16].¹⁶

⁸ S 35.95/4:72-76.

⁹ On the non-returner (*anāgāmi*), see **Sa,upadisesa S** (A 9.12/4:378-382) = SD 3.3(3).

¹⁰ See **Aṭṭhaka,nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350) = SD 41.2, where Comy says that this is *samatha,pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*; see **(Yuganaddha) Paṭipadā S** (A 4.170/2:157) = SD 41.5.

¹¹ “**Mental influxes,**” *āsava*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as influxes, taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists four *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These four are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of three influxes (omitting the influx of views) [43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: *āsava*.

¹² See §9n for explanation.

¹³ M 111.5-20/3:25-29.

¹⁴ M 52.4-11/1:350-352.

¹⁵ M 52.12-14/1:352.

¹⁶ The differences between the two types of liberation are given in **Mahā,nidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kiṭṭagiri S** (M 1:477 f).

At the close of the Sutta, Ānanda asks the Buddha about the difference between the “liberation of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*) and liberation by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*). The former is liberation by mental concentration, that is, liberation through destruction of the mental hindrances, while the former is liberation through insight (A 1:60). One who is “liberated by wisdom” “may not have reached the eight liberations (*vimokkha*) in his own body, but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed” (M 70.-16/1:478). All arhats are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into two types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain the eight liberations (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*),¹⁷ which include the four formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called “liberated both ways,” that is, liberated from the physical body by means of the formless dhyanas, and from all defilements by the path of arhathood.

The Commentary adds that amongst those practitioners who follow the way of calm (*samatha*), the one who emphasizes on mental unification is said to gain “liberation of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*), and the one who emphasizes on wisdom, “liberation by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*). The two chief disciples won arhathood by emphasizing on both calm and insight, that is, they are “liberated both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*), but Sāriputta is one liberated by wisdom, and Mahā Moggallāna, one liberated of mind. Thus the reason for the difference is in their faculties (*indriya*), that is, between the predominance of the concentration faculty and the wisdom faculty. (MA 3:147 f)

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The Greater Discourse to Mālunkya,putta

M 64/1:432-437

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika’s Park in Jeta’s Grove near Sāvattthī. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:

“Bhikshus!”

“Bhante!” the monks answered to the Blessed One in assent.

The five lower fetters

2 The Blessed One said this:

“Do you, bhikshus, remember the five lower fetters¹⁸ as taught by me?”

When this was said, the venerable Mālunkya,putta said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, I do remember the five lower fetters as taught by the Blessed One.”

“And how, Mālunkya,putta, do you remember the five lower fetters as taught by me?”

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|---|---------------------------------|---|
| (1) <u>Self-identity view</u> , | <i>sakkāya, diṭṭhi</i> , | bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One. |
| (2) <u>Doubt</u> , | <i>vicikicchā</i> , | bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One. |
| (3) <u>Attachment of rituals and vows</u> , | <i>sīla-b. bata, parāmāsa</i> , | bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One. |
| (4) <u>Sense-desire</u> , | <i>kāma-c, chanda</i> , | bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One. |

¹⁷ For full list of the 8 deliverances, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15.35/ 2:70 f) = SD 5.17.35. See also D 3:262, 228; **Vimokkha S**, A 8.66/4:306; also M 120.37/3:103 = SD 3.4.37.

¹⁸ The five “lower fetters” (*oram, bhāgiyāni samyojanāni*) are so called because they hold us back to be reborn in the sense-sphere. There are totally destroyed only at non-return.

(5) Ill will, *vyāpāda*, bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One.
Thus, bhante, do I remember the five lower fetters as taught by the Blessed One.”

The latent tendencies

3 “And, Māluṅkyā,putta, to whom do you remember the five lower fetters as having been taught thus by me.¹⁹

Would not the wanderers of other sects prove you, Māluṅkyā,putta, false with the simile of the infant?²⁰

(1) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘self-identity’ (*sakkāya*);²¹ [433] for, how could the self-identity view arise for him?

Yet, the the latent tendency²² of self-identity view lies in him.

(2) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘dharma’ (*dhamma*); for, how could doubt regarding dharmas arise for him?

Yet, the the latent tendency of doubt lies in him.

(3) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘virtue’ (*sīla*); for, how could attachment to rituals and vows with regards to moral virtue arise for him?

Yet, the the latent tendency of attachment to rituals and vows lies in him.

(4) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘sense-desire’ (*kāma*); for, how could sense-desire in sense-pleasure arise for him?

Yet, the the latent tendency of sense-desire lies in him.

(5) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘being’ (*satta*); for, how could ill will towards beings arise for him?

Yet, the the latent tendency of ill will lies in him.²³

Would not the wanderers of other sects prove you, Māluṅkyā,putta, false with the simile of the infant?”

The uninstructed worldling

4 When this was spoken, the venerable Ānanda said this:

“This is the time, Blessed One, this is the time, Sugata [well-gone one], for the Blessed One to teach the five lower fetters. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the monks will remember it!”

“Then, listen Ānanda, pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied to the Blessed One in assent.

The Blessed One said this:

5 OBSESSIVE LEVEL OF DEFILEMENTS.²⁴ “Here, Ānanda, an uninstructed worldling [ignorant ordinary] person, who has no regard for the noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma, who has no regard for the true individuals and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma,

(1) dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by self-identity view, and he does *not* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen self-identity view.

This self-identity view of his, grown in strength, undispelled, is a lower fetter.

(2) He dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by doubt, and he does *not* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen doubt.

¹⁹ Comy explains that the Buddha corrects Māluṅkyā,putta because he holds the view a person is fettered by the defilements only when they assail him, but at other times he is not fettered so. (MA 3:144)

²⁰ This is a popular parable is applied differently here: **Abhaya Rāja,kumāra** (M 58.7/1:394 f), **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 64.3/1:432 f), **Cātumā S** (“the young calf,” M 67.10/1:459), **Samaṇa,maṇḍika S** (M 78.8/2:24 f).

²¹ Cf **Samaṇa,maṇḍika S** (M 78.8/2:24), “body” (*kāya*) is used, and where Comy says that the baby does not know the difference between its own body and those of others (MA 3:267).

²² On latent tendencies, see Intro (2).

²³ On these latent tendencies (*anusaya*), see **Anusaya** = SD 31.3 (1.2).

²⁴ See Intro (2).

This doubt of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

(3) He dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by attachment to rituals and vows, and he does *not* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen attachment to rituals and vows.

This attachment to rituals and vows of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

(4) He dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by sense-desire, and he does *not* understand, according to reality, [434] the escape from the arisen sense-desire.

This sense-desire of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

(5) He dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by ill will, and he does *not* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen ill will.

This ill will of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

The instructed noble disciple

6 But, Ānanda, an instructed noble disciple, who has regard for the noble ones and is skilled and well disciplined in their Dharma, who has regard for the true individuals and is skilled and well disciplined in their Dharma,

(1) does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by self-identity view, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen self-identity view.

This self-identity view of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.²⁵

(2) He does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by doubt, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen doubt.

This doubt of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.

(3) He does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by attachment to rituals and vows, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen attachment to rituals and vows.

This attachment to rituals and vows of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.

(4) He does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by sense-desire, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen sense-desire.

This sense-desire of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.

(5) He does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by ill will, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen ill will.

This ill will of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.

There is the path to abandoning the fetters

7a THE PARABLE OF THE HEARTWOOD. Ānanda, there is a path, a way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

It is impossible that anyone shall know or see or abandon the five lower fetters without relying on that path, that way.

Ānanda, just as it is impossible for a man to cut out the heartwood of a great tree, standing, possessed of heartwood, without having first cut off the bark and sapwood,²⁶ even so, Ānanda, it is impossible that anyone shall know or see or abandon the five lower fetters without relying on that path, that way.

7b Ānanda, there is a path, a way, to **the abandoning of the five lower fetters**. [435]

But it is possible that one shall know or see or abandon the five lower fetters by relying on that path, that way.

Ānanda, just as it is possible for a man to cut out the heartwood of a great tree, standing, possessed of heartwood, by having first cut off the bark and sapwood, even so, Ānanda, it is possible that one shall know or see or abandon the five lower fetters by relying on that path, that way.

²⁵ Comy: The fetter and the latent tendency are not really distinct, but it is the same defilement that is called a “fetter” in the sense of binding, and an “underlying tendency” in the sense of being unabandoned. (MA 3:144)

²⁶ Comy: Cutting off the bark is like the attainment (*samāpatti*); cutting out the sapwood is like insight (*vipassanā*); and cutting out the pith is like the path (*magga*) (MA 3:145).

8a THE PARABLE OF CROSSING THE GANGES. Suppose, Ānanda, the river Ganges were brimful of water so that even a crow could drink from it, and then a weak man were to come, thinking, ‘Using my arms, I will safely swim from this bank of the river Ganges across to the other side.’ Yet, he would not be able to safely swim from this bank of the river Ganges across to the other side.

Even so, Ānanda, when the Dharma is being taught to someone for the ending of self-identity, if his mind does not enter into it, shows no faith in it, is not steady, is not liberated²⁷—he should be regarded just like the weak man.

8b Suppose, Ānanda, the river Ganges were brimful of water so that even a crow could drink from it, and then a strong man were to come, thinking, ‘Using my arms, I will safely swim from this bank of the river Ganges across to the other side.’ He would be able to safely swim from this bank of the river Ganges across to the other side.

Even so, Ānanda, when the Dharma is being taught to someone for the ending of self-identity, if his mind enters into it, shows faith in it, is steady, is liberated—he should be regarded just like the strong man.

Abandoning the lower fetters via dhyana²⁸

9.1 (1) THE 1ST DHYANA. And what, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters?

Here, Ānanda, a monk, secluded from acquisitions,²⁹ having abandoned the unwholesome states, with total stilling [tranquillization] of bodily inertia, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states,

a monk enters and dwells in the **first dhyana**,³⁰ accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of mental seclusion.

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

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as non-self.³¹

²⁷ “Does not enter into it...is not liberated,” *na pakkhandati na-p,pasīdati na santiṭṭhati na vimuccati*. IB Horner notes that at M 28.8/1:186 the clause is *na pakkhandati na-p,pasīdati na santiṭṭhati na adhimuccati* (“not resolute”), the last is also applicable here. In fact, Trenckner say (M 1:566) suggests as the preferred reading. Horner disagrees: “But I think *na vimuccati* (and *vimuccati* a little lower) are certainly right here, for to cross is to be freed. Moreover at M 1:186 *adhimuccati* is part of the sequence of verbs all referring to the same subject, whereas above *na vimuccati* is not. Thus the compilers were right to vary the last of the four verbs in these two contexts however much the first three are identical.” (M:H 2:105 n1)

²⁸ A similar method of liberation by applying insight to a dhyana or attainment as here (§§9-15) is found in **Aṭṭha-ka,nagara S** (M 52), but where “deliverance of mind” through the 4 divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*) (M 52.4-11/1:350-352) replaces the usual form dhyanas, followed by the 3 formless attainments (M 52.12-14/1:352). **The Anupada S** (M 111) repeats all the stages of **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 64.9-15), but adds the last attainment, “neither-perception-nor-non-perception” (*n’eva,saññā,nāsaññāyatana*) (M 111.5-20/3:25-29). For a briefer version, see **Āsava-k,khaya Jhāna** (A 9.36/4:422-426) = SD 33.8.

²⁹ “Secluded from acquisitions” (*upadhi,viveka*), ie secluded from the five cords of sense-pleasure (*pañca,kāma-guṇa,viveko*, MA 3:145). Of the 5 clause of this statement, the first 3 seem to express the same ideas as the 2 more usual clauses that follow, but MAṬ indicates that the 3 express the condition (*hetu*) for becoming “quite secluded from unwholesome mental states” (MAṬ:VRI 2:66).

³⁰ For a more detailed description of the dhyanas (*jhāna*) with similes, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.75-82/1:73-76 = SD 8.10).

³¹ “Impermanent...non-self,” *aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato*: as at **M 64.9/1:435,33-35**, **74.9/1:500,3-5**; **A 4.124/2:128,16-18**, **9.36/4:422,25-423,1**. The 11 terms are expanded to 40 at Pm 2:238, and explained in Vism 20.19-20/611-613.S Comy reduces them to the 3 contemplations (*manasi,kāra*), where “impermanence” and “breaking up” represent contemplation of impermanence (*anicca,manasikāra*), “empty” and “non-self” the contemplation on non-self (*anatta,manasikāra*), and the others the contemplation on suffering (*dukkha,manasikāra*) (SA 2:334). Vism & Pm however include “alien” in the reflection

9.3 He turns his mind away from these states.³²

Having turned his mind away from these states,³³ he directs his mind to the death-free element, [436] thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime,³⁴ that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”³⁵

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

9.5 If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas,³⁶

then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (*opapātika*) (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.³⁷

9.6 This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

10.1 (2) THE 2ND DHYANA. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner stillness and oneness of mind, enters and remains in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.³⁸

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

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as non-self.

10.3 He turns his mind away from these states.

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

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

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

of non-self” (Vism 20.20/613; Pm 3:146,13). Comy here adds that the marks of suffering are sixfold (*dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato*), the impermanent twofold (*aniccato palokato*), the non-self threefold (*parato suññato anattato*) (MA 3:146). This refrain (and the rest) shows the attainment of calm (*samatha*), leading to the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*), or “insight preceded by calm” (*samatha, pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*), ie, on emerging from dhyana, one contemplates on it as an object of insight, reflecting it as having arisen through conditions, esp volition: see **Aṭṭhaka, nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350) = SD 41.2, where Comy says that this is *samatha, pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*; see **(Yuganaddha) Paṭipadā S** (A 4.170/2:157) = SD 41.5. For the Āgama (Chin) version, see Analayo 2011:166.

³² Comy: “He turns his mind away” (*cittam paṭivāpeti*) from the 5 aggregates included in the dhyana, which he has seen to be marked with the 3 characteristics (of impermanence, suffering, non-self) (MA 3:146). He goes on to regard the dhyana or attainment, thus: “This is peaceful...nirvana” (see below).

³³ Comy: That is, from the five aggregates, all of which are marked by the 3 characteristics. (MA 3:146)

³⁴ *Paṇītam*, as at M 2:235, 263; A 4:423, 5:8, 110, 320, 322, 354 ff.

³⁵ *Etam santam etam paṇītam yad idam sabba, saṅkhāra, samatho sabbūpadhi, paṭinissaggo taṇha-k, khayō virāgo nirodho nibbānan ti*, This is stock, ref to nirvana: **M 64/1:436,34**; **A 3.32/1:133,1**, **9.36/4:423,3+21**, 424,18, 425,11 *pe*, 426,4 *pe*, **10.6/5:8,8**, **10.60/110,23**, 111,1, **11.7/5:319,15**, **11.8/320,21**, **11.9/322,15**, **11.19/354,9**, **11.20/355,27**, **11.21/357,1**, **11.22/358,14**; **Nm 2:424**; **Miln 325**. Not ref to nirvana: **M 102/2:230,18**, 231,17, 235,18+20+23 (*all pe*), 236×2, 237: all to *diṭṭhi* and *kappa*, **106/2:263,18** (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), 264,11 (*n’eva, saññā.nāsaññāyatana*), **M 152/3:299,12+24+33** (*all upekhā*), 300,3+6+9+12+15+19+2 (*all upekhā*); It **49/2.2.12/44**; **Pm 1:159**.

³⁶ “Desire...delight in dharmas” (*dhamma, rāga dhamma, nandī*), as at **Aṭṭhaka, nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350), where Comy explains that these 2 terms refer to the desire and lust (*chanda-rāga*), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). *Dhamma* here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

³⁷ On the non-returner, see Intro (3).

³⁸ The 2nd *jhāna* is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṇhī, bhāva*): see prec n.

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

10.6 This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

11.1 (3) THE 3RD DHYANA. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, with the fading away of zest, dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body, he enters and dwells in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

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

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as non-self.

11.3 He turns his mind away from these states.

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

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

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

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

11.6 This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

12.1 (4) THE 4TH DHYANA. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,³⁹ and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure, attains and dwells in **the fourth dhyana** that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.⁴⁰

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

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as non-self.

12.3 He turns his mind away from these states.

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

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

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

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

12.6 This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

³⁹ “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’atthena S** (S 36.6/4:207-210) = SD 5.5.

⁴⁰ Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4th dhyana—equanimity (*upekhā*), mindfulness (*satī*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa 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 also **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.83/1:75) = SD 8.10 & **Dhyana** = SD 8.4 (5.4).

Abandoning the fetters via attainment

13 (5) THE SPHERE OF INFINITE SPACE. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, having completely transcended perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, through non-attention to perceptions of diversity, contemplating, “Infinite space,” attains to **the sphere of infinite space**.⁴¹

Whatever states that are there by way of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,⁴²

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as non-self.

He turns his mind away from these states.

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

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

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

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

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

14 (6) THE SPHERE OF INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, having completely transcended the sphere of infinite space, contemplating, “Infinite consciousness,” attains to **the sphere of infinite consciousness**.⁴³

Whatever states that are there by way of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,⁴⁴

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as non-self.

He turns his mind away from these states.

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

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

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

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

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

15 (7) THE SPHERE OF NOTHINGNESS. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, having completely transcended the sphere of infinite consciousness, contemplating, “There is nothing,” attains to **the sphere of nothingness**.⁴⁵

Whatever states that are there by way of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,⁴⁶

he regards them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as non-self.

He turns his mind away from these states.

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

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

If he is steady therein, [437] he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

⁴¹ *Ākāsaṇaṅc’āyatana*. This is one of the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*): see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.33/2:111 f) = SD 9 & nn.

⁴² Note that the “form” aggregate is omitted from this list, as this is a formless attainment (like the foll two).

⁴³ *Viññāṇaṅc’āyatana*. This is one of the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*): see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.33/2:111 f) = SD 9 & nn.

⁴⁴ Note that the “form” aggregate is omitted from this list, as this is a formless attainment (like the other two).

⁴⁵ *Ākiñcaṇṇ’āyatana*. This is one of the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*): see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.33/2:111 f) = SD 9 & nn.

⁴⁶ Note that the “form” aggregate is omitted from this list, as this is a formless attainment (like the other two).

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

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.”

16 “Bhante, if this is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters, then how is it that some monks here are regarded as ‘liberated of mind’ (*ceto,vimutti*) and as ‘liberated by wisdom’ (*paññā,-vimutti*)?”

“Here, Ānanda, their difference is in their faculties, I say.”⁴⁷

The Blessed One said this. The venerable Ānanda joyfully approved of the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

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[For other titles, see SD 17.1, Biblio.]

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⁴⁷ See Intro (6).