

# 11

## Pacalā Sutta

or **Pacalāyamāna Sutta** The Discourse on Nodding Off | **A 7.58**<sup>1</sup> [A:B 7.61]

Also (**Sattaka**) **Moggallāna Sutta** The (Sevens) Discourse to Moggallāna  
Theme: Eight ways of overcoming drowsiness and nature of true discipleship

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2003

### 1 Moggallāna's struggle

**1.1** The title Pacalā Sutta<sup>2</sup> is found in the colophon (*uddāna*) of the PTS edition. The Siamese texts call it **the Moggallāna Sutta**,<sup>3</sup> and the Burmese and the Siamese World Tipiṭaka, **Pacalāyamāna Sutta** (*pacalāyamāna* means “nodding off”). This Sutta records the efforts of Mahā Moggallāna, the second chief disciple of the Buddha, to attain spiritual liberation during the week after his ordination in the second year of the ministry.

For his intensive training, Moggallāna went to live near a village called Kallavāḷa,mutta or Kallavāḷa,putta (“liquor-dealer’s son”)<sup>4</sup> in Magadha. On the seventh day of his ordination, when he was engaged in meditation, he was troubled by fatigue and torpor. According to the Aṅguttara Commentary, he had been walking up and down vigorously in meditation for seven days, so when he sat down for his meditation, drowsiness or torpor (*middha*) overcame him (AA 4:41).<sup>5</sup>

**1.2** While listening to the Buddha expounding these teachings on the meditation of the elements (*dhātu,kamma-t,thāna*), Moggallāna won the three higher paths and the apex of a chief disciple’s perfection by attaining arhathood (A 4:85 f; AA 4:42).

**1.3** Moggallāna’s struggle for arhathood here is recounted *dhyana by dhyana* in the first nine discourses of **the Moggallāna Saṃyutta** (S 40.1-9),<sup>6</sup> that is, on the 4 dhyanas, the 4 formless attainments, and the signless meditation. Historically, it is likely that the Pacalā Sutta records Moggallāna’s meditation struggle just before that recorded in **the Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha Sutta** (S 40.1).<sup>7</sup>

Another possibility is that both the discourses—the Pacalā Sutta and the Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha Sutta — are recounting the same event. While the Aṅguttara reciters records how the Buddha admonished Moggallāna on overcoming drowsiness (and also teachings on letting go), the Saṃyutta reciters recounts only the meditation practice itself, and in nine discourses describe his gaining of the form dhyanas and the formless attainments.

**1.4** Like Sāriputta, Moggallāna was an arhat “freed both ways” (*ubhato,bhāga,vimutta*).<sup>8</sup> Within the same week of striving, Moggallāna not only masters the successive planes of meditative concentration but also wins the “paths of spiritual power” (*iddhi,pāda*), and thus gains direct knowledge (*abhiññā*).

<sup>1</sup> Be adds 2 pp of text (A 4:88-90), a single line on p88.

<sup>2</sup> Due to editorial oversight in the PTS Pali ed, this Sutta and the following (Puñña) Mettā S (A 7.58a) are treated as one. See (**Puñña**) **Metta S** (A 7.58a/4:88-91), SD 3:2.11a.

<sup>3</sup> Here called (**Sattaka**) **Moggallāna S**, the (Sevens) Discourse on Moggallāna to distinguish it from (**Catukka**) **Moggallāna S**, the (Fours) Discourse on Moggallāna (A 4.167), SD 46.16.

<sup>4</sup> In the Thera.gāthā Comy on Moggallāna’s verses, it is called Kalla,vāla (ThaA 2:162).

<sup>5</sup> Cf Soṇa Koḷivisa who walked up and down in meditation until his feet bled (V 1:179-185; Tha 632-644; AA 1:233 f; Tha:RD 275 f). A shorter text, the **Soṇa S** (A 6.55/3:374-379) records the Buddha’s instruction on the middle way (simile of the lute) to Soṇa Koḷivisa. He is the foremost of the monks who exert effort (A 1:24).

<sup>6</sup> S 40.1-9/4:262-269 @ SD 24.11-19.

<sup>7</sup> S 40.1/4:262 f @ SD 24.11.

<sup>8</sup> See SD 4.25 (\*\*\*)

## 2 Problem reading

The Pali of the first method of overcoming drowsiness [§2] given by the Buddha poses a problem in translation as there are two variant readings that apparently contradict one another, that is, (a) the PTS and Siamese (Se) readings, and (b) the Sinhalese (Ce) and Burmese (Be) readings:

**PTS:** *yathā saññissa te viharato taṃ middham okkamati, taṃ saññam manasā'kāsi taṃ saññam bahulam akāsi.*

**Se:** *yathā saññissa te viharato taṃ middham okkamati, taṃ saññam manasi,kareyyāsi, taṃ saññam bahulam kareyyāsi.*

**Ce:** *yathā saññino te viharato tam middham okkamī ti taṃ saññam mā manasikāsi taṃ saññam mā bahulam akāsi;*

**Be:** *yathā saññissa te viharato tam middham okkamati, taṃ saññam mā manasākāsi, taṃ saññam mā bahulam-akāsi.*

Bodhi (1999) following the Sinhalese (Ce) reading has: “At whatever thought drowsiness befalls you, you should not give attention to that thought.” (A:B). As does Ṭhānissaro (2002): “...whatever perception you have in mind when drowsiness descends on you, don’t attend to that perception, don’t pursue it.”

However, I have followed the PTS and Siamese (Se) readings: “...when you perceive that drowsiness is descending upon you, you should make a mental note of that perception; frequently make that perception. It is possible that when you do so, that drowsiness would go away.”

From a practical angle, both readings—although they appear to contradict one another—are valid. When we try to overcome drowsiness or any distracting thought, we could either (a) simply note it at the sense-door as an objective experience (“drowsiness...”) <sup>9</sup> or (b) simply disregard it and go on with our meditation. <sup>10</sup>

## 3 Modes of spiritual progress

**3.1** There is a whole chapter (*vagga*)—the **Paṭipadā Vagga**—in the Aṅguttara Nikāya dealing with **modes of spiritual progress** (*paṭipadā*), or simply “ways of progress” (A 4.161-170), of which there are four, namely: <sup>11</sup>

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| (1) painful progress with slow direct knowledge   | <i>dukkhā paṭipadā dandhābhiññā</i> |
| (2) painful progress with quick direct knowledge  | <i>dukkhā paṭipadā khippābhiññā</i> |
| (3) pleasant progress with slow direct knowledge  | <i>sukhā paṭipadā dandhābhiññā</i>  |
| (4) pleasant progress with quick direct knowledge | <i>sukhā paṭipadā khippābhiññā</i>  |

(A 4.167 @ SD 46.16; also A 4.161-170/2:149-152, 154 f)

Of the suttas in the chapter, two are called **Sāriputta Moggallāna Sutta** (A 4.167-168). In the **Sāriputta Moggallāna Sutta 1** (A 4.167), Sāriputta visits Moggallāna and on being asked by Sāriputta, Moggallāna tells him that his (Moggallāna’s) mode of spiritual progress is painful but with quick direct knowledge. <sup>12</sup> In the **Sāriputta Moggallāna Sutta 2** (A 4.168), Moggallāna visits Sāriputta who says that his own mode of spiritual progress is pleasant with quick direct knowledge. <sup>13</sup>

**3.2** Moggallāna attains arhathood by swift realization (*khippābhiññā*), that is, in a week, but his progress is difficult (*dukkha,paṭipadā*), but needs the Buddha’s help, hence the swiftness in his insight. Sāriputta, on the other hand, takes only slightly longer in his progress (two weeks), but his progress is smooth

<sup>9</sup> **Māluṅkyaputta S:** “When, Māluṅkyaputta, what is to be seen, heard, sensed and cognized by you, | in the seen there will only be the seen; | in the heard there will only be the heard; | in the sensed there will only be the sensed; | in the cognized there will only be the cognized...” (S 35.95,13/4:73), SD 5.9.

<sup>10</sup> **Vitakka Saṅghāna S:** “(3) If, monks, while the monk is examining the dangers of those thoughts, there still arises in him evil unskillful thoughts connected with desire, hate or delusion, then **he should not mind them, disregard them**” (*asati amanasikāra*). (M 20,5/1:120), SD 1.6.

<sup>11</sup> See (**Vitthāra**) **Paṭipadā S** (A 4.162/2:149 f), SD 18.3, esp (1).

<sup>12</sup> **Sāriputta Moggallāna S 1** (A 4.167/2:154 f), SD 46.16.

<sup>13</sup> **Sāriputta Moggallāna S 2** (A 4.168/2:155), SD 46.17.

(*sukha,paṭipadā*) and he swiftly gains insight listening to the Buddha exhorting the wanderer Dīgha,nakha (**Dīgha,nakha Sutta**, M 74).<sup>14</sup>

Although Moggallāna has the Buddha’s personal guidance in his progress, he has a lesser range in insight, whereas Sāriputta is not only independent in his progress but has a wider range of insight. Hence, Sāriputta’s supremacy in wisdom.<sup>15</sup>

**3.3** The Pacalā Sutta is helpful in giving the methods of priming our meditation practice. It is put in the Sattaka Nipāta (collection of sevens) of the Āṅguttara Nikāya because it lists 7 ways of dispelling drowsiness. The eighth factor, not exactly a “solution” for drowsiness, is to take a rest, and is not exactly a “method” of overcoming drowsiness. Hence, the Sutta is not classed in the Aṭṭhaka Nipāta (the collection of eights).

#### 4 Cūla Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta

In the second section of the Sutta, Moggallāna asks the Buddha this question [§11.1]:

“In what way, bhante, in brief, is a monk freed through the destruction of craving, that is, one who has reached total perfection, the total security from bondage, the total holy life, the total consummation, the highest amongst gods and humans?”

In the **Cūla Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 37), the same question is asked, on the instigation of Moggallāna, by Sakka, the king of the devas, and the Buddha’s answer is identical to the passage here. It is possible that this passage originally belongs to the Cūla Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta, but is added here by the Āṅguttara reciters for a more complete Sutta.<sup>16</sup>

The events of the Cūla Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta are clearly later than those of the Pacalā Sutta since the Cūla Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta records the awakened Moggallāna as using his psychic powers to visit Sakra in his heaven. In the Pacalā Sutta, Moggallāna is still struggling in his meditation.

#### 4 “Nothing is worth clinging to”

**5.1** In the conclusion of the Pacalā Sutta, Moggallāna asks the Buddha how one is awakened [§11.1]. The Buddha begins by answering that the awakened one has learned that “nothing is worth clinging to” (*sabbe dhammā nālaṃ abhinivesāyā*) [§11.2]. The whole section [§11] is well known as “the brief advice on liberation through the destruction of craving,”<sup>17</sup> and runs thus:<sup>18</sup>

11.2 Here, the monk has learned [heard] that nothing is worth clinging to. And a monk has learned that nothing is worth clinging to, thus: he directly understands all things [he directly understands the nature of the all].<sup>19</sup> Having directly understood all things, he fully understands<sup>20</sup> all things.

<sup>14</sup> M 74,14/1:500 f @ SD 16.1.

<sup>15</sup> Sāriputta, on account of his consistently great compassion, should also be seen as the foremost of monks who are compassionate, as exemplified by stories about his acts in the Dhammapada Commentary. There is officially no monastic declared as the foremost of “those who are compassionate” because every monastic is expected to be so.

<sup>16</sup> M 37.15/1:255 f. Requests for brief instructions are found elsewhere in the Canon, eg V 1:39 (Sāriputta to Assaji); S 22.1/3:1-5 @ SD 5.4 (Nakula, pitā to the Buddha).

<sup>17</sup> *Saṅkhittena taṇhā,saṅkhaya,vimutto (ovādo)*.

<sup>18</sup> M 37,3/1:251 = A 7.58,11/4:88. The vocatives have been omitted. For nn on key terms, see sutta §11 below.

<sup>19</sup> “He directly understands all things,” *so sabbaṃ dhammaṃ abhijānāti*, alt tr, “he directly understands the nature of the all.” Here the “all” (*sabba*) refers to the 6 senses and their respective sense-objects (**Sabba S**, S 35.23/4:15 @ SD 7.1).

<sup>20</sup> “He fully understands,” *parijānāti*, here meaning “he comprehends, knows fully for certain.” This spiritual knowledge is called “**full understanding**” (*pariññā*), of which there are 3 kinds: (1) Full understanding of the known (*nāta,pariññā*), ie the discernment of the specific characteristics of a phenomena (“Form has the characteristic of

11.3 Having fully understood all things, he knows whatever feelings there are, whether pleasant, painful or neither painful nor pleasant.

As regards to those feelings, he dwells contemplating impermanence in them; he dwells contemplating dispassion [fading away of lust] in them; he dwells contemplating ending [of suffering] in them; he dwells contemplating letting go [of defilements].

When he dwells contemplating impermanence in them, contemplating dispassion [fading away of lust] in them, contemplating ending [of suffering] in them, contemplating letting go [of defilements], he does not cling to anything in the world; not clinging, he is not agitated; not agitated, he attains nirvana for himself.

He understands. ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done what is to be done, there is no more for this state of being.’ (M 37,3/1:251), SD 54.8 = (A 7.58,11/4:88), SD 4.11

**5.2** This whole famous “brief advice on liberation through the destruction of craving” forms the main theme of **the Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 37), where the Buddha gives this teaching to Sakra, leader of the devas, in the presence of Moggallāna.<sup>21</sup> To find out whether that Sakra remembered and understood the Buddha’s admonition, Moggallāna then visits the heaven of the thirty-three, where by a skillful means, Moggallāna reminds Sakra and the celestial king Vessavaṇa of the Buddha’s “brief advice” that nothing is worth clinging to.<sup>22</sup> Moggallāna then returns to the Buddha to recount the incident to him.<sup>23</sup> At that time, Sakra is already a streamwinner.<sup>24</sup>

**5.3** Passage 11.3 of the Pacalā Sutta is very close to that in **the Avijjā Pahāna Sutta 2** (S 35.80).<sup>25</sup> The ensuing passage [S 35.80.6b], however, is very different only in wording, but same in spirit, applying the teaching of “the all” (*sabba*).<sup>26</sup>

**6** Here, the monk has learned [heard] that nothing is worth clinging to. And if a monk has thus learned that nothing is worth clinging to, he directly knows<sup>27</sup> all things. Having directly known all things, he fully understands<sup>28</sup> all things.

6.2 <sup>29</sup>Having fully understood everything, he sees all signs differently.<sup>30</sup>

being oppressed, feeling has the characteristic of being felt, etc.”); (2) Full understanding by investigating (*tīraṇa, pariññā*), ie insight wisdom (*vipassanā, paññā*) which has the 3 universal characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, non-self) as its objects, and which arises when attributing a universal characteristic to a physical and mental state, eg “Form is impermanent; feeling is impermanent, etc.”; (3) Full understanding as overcoming (or abandoning) (*pahāna, pariññā*), ie the insight-wisdom that has the universal characteristics as its objects, and arises after one has overcome the idea of permanence, etc”. (Nm 52; Vism 20.3/606 f). Comy says that “full understanding” here refers to *tīraṇa, pariññā* (AA 4:43). The contemplation of impermanence (*aniccānupassanā*), etc, are given in the final tetrad (*dhammānupassanā*, contemplation of mind-objects) of the breath meditation of **Ānāpāna, sati S** (M 118,21/3:83), SD 7.13 .

<sup>21</sup> **Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 37,2-3/1:251), SD 54.8.

<sup>22</sup> **Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 37,11-13/1:254 f), SD 54.8.

<sup>23</sup> **Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 37,15/1:255), SD 54.8.

<sup>24</sup> **Sakka, pañha S** (D 21,2.10/2:289), SD 70.6.

<sup>25</sup> **Avijjā Pahāna S 2** (S 35.80,6/4:50), SD 16.9.

<sup>26</sup> Here the “all” (*sabba*) refers to the 6 senses and their respective sense-objects (**Sabba S**, S 35.23/4:15 @ SD 7.1), here the respective consciousnesses are also included.

<sup>27</sup> “He directly knows,” *abhijānāti*, ie through personal experience by way of spiritual insight. See sutta §11.2 n on **abhijānāti**.

<sup>28</sup> “He fully understands,” *parijānāti* here, meaning “he comprehends, knows fully for certain.” See sutta §11.2 n on **parijānāti**.

<sup>29</sup> *Sabbam dhammam pariññāya sabba, nimittāni aññato passati; cakkhum aññato passati, rūpe aññato passati, cakkhu, viññānam aññato passati; ...yam p’idaṃ mano samphassa, paccayā uppajjati vedayitam sukham vā dukkham vā adukkham asukham vā. Tam pi annato passato.*

<sup>30</sup> Comy: “He sees all signs differently” (*sabba, nimittāni aññato passati*) means that he sees the signs of formations (*saṅkhāra, nimittāni*) differently from those who have not fully understood the worldly inclinations (*abhinivesā*). For

He sees the eye differently; he sees forms differently; he sees eye-consciousness differently. Whatever feeling—whether pleasant, or painful, or neutral—that arises with eye-contact as condition, that, too, he sees differently.

He sees the ear differently; he sees sounds differently; he sees ear-consciousness differently. Whatever feeling—whether pleasant, or painful, or neutral—that arises with ear-contact as condition, that, too, he sees differently.

He sees the nose differently; he sees smells differently; he sees nose-consciousness differently. Whatever feeling—whether pleasant, or painful, or neutral—that arises with nose-contact as condition, that, too, he sees differently.

He sees the tongue differently; he sees tastes differently; he sees tongue-consciousness differently. Whatever feeling—whether pleasant, or painful, or neutral—that arises with tongue-contact as condition, that, too, he sees differently.

He sees the body differently; he sees touches differently; he sees body-consciousness differently. Whatever feeling—whether pleasant, or painful, or neutral—that arises with body-contact as condition, that, too, he sees differently.

He sees the mind differently; he sees mind-objects differently; he sees mind-consciousness differently. Whatever feeling—whether pleasant, or painful, or neutral—that arises with mind-contact as condition, that, too, he sees differently.

7 Monk, when a monk knows and sees thus, ignorance is abandoned by him and true knowledge (*vijjā*) arises. (S 35.80/4:50), SD 16.9

## 6 Related suttas

**6.1** There are a number of suttas, like the Pacalā Sutta, giving practical steps in overcoming distractions to meditation and spiritual development. **The (Thīna,middha) Tissa Sutta** (S 22.84) also deals with overcoming sloth and torpor, but through the application of insight.<sup>31</sup>

**6.2** The **Vitakka Saṅṭhāna Sutta** (M 20) teaches 5 methods of “stilling the mind,” that is, ridding of distracting thoughts, namely:

- (1) applying a different meditation sign (thought displacement);
- (2) examining the dangers of the distracting thought (aversion therapy);
- (3) disregarding the distracting thought (non-attention or avoidance);
- (4) identifying the causes of the distraction (thought reduction); and
- (5) sustained effort.<sup>32</sup>

In regards to method (3), the Majjhima Commentary suggests 6 other methods:

- (1) occupy ourselves with something else;
- (2) recite some work explaining a doctrine;
- (3) read a Dharma text (like a pūjā book);
- (4) examine the parts of an object from his bag, like fire-sticks (“this is the upper stick; this is the lower stick”);
- (5) carefully and reflectively examine his requisites (“this is the awl; this is a pair of scissors; this is the nail cutter; this is the needle”);
- (6) darn the worn-out parts of the robe. (MA 3:90 f).

**6.3** **The Āghāta Paṭivīnaya Sutta** (A 5.161) gives 5 methods for putting away ill will:

- (1) by cultivating lovingkindness (towards the person);
- (2) by cultivating compassion;

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such people see all signs as self, but one who has fully understood the worldly inclinations, sees them as not-self, not as a self. Thus is the characteristic of not-self discussed in this sutta (SA 2:370). On “sign” (*nimitta*), see SD 19.7.

<sup>31</sup> (Thīna,middha) Tissa S (S 22.84/3:106-109), SD 32.12.

<sup>32</sup> See Vitakka Saṅṭhāna S (M 20/1:118-122), SD 1.6.

- (3) by cultivating equanimity;<sup>33</sup>  
 (4) by simply disregarding the person;  
 (5) by applying the thought that we are each the owner of our karma, the heir to our karma, karma is the source (“womb”) of our being, karma is our real relations, karma is our refuge, and that we are responsible for our deeds. (A 5.161).<sup>34</sup>

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## The Discourse on Nodding Off

A 7.58

[85]

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in the Deer Park in the Bhesakaḷā Forest<sup>35</sup> at Sumsumāra,-giri<sup>36</sup> in the Bhaggā country.<sup>37</sup>

### MAHĀ MOGGALLĀNA’S DROWSINESS

1.2 At that time the venerable Mahā Moggallāna was sitting and nodding [while trying to meditate] in the village of Kallavāḷa,mutta<sup>38</sup> in Magadha. Through the divine eye [clairvoyance],<sup>39</sup> purified and surpassing the human, the Blessed One saw the venerable Mahā Moggallāna sitting and nodding in the village of Kallavāḷa,mutta in Magadha.

1.3 Then, just as a strong man would stretch his bent arm or would bend his stretched arm, the Blessed One disappeared from the Deer Park in the Bhesakaḷā Forest at Sumsumāra,giri in Bhaggā country and immediately appeared before the venerable Mahā Moggallāna sitting and nodding in the village of Kallavāḷa,mutta in Magadha.

The Blessed One sat down on the prepared seat.

### The 8 ways of overcoming drowsiness

1.4 Having sat down, the Blessed One said this to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna:

“Are you nodding, Moggallāna? Are you nodding, Moggallāna?”

“Yes, bhante.”

<sup>33</sup> Comy: Gladness is omitted here since it is very difficult for such a person to cultivate it at this point. (AA 3:294).

<sup>34</sup> **Āghāta Paṭṭivāya S** (A 5.161/3:186), SD 12.23.

<sup>35</sup> So called because it is the home of the yakshini Bhesakaḷā (SA 2:249). The house of Nakula,pitā and Nakula,-mātā is nearby.

<sup>36</sup> *Sumsumāra,giri*: see **Nakula,pitā S** (S 22.1), SD 5.4(1).

<sup>37</sup> For details regarding Bhaggā, see **Nakula,pitā S** (S 22.1), SD 5.4 Intro & Appendix.

<sup>38</sup> See Intro (1) above.

<sup>39</sup> *Dibba,cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma,cakkhu*) (D 2.95/1:82), which is an advanced form of clairvoyance, but it is inferior to the wisdom eye (*paññā,cakkhu*) which is the wisdom of the arhat. The Cūḷa Niddesa mentions **5 kinds of eyes**: (1) the physical eye (*maṁsa,cakkhu*); (2) the divine eye (*dibba,-cakkhu*); (3) the wisdom eye (*paññā,cakkhu*) of the arhats; (4) the Buddha eye (*Buddha-cakkhu*); and (5) the universal eye (*samanta,cakkhu*), the omniscience of the Buddhas (Nc 235; nos 1-2 are at It 52). On the Buddha’s omniscience, see **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133), SD 10.8 (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76), SD 35.7.

2 (1) MENTAL NOTING. “In that case, Moggallāna, when you perceive that drowsiness is descending upon you, you should **make a mental note** of that perception; [86] frequently make that perception.<sup>40</sup>

It is possible that when you do so, that drowsiness would go away.<sup>41</sup>

3 (2) REFLECTION. If, Moggallāna, that drowsiness still would not go away, then, Moggallāna, you should think about, ponder over, **mentally attend to a teaching** that you have learned,<sup>42</sup> that you have mastered.

*It is possible that when you do so, that drowsiness would go away.*

4 (3) RECITATION. If, Moggallāna, that drowsiness still would not go away, then, Moggallāna, you should **recite in detail a teaching** that you have learned. It is possible that when you do so, that drowsiness would go away.

5 (4) MASSAGE. If, Moggallāna, that drowsiness still would not go away, then, Moggallāna, you should **rub both your ears** [in a circular manner with your palms] **and massage your limbs**.<sup>43</sup>

*It is possible that when you do so, that drowsiness would go away.*

6 (5) LOOK AROUND. If, Moggallāna, that drowsiness still would not go away, then, Moggallāna, you should rise, wash your eyes with some water, **look around yourself** [at the surrounding] **and look up at the stars and constellations**.

*It is possible that when you do so, that drowsiness would go away.*

7 (6) PERCEPTION OF LIGHT. If, Moggallāna, that drowsiness still would not go away, then, Moggallāna, you should practise **the perception of light**, determine the perception of daylight: just as day is, so is night; just as night is, so is day.<sup>44</sup> Thus through a mind that is open and unhindered, you should cultivate a mind of bright light.<sup>45</sup> It is possible that when you do so, that drowsiness would go away.<sup>46</sup> [87]

<sup>40</sup> “When you perceive...of that perception,” PTS *yathā saññissa te viharato taṃ middham okkamati, taṃ saññam manasākāsi taṃ saññam bahulam akāsi*. Se *yathā saññissa te viharato taṃ middham okkamati, taṃ saññam manasi-kareyyāsi, taṃ saññam bahulam kareyyāsi*. But there are variants: Ce *yathā saññino te viharato taṃ middham okkamati taṃ saññam mā manasākāsi taṃ saññam mā bahulam akāsi*; Be *yathā saññissa te viharato taṃ middham okkamati, taṃ saññam mā manasākāsi, taṃ saññam mā bahulam-akāsi*. Bodhi, 1999: “At whatever thought drowsiness befalls you, you should not give attention to that thought.” (A:B). Ṭhānissaro, 2002: “Whatever perception you have in mind when drowsiness descends on you, don’t attend to that perception, don’t pursue it.”

<sup>41</sup> This method includes “labelling” it simply as “drowsy...drowsy..” or “sleepy...sleepy...”. Or, smiling at the sleepiness, showing it lovingkindness, and then reverting to the meditation-object.

<sup>42</sup> “That you have learned,” *yathā,sutaṃ*, lit “according to what you have heard.”

<sup>43</sup> “Rub both your ears...massage your limbs,” *tato tvaṃ...ubho kaṇṇa,sotāni āvijeyyāsi pāṇinā gattāni anumajjeyyāsi*. I take *āvijeyyāsi* as pot 2<sup>nd</sup> sg of *āvijjhati*, to move in a circular motion (instead of *āviñjati*, to pull, to draw, to attract). See CPD: *āvijjhati*, etc. The word *anumajjeyyāsi*, “you should massage,” is pot 2<sup>nd</sup> sg of *anumajjati*, (a) to rub along, to stroke; (b) to beat, flog, pound (CPD). For the first phrase, the Thai tr has แต่นั้นเธอพึงขอนข้อหูทั้งสองข้าง, “then you should put your fingers into both ears.”

<sup>44</sup> Comy to **Iddhi,pāda Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.20,10/5:278), SD 28.14 on the perception of light (*āloka,saññā*), gives the foll instructions: “A monk [meditator] sits in an open space [*aṅgaṇa*] attending to the perception of light, now shutting his eyes, now opening his eyes. When, having opened his eyes, he closes them and, it appears just as if he sees (*olokentassa viya*), then the perception of light has arisen. It is also called ‘the perception of day’ (*divā,saññā*), and with its arising in the night, it is said to be well mastered.” (SA 3:260).

<sup>45</sup> *Iti vivaṭṭena* [vl *vivaṭṭena*] *cetasā aparīyonaddhena sappabhāsam cittam bhāveyyāsi*. Here, “**open and unhindered**” (*vivaṭṭena...aparīyonaddhena*) alludes to avoiding the first 2 of the “4 faults” (*catu,dosa*) in meditation, ie, against being “too slack” (*atīlīna*) or “too tense” (*atipaggahita*): see **Iddhi,pāda Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.20/5:276-281), SD 28.14. See §8n below on the last 2 of the 4 faults.

<sup>46</sup> As at **Samādhi Bhāvanā S** (A 4.41,3/2:45), SD 24.1, & **(Anussatiṭṭhāna) Udāyi S** (A 6.29/3:322-325), SD 24.8. See also *Thīna,middha*, SD 32.6 (3.2).

8 (7) WALKING MEDITATION. <sup>47</sup>If, Moggallāna, that drowsiness still would not go away, then, Moggallāna, you should, **perceiving before and after**, be resolute in walking back and forth, <sup>48</sup> *with the senses turned inward, with the mind not straying outward.*<sup>49</sup>

*It is possible that when you do so, that drowsiness would go away.*<sup>50</sup>

9 (8) REST. If, Moggallāna, that drowsiness still would not go away, then, mindful and fully aware, you should lie down lion-like on your right side, placing foot on foot, keeping in mind the time for rising; and on awaking, Moggallāna, you would rise quickly, thinking, ‘I will dwell without indulging in the pleasure of sleep, or in the pleasure of reclining, or in the pleasure of drowsiness.’<sup>51</sup>

Thus, Moggallāna, you should train yourself.

## CONDITIONS CONDUCTIVE TO CONCENTRATION

### Humility

10 Therefore, Moggallāna, you should train yourself, ‘**I shall not approach families [for alms] with my nose in the air.**’<sup>52</sup> Thus, Moggallāna, you should train yourself.

10.2 If, Moggallāna, a monk approaches a family with his nose in the air—and Moggallāna there are families that are busy with various kinds of business who do not think about a monk who has come—then such a monk might think, ‘Who I wonder has cut me off from this family. Now these people seem to be displeased with me.’<sup>53</sup>

10.3 Thus through not receiving [almsfood], he becomes discontented; being discontented, he becomes restless; being restless, he becomes unrestrained [in his senses]; being unrestrained, his mind will be far from attaining concentration.

### Non-confrontational speech

10.4 Therefore, Moggallāna, you should train yourself thus, ‘**I shall not speak in a confrontational manner.**’<sup>54</sup> Thus, Moggallāna, you should train yourself.

<sup>47</sup> This whole para: *No ce te evaṃ viharato taṃ middhaṃ pahīyetha, tato tvaṃ moggallāna pacchā,pure,saññī [vl pacchā,pure tathā,saññī]) caṅkamaṃ adhiṭṭhaheyyāsi anto,gatehi indriyehi abahigatena mānasena. Tḥānaṃ kho paṇ’etaṃ vijjati, yaṃ te evaṃ viharato taṃ middhaṃ pahīyetha.*

<sup>48</sup> *Pacchā,pure saññī caṅkamaṃ adhiṭṭheyyāsi.* Here *pacchā,pure saññī* can have a simple spatial meaning: be mindful of what is behind you, what is in front of you. The important phrase *pacchā,pure* is also found in **Iddhi,pāda Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.20), where it simply refers to the whole practice, from beginning to end: S 51.20/5:277 f @ SD 28.14. This sense also applies here. For effective practice, both senses should be applied (albeit, noting that the latter meaning prevails: see foll n).

<sup>49</sup> *Anto,gatehi indriyehi abahi,gatena manasena.* “with senses turned inward” (*adhiṭṭheyyāsi...anto,gatehi indriyehi*) is actually synonymous with the foll phrase, “with the mind not straying outwards” (*adhiṭṭheyyāsi...abahi,gatena manasena*), to avoiding it from being “distracted externally” (*bahiddhā vikkhitta*). Comy explains “with the senses turn inward” as follows: “What is internal is not distracted with the external, with the pervasion of the 5 sense-faculties” (*anto,gatehi indriyehīti bahi avikkhittehi anto anupaviṭṭheh’eva pañcahi indriyehi*, AA 4:41). On the 5 benefits of walking meditation, see **Caṅkamaṇa S** (A 5.29/3:29 f), SD 76.3.

<sup>50</sup> See Nyanadhammo, “Walking meditation in the Thai Forest Tradition,” 2003. Accessible at [http://www.forestsangha.org/Ajahn\\_Nyanadhammo\\_Walking\\_Meditation.pdf](http://www.forestsangha.org/Ajahn_Nyanadhammo_Walking_Meditation.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> “Mindful and fully aware...or in the pleasure of reclining, or in the pleasure of drowsiness,” *tato tvaṃ moggallāna dakkhinena passena sīha,seyyaṃ kappeyyāsi pādena pādaṃ accādhāya sato sampajāno uṭṭhāna,saññāṃ manasikarivā, paṭibuddhena ca te moggallāna khippaṃ yeva paccuṭṭhātabbaṃ ‘na seyya,dukkhaṃ na passa,sukhaṃ na middha,sukhaṃ anuyutto viharissāmi ti.’* “Reclining” here is *passa*, lit “lying on the side.” On the significance of this passage, see SD 76.3 (1.2.2).

<sup>52</sup> “With my nose in the air,” *uccā,sonḍa*, lit “(of an elephant) with the trunk raised high,” ie with pride, arrogantly. This could be the origin of this common saying.

<sup>53</sup> “Now these people seem to be displeased with me,” *viratta,rūpā dānīme mayi manussā* (following Be).

<sup>54</sup> *Na viggāhika,kathaṃ kathessāmi.* On *viggāhika,kathā*, cf D 1:8; Sn 930; Nm 1:394 (which quotes this sutta). See also M 2:3; S 3:12.

10.5 When there is confrontational talk, there would surely be wordiness; with wordiness, there is restlessness; with restlessness, there is lack of restraint [of the senses]; when there is lack of restraint, the mind is far from concentration.

### Suitable dwelling place

10.6 Moggallāna, neither do I praise all (worldly) engagements<sup>55</sup> nor do I, Moggallāna, [88] blame all (worldly) engagements either.

Moggallāna, I do not praise the association between householders and renunciants; but as regards association with dwellings with few sounds, little noise, cooled by breezes, secluded from humans, suitable for solitude<sup>56</sup>—this I praise.”

## THE REALIZATION OF INSIGHT

### “Nothing is worth clinging to”<sup>57</sup>

**11** When this was said, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna said this to the Blessed One:

“In what way, bhante, in brief, is a monk freed through the destruction of craving, that is, one who has reached total<sup>58</sup> perfection, the total security from bondage, the total holy life, the total consummation, the highest amongst gods and humans?”<sup>59</sup>

11.2 <sup>60</sup>“Here, Moggallāna, the monk has learned<sup>61</sup> that nothing is worth clinging to.<sup>62</sup> And, Moggallāna, a monk has learned that nothing is worth clinging to, thus: he directly knows<sup>63</sup> all things [he directly knows the nature of the all].<sup>64</sup> Having directly known the nature of all things, he fully understands<sup>65</sup> all things.

<sup>55</sup> “(Worldly) engagements,” *samsagga*, also “association, contact.”

<sup>56</sup> This is stock: V 1:39; D 3:38; M 2:118, 3:13.

<sup>57</sup> This section is known as “the brief advice on liberation through the destruction of craving.” This whole section is at **Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 37,2-3/1:251), SD 54.8, whose events are clearly set after those of the Pacalā S since the Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S records the awakened Moggallāna as using his psychic powers to visit Sakra in his heaven. §§11.1+2 are found in **Avijjā Pahāna S 2** (A 35.80,6/4:88,11-15), SD 16.9. Their ensuing passages, however, are different. See Intro (5).

<sup>58</sup> “Total,” *accanta*, also “absolute.”

<sup>59</sup> In **Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 37.15/1:255 f), Sakra, the leader of the gods, on the instigation of Moggallāna, asks the same question and the Buddha’s answer is identical to the passage here. It is possible that this passage originally belongs to the Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S, but is added here by the Aṅguttara reciters for a more complete Sutta. Requests for brief instructions are found elsewhere in the Canon, eg V 1:39 (Sāriputta to Assaji); S 22.1/3:1-5 (Nakula, pitā to the Buddha).

<sup>60</sup> This passage [11.2] is also found in **Avijjā Pahāna S 2** (A 35/80). The ensuing passages, however, are different [4].

<sup>61</sup> “Has learned,” *suta*, lit “has heard.”

<sup>62</sup> “Nothing is worth clinging to,” *sabbe dhammā nālaṃ abhinivesāyā*, lit “all things are not worthy of adhering to.” “All things” here refer to the 5 aggregates, the 12 sense-bases and the 18 elements, all of which are not fit to be clung to. These factors have to do with insight (*vipassanā*). (AA 4:43). See Intro (6) above.

<sup>63</sup> “He directly knows,” *abhiñāṇāti*, here meaning to know for oneself by insight, ie through higher self-knowledge or *abhiññā*. Traditionally, there are **6 direct knowledges** (*abhiññā*): (1) psychic powers (*iddhi, vidhā*), (2) the “divine ear” or clairaudience (*dibba, sota*), (3) mind-reading, ie the ability to read the thoughts of others (*parassa ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*), (4) the recollection of one’s own past lives (*pubbe, nivāsānussati*), (5) the “divine eye” (*dibba, cakkhu*), ie the knowledge of the passing away and arising of beings, faring according to their karma, and (6) the destruction of mental influxes (*āsava-k, khaya*), ie arhathood. Nos 4-6 are known as “the three knowledges (*te, vijjā*) (D 3:281; A 3:280). Comy says that this knowledge here refers to *ñāṇa, pariññā* (A 4:43): see foll n.

<sup>64</sup> “He directly knows all things,” *so sabbam dhammam abhiñāṇāti*, alt tr, “he directly knows the nature of the all.” Here the “all” (*sabba*) refers to the 6 senses and their respective sense-objects (**Sabba S**, S 35.23/4:15 @ SD 7.1).

11.3 Having fully understood all things, he knows whatever **feelings** there are, *whether pleasant, painful or neither painful nor pleasant*.

11.4 As regards to those feelings,

he dwells contemplating impermanence in them;

he dwells contemplating dispassion [fading away of lust] in them;

he dwells contemplating ending (of suffering) in them;

he dwells contemplating letting go (of defilements).<sup>66</sup>

11.5 When he dwells contemplating *impermanence* in them, contemplating *dispassion* in them, contemplating *ending* in them, contemplating *letting go*, he does not cling to anything in the world.

Not clinging, he is not agitated; being not agitated, he himself surely attains nirvana.<sup>67</sup>

11.6 He understands,

‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done what is to be done, there is no more for this state of being.’<sup>68</sup>

11.7 That, Moggallāna, is, in brief, how a monk is freed through the destruction of craving, that is, one who has reached total<sup>69</sup> perfection,

*accanta,niṭṭhā*

the total security from bondage,

*accanta,yoga-k.khemī*

the total holy life,

*accanta,brahma.cārī*

the total consummation,

*accanta,pariyosāna*

the highest amongst gods and humans.<sup>70</sup>

*seṭṭho,deva.manussanam*

— evaṃ —

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<sup>65</sup> “He fully understands,” *parijānāti*: see (6.1) (11.2) n.

<sup>66</sup> The monk effects the abandoning of the mental hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence (*anicānupassanā*), fading away (of lust) (*viragānupassanā*), cessation (of suffering) (*nirodhānupassanā*) and of letting go (of defilements) (*paṭinissaggānupassanā*), and thus comes to look upon feelings (all experiences) with equanimity.

<sup>67</sup> *Anupādiyaṃ na paritassati, aparitassaṃ paccattañ,ñeva parinibbāyati*. On *paccattaṃ yeva parinibbāyati*, cf **Cūḷa Taṇhā.saṅkhaya S** (M 37,3/1:251 f, by fully understanding “the all, *sabba*”), SD 54.8; **Pacālā S** (A 7.58/4:88, by contemplating “nothing is worth clinging to”), SD 4.11. Comy says that he brings himself to nirvana (ie by his own efforts) by the utter extinction of defilements (*sayam eva kilesa,parinibbānena parinibbāyati*, MA 2:18, 299).

<sup>68</sup> This para describing the arhat is stock: V 1:14; D 1:84; M 2:39; S 2:82.

<sup>69</sup> “Total,” *accanta*, also “absolute.”

<sup>70</sup> As a result of this teaching, Moggallāna is fully freed as an arhat (AA 4:44,23). On this passage’s significance, see **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3 (1.5).