

## Pabbateyya Gāvī Sutta

### The Discourse on the Mountain Cow

Also called **Gāvī Upamā Sutta** = The Discourse on the Cow Parable

[How to progress into the dhyanas]

(Aṅguttara Nikāya 9.35/4:418-422)

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2006, 2008

#### Introduction

**1 RELATED SUTTAS.** The **Pabbateyya Gāvī Sutta** (A 9.35), also called the **Gāvī Upama Sutta**, is about meditation strategy in the attaining of higher states of mental concentration, namely, the form dhyanas (*rūpa-jjhāna*) and the formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*). The Sutta opens somewhat abruptly with the parable of the mountain cow, as if some preceding passages have been cut off. In fact, this Sutta serves very well as a follow-up to a set of nine suttas (not necessarily a coincidence!), that is, the first nine suttas of the **Moggallāna Saṃyutta** (S 40.1-9), which deals with the same topic, but without any parable. The nine suttas are as follows:

(1) <b>(Savitakka) Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.1/4:262 f	SD 24.11
(2) <b>(Avitakka) Dutiya Jhāna Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.2/4:263 f	SD 24.12a
(3) <b>(Sukhena) Tatiya Jhāna Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.3/4:264 f	SD 24.13
(4) <b>(Upekkhaka) Catuttha Jhāna Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.4/4:265 f	SD 24.14
(5) <b>Ākāsañāṇa'āyatana Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.5/4:266	SD 24.15
(6) <b>Viññāṇa'āyatana Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.5/4:266 f	SD 24.16
(7) <b>Ākiñcaṇṇ'āyatana Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.7/4:267 f	SD 24.17
(8) <b>N'eva,saññā,nāsaññ'āyatana Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.8/4:268	SD 24.18
(9) <b>Animitta Ceto,samādhi Pañha Sutta</b>	S 40.9/4:268 f	SD 24.19

Each of these nine suttas relate how Moggallāna has difficulty with his meditation, not being able to let go of one of the factors related to the previous state. The Buddha's advice is consistent: put in effort *in steadying the mind, unifying it, and focussing it*. This method is given in more detailed form in the **Pabbateyya Gāvī Sutta**.<sup>1</sup>

**2 THE FOOLISH COW.** The first part of the **Pabbateyya Gāvī Sutta** gives the parable of the foolish mountain cow, who, unfamiliar with pastures, and unsure of its way around, thinks of finding new pasture, but due to its lack of knowledge and experience is unable to even move about properly, much less taste new grass and, furthermore, is unable to find its way home [§1a]. Even so, a meditator who, lacking mastery over one level tries to attain to the next, would similarly fail [§1b].

If we, without having fully mastered the first dhyana, were to try to go into the second dhyana, we would fail, just as the foolish, inexperienced mountain cow that fails to find new pasture and would also be unable to find her way home. Such a meditator is said to be “one who has fallen away from both states (*ubhayato bhaṭṭho*), who has failed at both (*ubhayato parihīno*).”<sup>2</sup> The Burmese **Mahā Ṭikā** (Great Sub-commentary to the Aṅguttara) explains this expression as meaning that he is “one who has fallen from both the dhyanas” (*ubhayato jhānato bhaṭṭho*).<sup>3</sup>

For this reason, seasoned meditation teachers often advise the beginner, on attaining dhyana, to keep it up for a sustained period, and not to spend too much time discerning them.<sup>4</sup> This “stoking” of the

<sup>1</sup> Pa Auk Sayadaw (1999:18, 2003:55) says, “It says in the *Pabbateyya, gāvī Sutta*... that once the Venerable Moggallāna, still a stream-enterer, was practising to attain *jhāna*...” He apparently has conflated the *Moggallāna Saṃyutta* accounts with the *Pabbateyya Gāvī Sutta*.

<sup>2</sup> A 9.35.3/4:419.

<sup>3</sup> AAmT:Be 1:178,16 (1960).

<sup>4</sup> See eg Pa Auk Sayadaw 1999:18, 2003:55.

dhyana is kept up until one gains mastery (*vasī, bhāva*) over them. In this connection, the Commentaries and later meditation literature speak of these **fivefold mastery** (*pañca vasiyo*):<sup>5</sup>

- (1) Mastering the advertence (*āvajjana, vasī*): the ability to bring the mind into dhyana;
- (2) Mastering the attainment (*sampājjana, vasī*): entering dhyana quickly and whenever we wish to;
- (3) Mastering the resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna, vasī*): staying in dhyana for as long as we are determined to;
- (4) Mastering the emergence (*vuṭṭhāna, vasī*): easily emerging from dhyana at the appointed time;
- (5) Mastering the review (*paccavekkhaṇa, vasī*): discerning the dhyana factors after emerging from it.

**3 THE WISE MOUNTAIN COW.** The Pabbateyya Gāvī Sutta then gives the parable of an intelligent mountain cow who, familiar with pastures, and sure of its way around, thinks of finding new pasture and, with knowledge and experience, is able to even move about properly, and so taste new grass, and furthermore is able to find its way home [§2a]. The Sutta continues, explaining how we progress through the form dhyanas, implicitly showing how mastery is applied after each dhyana in turn in the refrain, “*He enjoys, cultivates, continuously works on the sign so that it is well fixed.*”<sup>6</sup> [§2b]. This is a variant of the instruction given in the first nine suttas of **the Moggallāna Saṃyutta** [1.1] that says: “*Be not heedless (in that meditative state), stabilize the mind (in that state), unify the mind (in that state), let the mind concentrate (in that state).*”<sup>7</sup>

In similar vein, the Sutta goes on to describe how the meditator progresses through each of the four formless attainments in turn [§2c]. However, the passages on the four form dhyanas remind us how to properly progress through the dhyanas. We should not rush from the first stage into the next. First, we should be thoroughly familiar with the first dhyana, and then emerge from it. In reviewing, we should then reflect on its faults, and on the advantages of the second dhyana, that is to say: the first dhyana is close to the five hindrances, and has the gross dhyana factors of initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*), thus making it less calm than the second dhyana.

So without any desire for these two dhyana factors, seeking only zest, happiness and one-pointedness of mind, we *go back to working on the counterpart sign*, and attain the first dhyana. Then, on emerging from it, while reviewing, the two dhyana factors, initial application and sustained application, will appear gross, while the other three factors will appear to be calm. In short, we have applied the fivefold mastery [1.2] over the first dhyana and attain to the second dhyana.

Similarly, in due course, we go on to apply the fivefold mastery to the third dhyana. After emerging from the second dhyana, we reflect on the faults of zest (*pīti*), that it is still body-bound. Then we re-enter the second dhyana, and on emerging, during reviewing, zest will appear gross, but happiness and one-pointed stillness. This second dhyana, too, should be well-mastered before we attempt to attain the third dhyana.

Then, having mastered the third dhyana, we emerge from it, and review that even happiness (*sukha*) is gross. We re-enter the third dhyana, and on emerging, during reviewing, happiness appears to be gross, but one-pointedness calm. Having mastered the third dhyana, we are then ready to enter the fourth, and so on.<sup>8</sup>

**4 SUTTA QUOTED IN THE VISUDDHI, MAGGA.** The importance of the passage on the parable of the foolish mountain cow [§1] is attested by the fact that it is quoted in **the Visuddhi, magga** in its fourth chapter, on “the description of the earth kasina.”<sup>9</sup> The Visuddhi, magga passage, however, begins with

<sup>5</sup> Pm 1;96 f, 100; Vism 4.131 f/154, 6.24-30/124-125; ApA 108; Abhs:BRS 342; VismT:Be 1:312. See Gunaratana 1985:74-77; Pa-Auk 2003:55-58. Besides these fivefold mastery, the meditator should also cultivate to gradually extend the counterpart sign (*nimitta, vaḍḍhana*) until it fills the whole universe (that is, becomes boundless) or beyond. [9]

<sup>6</sup> *So taṃ nimittam āsevati bhāveti bahulī, karoti svādhiṭṭhitam adhiṭṭhāti.*

<sup>7</sup> *Mā...pamādo...cittam saṅghāpehi...cittam ekodi, karohi...cittam samādahati.*

<sup>8</sup> See Pa Auk Sayadaw 1999:18-20, 2003:56-58; also **Bhāvanā** = SD 15.1 (8.6).

<sup>9</sup> *Paṭhavī, kasiṇa niddesa*, Vism 4.130/153 f. The sub-section is entitled “Concerning meditation progress” (*kammaṭṭhāna, vaḍḍhanā, naya*).

instruction on how to extend **the counterpart sign** or counter-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*)<sup>10</sup> in kasina meditation. It is a very clear and immovable image arising at a high level of concentration is. When this image arises, the stage of neighbourhood (or access) concentration (*upacāra, samādhi*) is reached.

In the case of a kasina-sign (such as a colour),<sup>11</sup> we should first mentally delimit the successive sizes for the sign, as it is mastered, that is to say, extending by the breadth of a finger, two fingers, three fingers, four fingers, and so on. This is like when a ploughman first delimits the plot he is going to plough, and then starts ploughing until he finishes the whole plot.

Then he goes on to extend the delimited area by the breadth of a span (the distance from the thumb to the little finger extended), and then two spans, and so on to “the verandah, the compound, the whole monastery, the boundaries of the village, the town, the district, the country, the ocean, (the world,) the universe, and beyond.”<sup>12</sup>

Just as young swans learning to use their wings, fly up a little farther each time, and in due course go into the moon or the sun; even so, when a monk extends the sign by successive delimitations in this manner, he can extend it up to the limit of the universe, and even beyond.

Then, that sign appears to him like an ox-hide stretched out with a hundred pegs over the earth’s ridges and valleys, rivers and ravines, and rugged crags, to wherever it is extended over the earth.

When a beginner has reached the first dhyana in this sign, he should often dwell on it without much reviewing. For, the first dhyana factors occur crudely and weakly in one who reviews it often. As a result, they do not conduce to further effort. While he is working towards what is not well mastered (*appagūṇe*) [ie, a higher dhyana], he falls away from the first dhyana and does not reach the second. (Vism 4:128-129/153)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For details, see BDict: *kasina, samādhi*. For other meanings and usages of nimitta, see PED sv; also *Nimitta* = SD 19.7 esp (3) & (9.3).

<sup>11</sup> Traditionally, these colours are blue (indigo), yellow, red (copper-red), or white: see **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.29-32/2:110 f) = SD 9 & **Bhāvanā** = SD 15.1(9.2) & Fig 8.1.

<sup>12</sup> Vism 4.127/152 f. It should be noted that this is a mental exercise, ie, we are cultivating *inner* space, not outer space, but the effects can reach great distances.

<sup>13</sup> For practical guidelines on how to attain dhyana, see **Bhāvanā** = SD 15.1(8.7).

## The Discourse on the Mountain Cow

(A 9.35/4:418-422)

At Sāvattihī.

### The foolish meditator

**1a THE PARABLE OF THE FOOLISH COW.** Suppose, bhikshus, a mountain cow—foolish, inexperienced, unfamiliar with her pasture, unskilled in roaming in the rugged mountains—were to think:

“What now if I were to go into a quarter I’ve never been to before, to eat grass that I’ve never eaten before, to drink water I’ve never drunk before?”

Not having firmly placed her front hoof, she would lift her hind hoof. Surely, she is unable to go into the quarter she has never been to before, nor to eat grass that she has never eaten before, nor drink water she has never drunk before.

And she would not be able to even return safely to that spot where she had placed her hoof, where it occurs to her, “What now if I were to go to a region I’ve never been to before, to eat grass that I’ve never eaten before, to drink water I’ve never drunk before?”

What is the reason for it?

Because, bhikshus, she is foolish, inexperienced, unfamiliar with her pasture, unskilled in roaming in the rugged mountains.

**1b THE ONE WHO HAS GIVEN UP BOTH WAYS.**

**[He is unable to attain the first dhyana.]** Even so, bhikshus, here a certain monk is foolish, inexperienced, unfamiliar with his pasture, unskilled in being quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, he would not be able to attain and dwell in **the first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude.

He does not enjoy that sign. He does not cultivate, nor develop, nor establish it firmly.

**[He is unable to attain the second dhyana.]** It occurs thus to him: “What now, if, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, I were to attain and dwell in **the second dhyana**, [419] free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration?”

He would not be able to attain and dwell in **the second dhyana**, arising with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.

**[He is unable to “return” the first dhyana.]** It occurs thus to him: “What now, if I, were to attain and dwell in **the first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude.”

He would not be able to attain and dwell in **the first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude.

This monk, bhikshus, is called “*one who has fallen from both, who has abandoned both*,”<sup>14</sup> just like the mountain cow that is foolish, inexperienced, unfamiliar with her pasture, unskilled in roaming in the rugged mountains.

### The wise meditator

**2a THE PARABLE OF THE WISE COW.** Suppose, bhikshus, a mountain cow—wise, experienced, familiar with her pasture, skilled in roaming in the rugged mountains—were to think:

“What now if I were to go into a quarter I’ve never been to before, to eat grass that I’ve never eaten before, to drink water I’ve never drunk before.”

<sup>14</sup> *Bhikkhu ubhato bhāṭṭho ubhato pariṇho.*

Having firmly placed her front hoof, she would lift her hind hoof. Surely, she is able to go into the quarter she has never been to before, and eat grass that she has never eaten before, and drink water she has never drunk before.

And she would safely return to that spot where she has placed her hoof, where it occurs to her, “What now if I were to go to a region I’ve never been to before, to eat grass that I’ve never eaten before, to drink water I’ve never drunk before.”

What is the reason for it?

Because, bhikkhus, she is wise, experienced, familiar with her pasture, skilled in roaming in the rugged mountains.

## 2b THE DHYANA-ATTAINER

**[The first dhyana]** Even so, bhikkhus, here, a certain monk,<sup>15</sup> wise, experienced, pasture-wise [knowing the right conditions], skillful, being quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, reaches and dwells in the **first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude.<sup>16</sup>

He enjoys, cultivates, continuously works on the sign so that it is well focussed.<sup>17</sup>

**[The second dhyana]** Then it occurs to him, “What now, if, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, I attain and dwell in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration?”<sup>18</sup>

Without distracting himself, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he attains and dwells in the second dhyana, . . .<sup>19</sup>

He enjoys, cultivates, continuously works on the sign so that it is well focussed.<sup>20</sup>

**[The third dhyana]** Then it occurs to him, “What now, if, with the fading away of zest, [420] I remain equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experience happiness with the body, I attain and dwell in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness?’” Without distracting himself, he, with the fading away of zest, . . . attains and dwells in the third dhyana, . . .<sup>21</sup>

He enjoys, cultivates, continuously works on the sign so that it is well focussed.

**[The fourth dhyana]** Then it occurs to him, “What now, if, with the letting go of pleasure and of pain—and with the earlier ending of happiness and suffering—I attain and dwell in **the fourth dhyana**,

<sup>15</sup> That is, a meditator.

<sup>16</sup> *Evam eva kho bhikkhave idh’ekacco bhikkhu paṇḍito vyatto khettaññū kusalo vivicc’eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pīti,sukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharituṃ.* Elsewhere, eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.75b/1:73), this line follows: “He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body [the mental body, Vism 4.175/169] with the zest and happiness born of solitude,” see SD 8.10. On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see **The Layman and Dhyana** = SD 8.5.

<sup>17</sup> *So taṃ nimittaṃ āsevati bhāveti bahulī, karoti svādhiṭṭhitaṃ adhiṭṭhāti.*

<sup>18</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur (S 2:273); cf S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In Ariya, pariyesanā S (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate).

<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere, eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.77/1:74 f), this line follows: “He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the zest and happiness born of concentration,” see SD 8.10.

<sup>20</sup> *Tassa evaṃ hoti ‘yan nūnāhaṃ vitakka, vicāraṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanin cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijam pīti, sukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja vihareyyan ti, so dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ anabhihimsamāno vitakka, vicārānaṃ vūpasamā . . . pe . . . dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. So taṃ nimittaṃ āsevati bhāveti bahulī, karoti svādhiṭṭhitaṃ adhiṭṭhāti.*

<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere, eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.79/1:75), this line follows: “He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the happiness free from zest,” see SD 8.10.

that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity?” Without distracting himself, he, with the letting go of pleasure and of pain, attains and dwells in the fourth dhyana,...<sup>22</sup>

He enjoys, cultivates, continuously works on the sign so that it is well focussed.

### 2c THE FORMLESS-ATTAINER

**[The attainment of infinite space]**<sup>23</sup> Then it occurs to him, “What now, if I, transcending bodily consciousness, having ended sense-impingement, after paying no attention to perceptions of diversity, by reflecting, ‘Space is infinite,’ attain the sphere of infinite space and dwell in it?”

Without disrupting [disturbing] the sphere of infinite space, having transcended all perception of form, having ended sense-impingement, not attending to the diversity of perception, he attains the sphere of infinite space and dwells in it, perceiving, “Space is infinite.”<sup>24</sup>

He enjoys, cultivates, continuously works on the sign so that it is well focussed.

**[The attainment of infinite consciousness]**<sup>25</sup> Then it occurs to him, “What now, if I, transcending the sphere of infinite space, by reflecting: ‘Consciousness is infinite,’ attain the sphere of infinite consciousness and dwell in it?”

Without disrupting [disturbing] the infinity of consciousness, having transcended all infinity of space, he attains to the sphere of infinite consciousness and dwells in it, perceiving, “Consciousness is infinite.”

He enjoys, cultivates, continuously [421] works on the sign so that it is well focussed.

**[The attainment of nothingness]**<sup>26</sup> Then it occurs to him, “What now, if I, transcending the sphere of infinite consciousness, by reflecting: ‘There is nothing that really is,’ I attain the sphere of nothingness and dwells in it?”

Without disrupting [disturbing] the sphere of nothingness, having transcended all infinity of space, he attains the sphere of infinite consciousness and dwells in it, perceiving, “Consciousness is infinite.”

He enjoys, cultivates, continuously works on the sign so that it is well focussed.

**[The attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception]**<sup>27</sup> Then it occurs to him, “What now, if I, having transcended all the sphere of nothingness, attain the sphere of neither-perception-and-non-perception and dwell in it?”

Without disrupting [disturbing] the sphere of neither-perception-and-non-perception, having transcended all the sphere of infinity of nothingness, he attains the sphere of neither-perception-and-non-perception and dwells in it.

He enjoys, cultivates, continuously works on the sign so that it is well focussed.

**[The cessation of feeling and perception]**<sup>28</sup> Then it occurs to him, “What now, if I, through the utter transcending of the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, enter and dwell in the cessation of perception and feeling?”<sup>29</sup>

Without disrupting [disturbing] the cessation of perception and feeling, having transcended all the sphere of neither-perception-and-non-perception, he attains the cessation of perception and feeling, and dwells in it.

<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere, eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.81/1:75), this line follows: “He sits, pervading the body with a pure, bright mind, so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by a pure, bright mind,” see SD 8.10. On the “pure, bright mind,” see **Accharā Vagga** (A 1.6.1 f): “Bhikshus, this mind is radiant (*pabhassara*), but it is defiled by defilements from outside. The uninstructed ordinary person does not understand this as it really is. As such, for him there is no personal development” (A 1.6.1 f/1:10). On reaching the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, the practitioner becomes directly aware of the truly and naturally pure nature of the mind. See also A:ÑB 1999 §4.

<sup>23</sup> Cf the description of this state in **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.14/1:183) = SD 7.14.

<sup>24</sup> *So ākāsañāṇe’āyatanam anabhihimsamāno sabbaso rūpa,saññānam samatikkamā paṭigha,saññānam atthanigamā nānatta,saññānam amanasikārā “ananto ākāso” ti ākāsañāṇe’āyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

<sup>25</sup> Cf the description of this state in **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.15/1:184) = SD 7.14.

<sup>26</sup> Cf the description of this state in **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.16/1:184) = SD 7.14.

<sup>27</sup> Cf **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.16/1:184) = SD 7.14, where this attainment is omitted.

<sup>28</sup> Cf the description of this state in **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.17/1:184) = SD 7.14.

<sup>29</sup> This last stage requires both concentration and insight, and can be attained only by non-returners and arhats who have mastered the formless attainments. See Bodhi, *The Great Discourse on Causation*, 1984:47-51.

### 3 THE DIRECT KNOWLEDGES

Whenever a monk attains to such an attainment, or emerges from it, his mind is pliable and malleable.<sup>30</sup>

With a mind that is pliable and malleable, boundless samadhi is well developed.<sup>31</sup>

With a well-developed boundless samadhi, whatever higher knowledge that should be realized that he directs his mind to, he realizes it.<sup>32</sup>

—He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right [whenever the occasion arises].<sup>33</sup>

(1) [**Psychic powers**] If he wishes,<sup>34</sup> “May I wield **the manifold supernormal powers**.<sup>35</sup>

Having been one, may I become many; having been many, may I become one.

May I appear, may I vanish.

May I move unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space.

May I dive in and out of the earth as if it were water.

May I walk on water without sinking as if it were dry land.

Sitting cross-legged, may I fly through the air like a winged bird.

With my hand may I touch and stroke even the sun and the moon, so mighty and powerful.

May I have power over my body up to as far as the Brahmā worlds.”

—He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.

(2) [**Clairaudience**] If he wishes, “May I hear, by means of the **divine-ear element**,<sup>36</sup> purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds, divine and human, whether near or far.”

—He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.

If he wishes,

(3) [**Telepathy**] If he wishes, “May I **know the minds of other beings**, other individuals, having encompassed them with my own mind.<sup>37</sup>

May I know a mind with lust as a mind with lust,

and a mind without lust as a mind without lust.

May I know a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion,

and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion.

May I know a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion,

and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion.

May I know a contracted mind [due to sloth and torpor] as a contracted mind,

<sup>30</sup> *Yato kho bhikkhave bhikkhu taṃ tad eva samāpattim samāpajjatipi vuṭṭhāti pi.*

<sup>31</sup> *Tassa muduṃ cittam hoti kammaññam, mudunā citte kammaññena, appamāṇo samādhi hoti subhāvito.*

<sup>32</sup> *So appamāṇena samādhinā subhāvitena, yassa yassa abhiññā, sacchikaraṇīyassa, dhammassa cittam abhininnāmeti, abhiññā, sacchikiriyāya.*

<sup>33</sup> *Tatra tatr’eva sakkhi, bhabbatam pāpuṇāti sati sati āyatane.* This is a common stock phrase that introduces the attainment of the direct knowledges (*abhiññā*): **Mahā Vaccha, gotta S** (M 73.19/1:494 = SD 27.4); **Kāya, gata, sati S** (M 119.29 f/3:96 f = SD 12.21); **Paṃsu, dhovaka S** (A 3.100a.4/1:255 = SD 19.11a); **Upakkilesa S** (A 5.23/-3:16-19); **Dutiya Iddhi, pāda S** (A 5.68/3:82 f); **Sakkhi, bhhabba S** (A 6.71/3:426 f); **Gāvī Upamā S** (A 9.35/4:421 f). It refers to the preliminary conditions (*āyatana*) for the 6 direct knowledges (*abhiññā*) which follow later. The preliminary condition for the first 5 knowledges (the mundane ones) is the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana; for the 5<sup>th</sup> (the only supra-mundane one), it is insight. See SD 12.21 Intro (6).

<sup>34</sup> *So sace ākaṅkhāti.* This does not mean that he could simply “wish” for such powers [§§5-9] or for liberation [§10], but that, when his mind “has won full tranquillity and come to mental unification,” ie attained to the 4th dhyana, he has to “direct his mind” (*cittam abhininnāmeti*) towards that goal [§4b]. The attainment of the spiritual states is the result of conscious effort.

<sup>35</sup> Cf **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11.5) where the Buddha disapproves of the exhibiting of such powers.

<sup>36</sup> “Divine-ear element,” *dibba, sota, dhātu*, clairaudience.

<sup>37</sup> This list of mental states also appears in **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22.12/2:299 = M 10.34/1:59).

and a distracted mind [due to restlessness and worry] as a distracted mind.

May I know an exalted mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] as an exalted mind, and an unexalted mind [not developed by dhyana] as an unexalted mind.

May I know a surpassable mind as a surpassable mind, and an unsurpassable mind as an unsurpassable mind.<sup>38</sup>

May I know a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind, and an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind.

May I know a released mind as a released mind, and an unreleased mind as an unreleased mind.”

—he gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.

(4) [**Retrocognition**]<sup>39</sup> If he wishes, “May I **recollect my manifold past lives**, that is, one birth, two births, three births, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand, many aeons of cosmic contractions, many aeons of cosmic expansions, many aeons of cosmic contractions and expansions, [recollecting],

‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life.’

Thus may I recollect my manifold past lives in their modes and details.”<sup>40</sup>

—He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right. [422]

(5) [**Clairvoyance**] If he wishes, “May I see—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],<sup>41</sup> purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing, and know how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, faring in accordance with their karma:

‘These beings—who were endowed with evil conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—after death, when the body has broken up, have re-appeared in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell.

But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—after death, when the body has broken up, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’

Thus, by means of the divine eye, may I see beings passing away and re-appearing, and *how they fare according to* their karma.”

—He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.

(6) [**Gnosis**] If he wishes, “May I, by realizing direct knowledge for myself, here and now, enter and dwell in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom<sup>42</sup> that are canker-free with the destruction of the influxes.”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Unsurpassable (*anuttara*) mind, probably synonymous with “developed” mind. See D:W 592 n667.

<sup>39</sup> *Pubbe, nivāsanānussati*, lit “recollection of past abodes.”

<sup>40</sup> This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

<sup>41</sup> *Dibba, cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*) (see n in §102).

<sup>42</sup> “Liberation of mind and liberation through wisdom,” respectively: *ceto, vimutti* (or, liberation by concentration, ie through destruction of the mental hindrances) and *paññā, vimutti* (liberation through insight). One who is *liberated by wisdom* “may not have reached the 8 liberations (*vimokkha = jhāna*) 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 8 liberations (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*), which include the 4 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. Arhats like Sāriputta and Moggallāna are



—He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.

— evaṃ —

## Bibliography

Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw

- 1999 *Knowing and Seeing: Talks and questions-and-answers at a meditation retreat in Taiwan.* ©WK Ng, 1999. viii + 263 pp. Free book. Some editing & possible tr errors. Various reprs.
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“liberated both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*). The differences between the 2 types of liberation are given in **Mahānidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kīṭāgiri S** (M 1:477 f).

**Aṅguttara** mentions the two states that partake of spiritual knowledge (*dve vijjā, bhāgiyā*) as, namely, calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*). The cultivation of calm leads to the destruction of passion and the cultivation of insight to the destruction of ignorance (A 2.4.10/1:61). The distinction between the two is expressed by “liberation of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*) and “liberation by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*) respectively. “However, these two expressions are not simply equivalent in value relative to realization. While ‘freedom by wisdom’ (*paññā, vimutti*) refers to the realization of *Nibbāna*, ‘freedom of the mind’ (*ceto, vimutti*), unless further specified as ‘unshakeable’ (*akuppa*), does not imply the same. ‘Freedom of the mind’ can also connote temporary experiences of mental freedom, such as the attainment of the four absorptions, or the development of the divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*) [eg M 1:296]. Thus this passage is not presenting two different approaches to realization but two aspects of the meditative path, one of which is not sufficient by itself to bring realization” (Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization*, 2003:89 f). See Lily de Silva, “Cetovimutti, paññāvimutti and ubhatobhāgavimutti,” *Pāli Buddhist Review* 3,3 1978:118-145.

For a full list of the 8 liberations, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15.35/2:70 f). For full list of the 8 liberations, 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.

<sup>43</sup> *Āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto, vimuttiṃ paññā, vimuttiṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati*. This is stock, found throughout the 4 Nikāyas. *Āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsavā*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence or becoming (*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” (*oghā*) and “yokes” (*yogā*). The list of three influxes (omitting the influx of views) 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*.