

# 10

## Paṭilīna Sutta

The Discourse on the Withdrawn | A 4.38

Theme: The qualities of a true dhyana meditator  
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2011, 2013

### 1 Sutta teachings

#### 1.1 CONTEXT OF THE SUTTA

##### 1.1.1 Solitude and withdrawal

1.1.1.1 SOLITUDE. **The Paṭilīna Sutta** (A 4.38) is about spiritual solitude, emotional independence and personal readiness to let the awakening and liberating Dharma truly flow into the lives of others. The Sutta deals with the accomplished dhyana-attainer or any of the 4 kinds of saints (as attainers of the 4 dhyanas).<sup>1</sup> However, if we take the phrase “*stilled bodily formation [activity]*” [§3, 1.4] to refer to the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, then clearly, these 3 qualities of **withdrawal** [1.1.1.2] are those of an accomplished dhyana-attainer.<sup>2</sup>

A true dhyana meditator is said to be “**withdrawn**” (*paṭilīna*) or “secluded,” even “reclusive.” In other words, this is a teaching on “solitude” (*viveka*). **The 3 kinds of solitude** often mentioned in the Commentaries<sup>3</sup> are as follows:

- |                                  |                       |                                  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) solitude of the body         | <i>kāya viveka,</i>   | that is, physical solitude,      |
| (2) solitude of the mind         | <i>citta viveka,</i>  | that is, spiritual solitude, and |
| (3) solitude from the substrates | <i>upadhi viveka,</i> | that is, nirvana.                |

Briefly, the “solitude of the body” is keeping aloof from socializing for the purpose of mental cultivation. The “solitude of the mind” is the letting go of mental defilements, especially in a mindful state. And the “solitude from the substrates” is the abandoning of all unwholesome states, that is, the attainment of awakening.<sup>4</sup> [2.1]

1.1.1.2 WITHDRAWAL. The Paṭilīna Sutta teaches “withdrawal” into meditation works in terms of the “solitude of the mind” (*citta,viveka*) in a broad sense of the term. The “withdrawn” [§1] meditator is said to be one

- |  |                                |             |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------|
| (1) “who has put aside personal truths,”       | <i>panuṇṇa,pacceka,sacco</i>   | [§1.2, 1.2] |
| (2) “completely given up seeking,” and         | <i>samavaya,saṭṭh’esano</i>    | [§2, 1.3]   |
| (3) “has stilled bodily formation [activity].” | <i>passaddha,kāya,sankhāro</i> | [§3, 1.4]   |

**1.1.2 The noble abidings.** These three conditions are also the noble’s abidings nos 5, 6, and 8 of the 10 noble abodes (*ariya’vāsa*), given in brief in **the Ariya,vāsa Sutta 1** (A 10.19), and detailed in **the Ariya,vāsa Sutta 2** (A 10.20). These two Suttas begin with the overcoming of the 5 mental hindrances and end with the arhathood itself. Hence, from these two Suttas, we have a good idea of the context of the teachings of the Paṭilīna Sutta. If you like, you may pause the reading here, and go on to study the two Ariya,vāsa Suttas; or, you could finish studying this Sutta, and then go on to study the two Ariya,vāsa Suttas.

We will now examine each of the three important terms here in turn.

<sup>1</sup> The 4 kinds of saints are the streamwinner, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the arhat. For details, see **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22,42-47), SD 3.13 ≈ **Ānâpâna,sati S** (M 118.9-12), SD 7.13. On dhyana, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

<sup>2</sup> In **Ariya,vāsa Ss 1+2**, the 3 qualities are given as nos 5, 6 and 8, and as a set are clearly those of a full-fledged arhat (A 10.19+20), SD 43.14+15. On the need for dhyana for the attainment of arhathood, see **Samatha & vipasana**, SD 41.1 (2.2.2.4). See also **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (13); **Samadhi**, SD 33.1a (2.2-2.5); **The layman and dhyana**, SD 8.5 (9).

<sup>3</sup> Nm 27, 140, 157, 341; DA 169; MA 2:142; UA 163, 206, 231, 396; SA 3:122; DhA 2:103, 3:129.

<sup>4</sup> On the 3 kinds of solitude, see **Viveka,nissita**, SD 20.4 (4.2).

## 1.2 “WHO HAS PUT ASIDE PERSONAL [PRIVATE] TRUTHS” (*panunna, pacceka, sacca*)<sup>5</sup> [§1.2].

**1.2.1** Both our **Paṭilīna Sutta** [§1.2] and the **Ariya, vāsa Sutta 2** (A 10.20) explain this as the giving up of speculating on the 10 undetermined (*avyākata*) questions.<sup>6</sup> Both the Ariya, vāsa Sutta 1 (A 10.19) and the Ariya, vāsa Sutta 2 (A 10.20) have this quality as their fifth noble abiding.<sup>7</sup> These, then, are the “personal (or private) truths” (*pacceka, sacca*) referred to in the **Paṭilīna Sutta**.

The Commentary explains the phrase “personal truth” or “private truth” (*pacceka, sacca*) as meaning “view-truths” (*diṭṭhi, sacca*) or “view-based truths.”<sup>8</sup> They are so called because such views are individually held by different people who then insist, “Only this is true, only this is true!” (AA 3:79), or in sutta terms, “Only this is true, all else false” (*idam eva saccaṃ mogham aññan ’ti*).<sup>9</sup>

**1.2.2** In other words, the 10 undetermined questions, which have been left unanswered by the Buddha, belong to the generic order known as “personal or private truths.” They are so called because we can only have personal opinions about them, and as such are unlikely to agree with one another. More seriously, they are unhelpful in our spiritual quest because they, in no way, reflect or point to true reality. Since they tend to generate a lot of thinking and speculating, they are serious mental hindrances to meditation and mental development.<sup>10</sup>

Such view-driven people tend to be deeply ruttid in some level of narcissism (*asmi, māna*). They use their fixed views as a means of measuring whom they can dominate or at least reject, since he has a powerful sense of self-grandiosity and is, as such, unable to accept criticism. In short, these become emotional walls that prevent any kind of wholesome learning, but actually imprison the insecure child in them. Sadly, such people have no friends, only admirers and yes-men.

## 1.3 “COMPLETELY GIVEN UP SEEKING” (*samavaya, saṭṭh ’esano*)<sup>11</sup> [§2]

**1.3.1** The Sutta says that the “withdrawn” meditator has given up seeking, in that he has

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (1) abandoned seeking sensual pleasures;    | <i>kām ’esanā pahīnā hoti</i>              |
| (2) abandoned the seeking of existence; and | <i>bhav ’esanā pahīnā hoti</i>             |
| (3) settled the seeking of the holy life.   | <i>brahma, cariy ’esanā paṭippassaddhā</i> |

As noted below [3], there are two suttas dealing with “seeking” (*esanā*) (the negative form), that is, **the Esanā Sutta 1** (It 54) and **the Esāna Sutta 2** (It 55). Their prose sections are identical; only their closing verses are different.

**1.3.2** In the Abhidhamma texts, the 3 kinds of quest or seeking are defined in **the Vibhaṅga** (Vbh §919) respectively as lust for sense-pleasure, lust for existence, and the extreme views, and the bad bodily action, verbal action and mental action therein in each case.<sup>12</sup> In other words, here it is not only the seeking as a thought but also what they entail, namely, the unwholesome actions through the three karmic doors.

**1.3.3** The Commentary glosses *brahma, cariy ’esanā* as one motivated by his aspiration: “I will seek out, search for a holy life.” Both the Vibhaṅga and the Commentary on It 54 defines “the holy life of seeking views” as one that speculates on the 10 undetermined points (*avyākata*),<sup>13</sup> listed in the Sutta [§1.2]. This is settled and subsides on account of the path of arhathood. But the search for a holy life in the form of views (*diṭṭhi, brahma, cariy ’esanā*) settles with the path of streamwinning (AA 3:80).

Although **Buddhist training** consists of the cultivation moral virtue, mental stillness and wisdom, they are not really about the discussion or mastery of Buddhist ethics, psychology, philosophy, philology

<sup>5</sup> For a word analysis, see below §1.2 n.

<sup>6</sup> A 10.20,8/5:31 @ SD 43.15.

<sup>7</sup> A 10.19/5:29 @ SD 43.14 & A 10.20/5:30 @ SD 43.15.

<sup>8</sup> On the nature of views and the need to abandon them, see **The notion of diṭṭhi**, SD 40a.1.

<sup>9</sup> Eg **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136,9/3:210), SD 4.16.

<sup>10</sup> See esp **Cūḷa Māluṅkya,putta** (M 63/1:426-432), SD 5.8.

<sup>11</sup> For a word analysis, see below §1.2 n.

<sup>12</sup> Vbh 919/366 f.

<sup>13</sup> Vbh 919/366; ItA 2:16.

or any kind of academic discourse: it is certainly not about monastics seeking academic excellence or a professional career.

All such fields of studies are useful in their own way. If we are cooks, these are like our utensils, cutlery and dining furniture; or, if we are musicians, they are like our knowledge of music, the musical instruments, the tools for writing music, recording and playback devices, a sound-proof studio, an acoustic auditorium, and so on. They do not in themselves provide good food or beautiful music. It all depends on how well we use them, and how we enjoy what we have skilfully crafted.

The Dharma is like that, too. First, we try our best to understand what it is really about. Then, we put whatever we understand or need to understand, into practice. As we understand our experiences better, we progress from there to deeper things. In fact, often enough, if we keep our minds and hearts open, the Dharma seems to speak to us, fitting together in a bigger and clearer picture, to enrich and enlighten our lives.

These are all progressive stages we go through. Our understanding of one teaching or sutta becomes the basis for another, like climbing a ladder by stepping on one rung, the other foot steps on the next rung, and so on, until we reach the top. Then we do not need the ladder any more, and go on to do what needs to be done next.

Indeed, as evident from **the Ratha Vinīta Sutta** (M 24), it is not *merely* for the sake of moral virtue, or mental purity, or even a vision of reality. These are only means to a higher end and steps on the path to awakening.<sup>14</sup> There is more to be done,<sup>15</sup> and the goal is awakening itself, if not at least streamwinning in this life itself.<sup>16</sup>

#### 1.4 “STILLED BODILY FORMATION [ACTIVITY]” (*passaddha, kāya, saṅkhāra*) [§3]

**1.4.1 Bodily formation.** The Commentary here is silent on “**bodily formation**” (*kāya, saṅkhāra*) (sg), but elsewhere it says that it refers to the in-and-out-breathing, which ceases in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana,<sup>17</sup> which is then described by the Sutta [§3].<sup>18</sup> **The Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta** (M 44) explains that “bodily formation” is so called because the in-and-out-breaths are “states bound up with the body.”<sup>19</sup>

For this reason, too, the term *kāya, saṅkhāro* is in the singular, unlike the “normal” formations (*saṅkhārā*) which is always in the plural. One simple explanation for this *plurality* is that an unawakened person is, as a rule, overwhelmed or influenced by his own thoughts and their diversity—a condition known as “mental proliferation” (*papañca*).<sup>20</sup>

The Commentary says that *passaddha* here is “of two kinds, bodily and mental.”<sup>21</sup> As the 5<sup>th</sup> awakening-factor, it is called *passaddhi*, “tranquillity,” and means calm both of consciousness (*citta, passaddhi*) and of the mental body (*kāya, passaddhi*),<sup>22</sup> here meaning the physical body in meditation, which is also

<sup>14</sup> M 24/1:145-151 @ SD 28.3.

<sup>15</sup> *Atthi c’ev’ettha uttarim karaṇīyam*, which means that sainthood and liberation have not been attained yet: see **(Ānanda) Subha S** (D 10,1.32.3/1:207), SD 40a.13. Also *sati uttarim karaṇīye*, as in **Assa, pura S** (M 39,3.5/1:-271), SD 10.13.

<sup>16</sup> See **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3 & the 10 suttas of **Okkanta Saṃyutta** (S 25) (the Connected Suttas on the Descent), ie, ch 25 of the Saṃyutta Nikāya are: **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), **(Anicca) Rūpa S** (S 25.2), **(Anicca) Viññāṇa S** (S 25.3), **(Anicca) Phassa S** (S 25.4), **(Anicca) Vedanā S** (S 25.5), SD 17.3(4.5a), **(Anicca) Saññā S** (S 25.6), SD 17.4(10), **(Anicca) Saṅkhāra S** (S 25.7), **(Anicca) Taṇhā S** (S 25.8), **(Anicca) Dhātu S** (S 25.9), and **(Anicca) Khandha S** (S 25.10) (S 25.1-10/3:225-229).

<sup>17</sup> “Thus it is the stilling of the in-and-out breath in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana” (*evam catuttha-jjhānena passaddha, kāya, saṅkhāro vūpasanta, assāsa, passāso nāma hoti*, AA 3:81).

<sup>18</sup> See **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,15/1:301,19-21), SD 40a.9; **Kāma, bhū S 2** (S 41.6/4:293,16-17), SD 48.7; **(Anupubba) Nirodha S** (A 9.31,4/4:409,12), SD 33.6.

<sup>19</sup> *Assāsa, passāsā kho āvuso visākhā kāyikā ete dhammā kāya, paṭibaddhā. Tasmā assāsa, passāsā kāya, saṅkhāro* (M 44,15.2/1:301,19-21), SD 40a.9

<sup>20</sup> See **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18/1:108-114) & SD 6.14 (2).

<sup>21</sup> *Passaddho’ti dvīhi kāya, citta, passaddhīhi passaddho* (AA 3:80).

<sup>22</sup> See Abhs:BRS 85-88, 281.

very calm.<sup>23</sup> The 7 awakening-factors are (1) mindfulness (*sati*); (2) investigation of states (*dhamma,vi-caya*); (3) effort; (4) zest (joyful interest); (5) tranquillity (*passaddhi*); (6) concentration (*samādhi*); and (7) equanimity (*upekkhā*).<sup>24</sup> [1.4.2.2]

### 1.4.2 Context

1.4.2.1 THE *VIVEKA,NISSITA* FORMULA. The “stilled bodily formation” as the process of “withdrawal” (*paṭilīna*) into deep meditation, especially dhyana, is best understood in the context of **the *viveka,nissita* formula**, which runs thus (with an alternative translation):

...dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust) [on dispassion],<sup>25</sup> dependent on cessation (of suffering),<sup>26</sup> ripening in letting go (of defilements).<sup>27</sup>

[...based on solitude, on dispassion, on cessation, maturing in release.]

*viveka,nissitaṃ virāga,nissitaṃ nirodha,nissitaṃ vossagga,pariṇāmiṃ.*

(M 118,41-43/3:88), SD 7.13; (S 45.158,3/5:51), SD 20.16

Paraphrased, this formula goes thus: *based on mental solitude, which is dependent on the fading away of lust, bringing about dispassion, there is the cessation of suffering, leading to the letting go of defilements, that is the maturing in release.*<sup>28</sup>

1.4.2.2 THE 7 AWAKENING-FACTORS. This becomes even clearer when we see how this formula acts as the climax of the 7 awakening-factors, as stated in **the *Ānāpāna,sati Sutta*** (M 118), thus:

**41** And how, bhikshus, are **the 7 awakening-factors** cultivated and often developed to bring true knowledge and liberation to perfection?<sup>29</sup>

**42** Here, bhikshus,

(1) a monk cultivates the awakening-factor of mindfulness that is ***dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust) [on dispassion],<sup>30</sup> dependent on cessation (of suffering),<sup>31</sup> ripening in letting go (of defilements).***<sup>32</sup>

(2) He cultivates the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation...

(3) He cultivates the awakening-factor of effort...

(4) He cultivates the awakening-factor of joy...

(5) He cultivates the awakening-factor of tranquillity...

(6) He cultivates the awakening-factor of concentration...

<sup>23</sup> There is certainty of the meaning of “body” (*kāya*) here: it can refer to the “body of breath” or the physical body itself. However, we can surmise from the sutta context.

<sup>24</sup> See (**Bojjhaṅga**) **Sīla S** (S 46.3), SD 10.15; SD 6.18 (7). See also MA 1:82-84.

<sup>25</sup> *Virāga*, also tr as “dispassion.”

<sup>26</sup> *Nirodha*, ie, “non-arising of suffering.”

<sup>27</sup> MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (*vossagga*): “giving up” (*pariccāga*), ie the abandonment of defilements, (*kilesa*), and “entering into” (*pakkhandana*), and it is the way itself (*maggo eva vossagga,pariṇāmi*), culminating in nirvana (MA 1:85 f = SA 1:159 = VbhA 316). **Gethin** notes that this phrase is not unique to the 7 *bojjhaṅga*, but is also found in connection with the factors of the noble eightfold path, the *indriya* and *bala* (2001:162 f). This formula shows that the *bojjhaṅgā* are to be developed successively “as dependent on solitude, dispassion [fading away] and cessation” (Gethin 2001:166).

<sup>28</sup> *Viveka,nissita*, SD 20.4.

<sup>29</sup> This closing section (M 118.41-44/3:88) is a pericope = **Ānanda S 1** (S 54.13-14/5:333) = **Ānanda S 2** (S 54.-14/5:335).

<sup>30</sup> *Virāga*, also tr as “dispassion.”

<sup>31</sup> *Nirodha*, ie, “cessation of suffering.”

<sup>32</sup> MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (*vossagga*): “giving up” (*pariccāga*), ie the abandonment of defilements, and “entering into” (*pakkhandana*), ie culminating in nirvana. **Gethin** notes that this phrase is not unique to the 7 *bojjhaṅga*, but is also found in connection with the factors of the noble eightfold path, the *indriyā* and *balā* (2001:162 f). This formula shows that each *bojjhaṅga* is to be developed successively “as dependent on solitude, dispassion [fading away] and cessation” (Gethin 2001:166).

(7) He cultivates the awakening-factor of equanimity that is *dependent on solitude, dependent on fading away (of lust), dependent on cessation (of suffering), ripening in letting go (of defilements)*.

43 Bhikshus, when the seven awakening-factors are thus cultivated, thus often developed, they bring true knowledge and liberation to perfection.”<sup>33</sup> (M 118,41-43/3:88), SD 7.13

1.4.2.3 SOLITUDE. As we have noted [1.1.1], “withdrawal” in this Sutta means “solitude” (*viveka*), or seclusion, that is, an environment for meditation, that is a physical solitude. On a deeper level, there is mental solitude, which refers to the suppression of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇā*). This is the meaning of “solitude,” which is the first term in the *viveka,nissita* formula [1.4.2.1].<sup>34</sup>

The Paṭisambhidā,magga mentions 5 kinds of “solitude” (*viveka*):

- |  |                             |                                    |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) solitude through suppression               | <i>vikkhambhana viveka</i>  |                                    |
| (2) solitude through displacement by opposites | <i>tad-aṅga viveka</i>      |                                    |
| (3) solitude through cutting off               | <i>samuccheda viveka</i>    |                                    |
| (4) solitude through stilling                  | <i>paṭipassaddhi viveka</i> |                                    |
| (5) solitude through escape                    | <i>nissaraṇa viveka</i>     | (Pm 1:27, 2:219-224) <sup>35</sup> |

Here, (1) “solitude through suppression” is the attaining of some level of calmness, especially the first dhyana, so that the unwholesome state is at least temporarily suppressed. Even the memory of such mental calm (recollecting it in a mindful way) can help to rouse joy in us so that our negative state could be warded off.

(2) “Solitude through displacement” is the application of insight into the situation, especially after some level of mental calm. A proper understanding of the sutta teachings helps us to more effectively deal with unwholesome states, by noticing negative personal habits and their root-conditions, and rectifying them.

(3) “Solitude by cutting off” occurs “for one who develops the supramundane path that leads to the destruction of the influxes,”<sup>36</sup> and consists in “abandoning of states that are fetters, etc, by means of the knowledge of the noble path, such that they do not occur again.”<sup>37</sup>

(4) “Solitude by stilling [tranquillization]” occurs at the moment of fruition.

(5) “Solitude by escape” is the cessation that is nirvana.

**1.4.3 Cessation.** The suttas often mention **dhyana** (*jhāna*) before the Buddha’s time and dhyana experienced by non-Buddhists. In such cases, it is clear that such practitioners would not have called their own experience “dhyana” nor would they have known of its spiritual potential.<sup>38</sup> This was more likely that their dhyana was lacking right view. The dhyana discovered and used by the Buddha is the one with right view, that is, one that frees us from all notions of an abiding self or eternal soul.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> MA says that the mindfulness that comprehends breathing is mundane. The mundane mindfulness of the breath perfects or fulfills the mundane focuses of mindfulness. The mundane focuses of mindfulness perfect the supramundane awakening-factors, and the supramundane awakening-factors perfect true knowledge and liberation, ie the fruit and nirvana.

<sup>34</sup> See Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001:162-168.

<sup>35</sup> Also Vism 13.12/410, 22.110/693. See also **Satipaṭṭhāna S** intro, SD 13.1 (4.2c).

<sup>36</sup> *Samuccheda-p,pahānaṅ ca lokuttara-khaya.gāmi,maggam bhāyayato* (PM 1:27). “Influxes” or mental influxes (*āsava*): The oldest list of these is prob a set of 3 influxes—of sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), of existence (*bhav’āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijjāsava*), as in **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216,9), **Sammā,ditṭhi S** (M 9,70/1:55,10), the **Cūḷa Suññata S** (M 121,11/3:108,18), SD 14.11, **Āsava S** (S 38.8/4:256,4 = 45.163/5:56,15 = 47.50/189,29), **Ti,kappa S** (A 3.58/1:165,16), (**Te,vijja**) **Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 3.59,4/1:167,22), **Nibbedhika Pariyāya S** (A 6.63/3:414,11); **Vbh 914/384,13**.

<sup>37</sup> *Ariya,magga,nāṇena saṃyojanādīnaṃ dhammānaṃ yathā na puna pavattanti* (Vism 22.122/696). Pm 1:27 also mentions a variety of subsidiary types of abandoning.

<sup>38</sup> See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (3.1.4).

<sup>39</sup> See **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (4).



In a number of such suttas, the Bodhisattva is said to have tried “breathless meditation” (*appāṇaka jhāna*).<sup>40</sup> This could have been the kind of meditation alluded to by the term *passaddha, kāya, saṅkhāra* in the Paṭilīna Sutta [§3]. More specifically, however, “the stilled bodily formation” [1.4] here refers to the Buddha or arhat’s attainment of the cessation of feeling and perception. In **the Ariya, vāsa Sutta 2** (A 10.-20), this condition is listed just before the last two factors, that is, the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom, that is, arhathood.<sup>41</sup> This shows how this kind of “breathless meditation” is closely connected with awakening.

## 2 Key terms of the Suttas

### 2.1 PAṬILĪNA

**2.1.1 Etymology and meanings.** *Paṭilīna*, which is in the title of the Sutta, is also its key word, and has here been translated “**withdrawn**” (*paṭilīna*), which describes the meditator. *Paṭilīna* is the past participle of *paṭilīyati*, “having withdrawn, keeping away.”<sup>42</sup> The Commentary glosses *paṭilīna* as “hidden, gone into solitude” (*nilīno ekī, bhāvam upagato*, AA 3:79).<sup>43</sup>

*Nilīna*,<sup>44</sup> here a synonym of *paṭilīna*, is the past participle of *nilīyati*, “sitting on, perched; hidden, concealed, lying in wait” (AA 3:79). All this evokes the idea of going into solitary retreat for the purpose of meditation for the attaining of arhathood. As noted however, this gloss alludes only to “solitude of the body” (*kāya, viveka*) [1.1.1.1]. The Sutta details the nature of “the solitude of the mind” (*citta, viveka*) [1.1.1.1].

**2.1.2 The compass of “withdrawn.”** Although this translation may not be immediately appealing, it encompasses a broad embrace of senses. It evokes, firstly, a sense “withdrawing” from an addiction to what is unwholesome (whatever is rooted in greed, hate, or delusion). Then, we may have “withdrawal” symptoms of missing what the unwholesome states that we have abandoned. It is as if they fight us for a comeback. From a physical withdrawal (avoid negative places), social withdrawal (avoiding negative people), we move on to a psychological withdrawal (avoiding negative thoughts) and emotional withdrawal (avoiding negative feelings), and finally spiritual withdrawal (avoiding wrong view), and then the ultimate withdrawal (the freedom from all views).

As such, we can say that “withdrawn” (*paṭilīna*) covers a wide range of wholesome qualities, that is, “physically secluded, socially aloof, emotionally independent, spiritual alone,” and especially ever ready to let the awakening and liberating Dharma flow into the lives of others. This aptly describes the nature of the early saints and how our spiritual training should properly emulate them.

**2.1.3 Qualities of a true saint.** The Paṭilīna Sutta, taken as a whole, clearly refers to the qualities of an accomplished dhyana-attainer who is a full-fledged arhat. This is especially clear from the last two qualities, those of (9) mental liberation and of (10) liberation by wisdom.

### 2.2 ESANĀ

**2.2.1 Etymology and meanings.** The nouns *esanā* (fem, Skt *eṣaṇā*) and *esana* (nt, Skt *eṣaṇa*) are important and interesting sutta terms, generally meaning “quest, seeking, searching, desire; (surgery) probing.” It comes from the verb *esati*, “to desire, long (for), wish (for).”<sup>45</sup> In Sanskrit this is *eṣati* or *esate*, while in Buddhist Sanskrit, this is *eṣati*. They all come from √IS (1), “to wish for”<sup>46</sup> or √ES (1), “to search for, desire”<sup>47</sup> (CPD).<sup>48</sup>

<sup>40</sup> **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,20-25/1:243 f), SD 1.12; **Bodhi Raja, kumāra S** (M 85/2:93×4), SD 55,2; **Saṅgārava S** (M 100/2:212), SD 10.9.

<sup>41</sup> A 10.20,11/5:31 @ SD 43.15.

<sup>42</sup> S 1:48; A 2:41, 4:449; Sn 810, 852; Nm 1:130, 224 (*rāgassa* etc *pahīnattā patilīno*).

<sup>43</sup> *Paṭilīna* is pp of *paṭilīyati* (*paṭi*, “opposite of, not” + *līyati*, “to stick,” fr √LI, to stick).

<sup>44</sup> J 1:135, 293, 3:26; VvA 230.

<sup>45</sup> S 1:127,16\*, 175,2\* = J 5:325\*, 6:77,24\* = 85,20\*; Sn 592 = U 12,6\*, Sn 919; J 3:88,14\*. See CPD: <sup>2</sup>esati.

<sup>46</sup> The Skt root is √IṢ or √ICH, “to desire, wish.”

<sup>47</sup> The Skt root is *ā* -√IṢ > *eṣ* SED 232c.

<sup>48</sup> CPD gives the roots respectively as <sup>2</sup>√IS and <sup>1</sup>√ES: sv esati.

The adjective *esana* (mfn; Skt *eṣaṇa*), meaning “seeking for, wishing” is less common. It is found, for example, in the verses of **the Jantu Sutta** (S 353\*) and **the Pakat’indriya Sutta** (S 791\*) in the line *sukhā,jīvino pure āsum, bhikkhū gotama,sāvaka anicchā piṇḍam ~ā, anicchā sayan’āsanam*, “In the past, they lived happily. The monks, Gotama’s disciples, without a wish sought alms, without a wish sought a lodging [a bed-seat].”<sup>49</sup>

**The Dv’esanā Sutta** (A 2.153) speaks of 2 kinds of quests or seeking, “the worldly quest” (*amis’-esanā*) and the Dharma quest (*dhamm’esanā*).<sup>50</sup> We will now briefly look at these 2 kinds of quest, beginning with the “worldly quest,” which is also said to be the “false quest” or “false seeking.”

**2.2.2 False seeking.** The false quest or seeking is the subject of §2 of **the Paṭilīna Sutta** (A 4.38), and of the **2 Esanā Suttas** [3a+3b], stated in brief in **the Esanā Sutta 1** (It 54) and in some detail in **the Esanā Sutta 2** (It 55). All the three Suttas give a same set of 3 wrong quests (*tisso esanā*), that is, the quests for sensual pleasure, for existence, and for the holy life.<sup>51</sup>

As we have already noted [1.2.1], the word *esanā* comes from *esati*, “he desires, longs (for), wishes (for)”<sup>52</sup> [1.2.1]. Hence, the lexical sense is here taken literally. A more specific word for “false seeking” is *anesanā* (f) or *anesana* (nt), “an improper way of seeking; an improper means of obtaining.”<sup>53</sup> **The Esanā Sutta 1** (It 54) briefly lists these 3 kinds of wrong quests as the quest for sensual pleasures, for existence, and for the holy life [3a], which is detailed in **the Esanā Sutta 2** [3b]. **The Paṭilīna Sutta** (A 4.38) says that the practitioner who is “withdrawn” (*paṭilīna*), one properly and deeply devoted to meditation, has given up all worldly quests [§§1+2].

### 2.2.3 True seeking

**2.2.3.1 POSITIVE USAGE OF ESANĀ.** The term *esanā*, “quest,” is found in **the Esanā Sutta 1** [§2] and **2** [§2], as well as **the Paṭilīna Sutta** (A 4.38) [§§1.2, 2]. Here, *esanā* takes on a figurative, but positive, sense of an inner or spiritual quest, that is, meditation and related training summed up by the term “withdrawn” (*paṭilīna*) [1.1]. When *esanā* is used in a positive sense, it is usually appropriately prefixed to reflect the word’s import. Three such positive forms are well known, that is, *gavesanā*, *pariyesanā* and *samannesanā*.<sup>54</sup>

**2.2.3.2 GAVESANĀ.** The word *gavesanā* comes from *go* or *gava* (“cow, cattle”) + *esanā* (“seeking”) [1.2.1]. This word has two positive meanings here.

(1) Just as a cow or cattle habitually keeps to its safe pasture in search of grass, a meditator, too, resorts to a conducive place and avoids any unconducive place. Here, more commonly, the term *go,cara*, “a cow’s path or trail; resort,” is used. It refers to 2 aspects of the renunciant’s life. In the Canon, it refers to places that are regarded as suitable for collecting almsfood (V 2:208). In this sense, *agocara* refers to places that are unsuitable for renunciants as resort (whether for alms or otherwise).<sup>55</sup>

In the Commentaries, *go,cara* refers to places suitable for meditation (Vism 127). We can also take *go,cara* here in a psychological sense of *ārammaṇa*, that is, sense-objects. In other words, one “possessed of proper conduct and resort” (*ācāra,gocara,sampanna*) can also have the meaning “accomplished in proper conduct of body and of mind.”

(2) When a cowherd or an owner loses even a single cow, he would look for it until he finds it. For, in the Buddha’s time, cows and cattle are regarded as one’s wealth as it is a hard-working and productive

<sup>49</sup> S 2.25/1:61,10\* = 9.13/1:204,8\*.

<sup>50</sup> A 2.153/1:93,10.

<sup>51</sup> D 3:216,12 (cf DA 989,29 *fol.*) ≈ S 5:54,16 (SA 3:136,20 h) = 246,29 ≈ It 48,2 ≈ Vbh 366,20 ≈ Peṭk 252,11 ≈ Mohv 215,11; Peṭ 233,24.

<sup>52</sup> D 3:216, 270; M 1:79; S 5:54, 139; A 1:93; 2:41, 5:31; VvA 83; PvA 98, 163, 265.

<sup>53</sup> D 3:224,25; DA 1013,26 = S 2:194,6\*; Miln 401,12; J 2:82,15, 3:411,22’, 4:373,17’; Ap 67,10; Peṭk 252,11; Vism 43,4\*; SA 2:27,11; Saddhp 392.

<sup>54</sup> *Eṭṭhi gavetṭhi pariyetṭhi ~ā gavesanā pariyesanā*, Vbh 353,14; *eṭṭhīti ~ā gavetṭhīti gavesanā*, VbhA 485,34 = Vism 30,4; *samannesanāti ~ā pariyesanā upaparikkhā*, MA 2:378,30.

<sup>55</sup> D 1:63 = It 118; M 1:33, S 5:187; It 96; cf Dh 22.

animal. Even so, a Buddhist practitioner seeks what is profitable to the spiritual life, and avoids what is not.

A famous usage of the word *gav-esanā* is found in the Buddha’s conversation with the 30 young men in search of a woman. When the youths ask the Buddha if he has seen a woman passing his way, the Buddha replies: “Now, wouldn’t it be better for you, instead of looking for a woman, to look for the self?” (*katamaṃ nu kho tumhākaṃ varaṃ yaṃ vā tumhe itthiṃ gaveseyyātha yaṃ vā attānaṃ gaveseyyāthāti*, V 1:23,23). The youth’s seeking was “a seeking for sensual pleasure” (*kāma’esanā*), while the search for the self (*\*attā gav’esanā*) is a noble quest.

2.2.3.3 Another important positive word containing *esanā* is *samannesanā* (“inquiring, examining, investigating”). The verb for this abstract noun is *samannesati* or *samanvesati*, “he seeks, looks for, searches, examines, investigates,” which comes from *sam* (“together”) + *anvesati* (*anu*, “after, repeatedly” + *esati*, “he seeks”), meaning a careful and sustained investigation. It is one of the key words in **the Caṅkī Sutta** (M 95).<sup>56</sup>

Another important term having its main element as *esanā* is *pariyesanā* (fem) and *pariyesana* (neut), both of which come from the verb *pariyesati* (BHS *paryeṣate*), “he seeks,” both of which are formed from *pari-*, “all around, complete” + *y* (sandhi infix) + *esanā*, “seeking.”<sup>57</sup> Its older form is the feminine noun, *pariyesanā*, and, in the negative sense—as “craving conditions seeking” or “dependent on craving there is seeking” (*taṇhaṃ paṭicca pariyesanā*)—is found in **the Mahānidāna Sutta** (D 15).<sup>58</sup>

### 2.2.4 Suttas related to *esanā*

2.2.4.1 The Saṃyutta Nikāya has a series of sutta cycles based on a set of **8 teaching models**, perhaps an expanded version of the famous “**7 sets**” (plus the “dhyana,” *jhāna* set).<sup>59</sup> They are all generically called “**Esanā Sutta**”<sup>60</sup> and each is found in its respective “connected collection” (*saṃyutta*) in **the Mahāvagga** (S 5), namely, (1) the Magga Saṃyutta, (2) the Bojjh’āṅga Saṃyutta, (3) the Sati’paṭṭhāna Saṃyutta, (4) the Indriya Saṃyutta, (5) the Samma-p, padhāna Saṃyutta, (6) the Bala Saṃyutta, (7) the Iddhi-pāda Saṃyutta, and (8) the Jhāna Saṃyutta, as follows (with 10 suttas in each cycle):

- |                                      |  |                          |       |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------|
| • (1) the noble eightfold path       | <i>ariya’atṭh’āṅgika magga</i> <sup>61</sup> | S 45.161                 |       |
| • (2) the 7 awakening-factors        | <i>satta bojjhanga</i> <sup>62</sup>         | S 46.111-120, 46.165-174 |       |
| • (3) the 4 focuses of mindfulness   | <i>catu satipaṭṭhāna</i> <sup>63</sup>       | S 47.85-94               |       |
| • (4) the 5 spiritual faculties      | <i>pañc’indriya</i> <sup>64</sup>            | S 48.105-114, 48.159-168 |       |
| • (5) the 4 right strivings          | <i>samma-p, padhāna</i> <sup>65</sup>        | S 49.35-44               |       |
| • (6) the 5 spiritual powers         | <i>pañca bala</i> <sup>66</sup>              | S 50.35-44, 50.89-98     |       |
| • (7) the 4 paths of spiritual power | <i>catu iddhi, pāda</i> <sup>67</sup>        | S 51.67-76               |       |
| • (8) the 4 dhyanas                  | <i>catu-j, jhāna</i> <sup>68</sup>           | S 53.35-44               | [3.2] |

<sup>56</sup> M 95,20/2:173 & SD 21.15 (1.3.2).

<sup>57</sup> See **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,5) n, SD 1.11.

<sup>58</sup> D 15/2:58,31+61,23 @ SD 5.17. Cf *pariyesanāṃ paṭicca lābho*, “dependent on seeking there is gain” (D 15/2:-61,14). For a detailed analysis of *pariyesanā*, see SD 1.11 (7).

<sup>59</sup> On the better known “7 sets,” see SD 9 (10c).

<sup>60</sup> Technically, these suttas would be titled as follows: (1) (Magga) Esanā S (S 45.161), (2) (Bojjhaṅga) Esanā S (S 46.111); (3) (Sati’paṭṭhāna) Esanā S (S 47.85), (4) (Indriya) Esanā S (S 48.105+159), (5) (Bala) Esanā S (S 50.35+89), (6) (Iddhipāda) Esanā S (S 51.67), and (7) (Jhāna) Esanā S (S 53.35).

<sup>61</sup> See D 1:256 f, 165, 312; M 1:61, 118, 3:251; It 18; Sn 1130; Vbh 235.

<sup>62</sup> See D 2:79, 83, 120, 302, 3:101, 128, 251, 282; M 1:11, 2:12; S 1:54, 5:83; A 1:14, 4:23; Vbh 277.

<sup>63</sup> See D 1:56, 339, 2:83, 290-315, 3:101; S 3:96, 153; A 2:218, 3:12.

<sup>64</sup> See M 1:295; S 3:46, 225, 4:168; A 2:151. See foll n.

<sup>65</sup> See **(Catu) Padhāna** (A 4.14), SD 10.2.

<sup>66</sup> See D 2:120, 239; M 2:12, 3:296; S 3:96, 153, 4:366; A 3:10, 12; Vbh 342.

<sup>67</sup> See D 2:213, 221; M 1:103 = 2:11; A 1:39, 297, 2:256, 3:82; Vbh 213.

<sup>68</sup> See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.



This is a group of suttas on the 3 kinds of seeking or quest (*esanā*), that is, the seeking for sensual delights, for existence, for the holy life. These Suttas firstly admonish us to cultivate “direct knowledge” (*abhiññā*) into these three wrong kinds of seeking by way of any of the 7 sets of teachings. The final goal is always the same, that of the death-free, nirvana.

Secondly, such a direct knowledge leads to a “full understanding” (*pariññāya*) of the three kinds of wrong seeking. Thirdly, this in turn brings about their “utter destruction” (*parikkhaya*), so that fourthly, all such seeking are abandoned (*pahāna*).

2.2.4.2 An important clue that these 7 sets (ending with the dhyanas) is very ancient, preceding that of the better known 7 sets (ending in the eightfold path) is the presence of **the 4 dhyanas**. In the later 7 sets, the dhyana set is replaced by “the 4 right efforts.” This means that while the older set stresses on the attaining arhathood, by way of the attaining of dhyanas, the later set, shifts the emphasis to the noble eightfold path.

**Dhyana** is of course still there, especially in the practice of satipatthana<sup>69</sup> and, of course, by way of right concentration.<sup>70</sup> Those who are able to cultivate dhyana, would, with proper practice, go on to attain non-return or arhathood. Those who are unable to attain dhyana, but live Dharma-centred lives of mindfulness (especially practising the perception of impermanence)<sup>71</sup> will attain streamwinning or once-return.<sup>72</sup>

2.2.4.3 The well known 7 sets (ending with the eightfold path) are collectively known as **the 37 limbs of awakening** (*bodhi, pakkhiya, dhamma*). These **7 sets** are as follows:<sup>73</sup>

the 4 focuses of mindfulness,	<i>cattāro satipaṭṭhāna</i>
<u>the 4 right efforts</u> ,	<i>catu samma-p, padhāna</i> <sup>74</sup>
the 4 paths to spiritual power,	<i>catu iddhi, pādā</i>
the 5 spiritual faculties,	<i>pañc 'indriya</i>
the 5 spiritual powers,	<i>pañca, bala</i>
the 7 awakening-factors,	<i>satta bojjaṅga</i>
the noble eightfold path.	<i>ariyo aṭṭh 'aṅgiko magga</i> (D 29,16+17/3:127 f) [3.2]

## 2.3 SAMUSSAYĀ

**2.3.1 Meaning and context.** The term *samussayā* is found in the first verse common to both **the Paṭiṇa Sutta** (A 4.38) [§5.4] and **the Esanā Sutta 2** (It 55) [3.2 §4.4]. Both the commentators, Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla, apparently take *samussayā* to mean “accumulation, piling, swelling.” **Buddhaghosa** explains that these viewpoints or simply views (*diṭṭhi*) are called “swellings” because of their swelling up (*samussitattā*, AA 3:80), that is, they rise up, pile up, and persist. **Dhammapāla**, giving more details, explains *samussaya* “on account of its accumulating defilements of greed and the rest, ever having them grow in leaps and bounds.”<sup>75</sup>

There is, however, more to this, if we carefully reflect on the verse’s context, index the drift of the Suttas themselves. There is a play on the word *samussaya*, but first let us examine it. **Samussaya**, comes from *sam*, “together, converging” + *ussaya*, “height, growth, accumulation, intensity” (DP: Sadd 352,18), which, in turn, comes from the Sanskrit, *ucchraya*, “rising, mounting, elevation” (SED) from *ud* + √ŚRI.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>69</sup> On satipatthana leading on into dhyanas, see SD 41.1 (6.3).

<sup>70</sup> On right concentration as dealing with dhyanas, see (**Magga**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 45.8/5:9,28-10,4), SD 14.5.

<sup>71</sup> On the perception of impermanence, see (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1) & SD 16.7 (5) & **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62,23), SD 3.11.

<sup>72</sup> On whether dhyana is necessary for these attainments, see SD 8.5 (2).

<sup>73</sup> These 7 sets are listed in **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 19,3.50b/2:120 + SD 9 (10c)) given in full in **Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77,15-21/2:11 f @ SD 6.18) and as practised by various monks, in **Ānāpāna, sati S** (M 118,13/3:81 @ SD 7.13).

<sup>74</sup> See V 1:22; D 2:120; M 3:296, 2:96; A 2:74, 15 f.

<sup>75</sup> *Tā eva ca uparūpari vaḍḍhamānā lobh’ādi, kilesa, samussayena ca samussayā* (ItA 2:17).

<sup>76</sup> For other interesting usages and refs of *ussaya*, sv CPD & DP.

A related Pali word, a near-synonym to *samussaya*, is *samuccaya*, “collection, accumulation,” but which comes from a different root, √CI, “to pile up.” The Sanskrit form of this is the same, a tatsama. It is found in the title of a well known Buddhist Sanskrit work, Śikṣā,samuccaya, “a compilation on the training,” a work by the 8<sup>th</sup>-century Buddhist scholar from Nālandā university.

**2.3.2 Identifying with the body.** The word *samussaya* is especially interesting as it can also mean “the body” (PED), especially its Sanskrit form, *samuccaya*, which is a tatsama (the same word) in Pali, too, meaning “the body” (J 2:235; SnA 266). In the name, Samuccaya Khandhaka, that is, the third section of the Culla,vagga (V 2:38-72), the word *samuccaya* means “accumulation” (of offences). This shows how the two words *samussaya* and *samuccaya* are closely related.

Of special interest in the line, “Viewpoints are the body” (*diṭṭhi-t,ṭhānā samussayā*) [§5], which has a wordplay on “body.” Firstly, it has the sense of “accumulating” or piling up of views, suggesting that this burdens the person of views, who is fettered by them so that he is unable to see beyond them. Secondly, it alludes to the view that our body (*kāya*) is us, that is, a self-identity view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*), or more technically, taking any of the 5 aggregates—form, feeling, perception, formations, or consciousness<sup>77</sup>—to be the self. When the self-identity view—along with doubt (*vicikicchā*) and attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*)—are abandoned by us, we attain streamwinning, the first step towards awakening.<sup>78</sup>

### 3 Related suttas

**3.1** There are at least two other suttas dealing with the same topic of the 3 kinds of wrong seekings or quests as in **the Paṭilīna Sutta** (A 4.38). They are the **Esanā Sutta 1** (It 54) and **the Esanā Sutta 2** (It 55). Both are very short, simply stating the 3 kinds of wrong seekings, and then closing with 2 verses in the first Sutta and three and a half verses in the second. These two Suttas or either of them can be studied as an introduction to the Paṭilīna Sutta or as a conclusion or overview of it.

### SD 43.10(3a)

## Paṭhama Esanā Sutta

The First Discourse on Seeking | It 54/48

It 3.1.5 Itivuttaka 3, Tika Nipāta 1, Paṭhama Vagga 5

Theme: One who is awakened understands all about seeking

- 1 This was spoken by the Blessed One, spoken by the arhat as heard by me:<sup>79</sup>
- 2 Bhikshus, there are these 3 kinds of seeking. What are the three?
  - (1) Seeking for sensual pleasures. *kām’esanā*
  - (2) Seeking for existences. *bhav’esanā*
  - (3) Seeking of the holy life. *brahma,cariy’esanā*

These, bhikshus, are the 3 kinds of seeking.

- 3 The Blessed One spoke on this matter. Then he said this:<sup>80</sup>

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 <i>Samāhito sampajāno<br/>sato buddhassa sāvako<br/>esanā ca pajānāti<br/>esanānañ ca sambhavam</i></li> <li>5 <i>Yattha c’etā nirujjhanti<br/>maggañ ca khaya,gāminam</i></li> </ol> | <p>Mentally stilled, fully aware,<br/>mindful is the Buddha’s disciple,<br/>and he understands seekings<br/>and the birth of seekings,</p> <p>and where they end,<br/>and the way to their destruction—</p> |
|--|---|

<sup>77</sup> On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17; for an intro, see **Dve Khandhā S** (S 22.48), SD 17.1a.

<sup>78</sup> On the 3 fetters, see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8.

<sup>79</sup> *Vuttam h’etaṃ bhagavatā. Vuttam arahatā’ti me sutam.*

<sup>80</sup> *Etam attham bhagavā avoca. Tatth’etaṃ iti vuccati.*

*esanānaṃ khaya bhikkhu*                      having destroyed seekings, a monk  
*nicchāto parinibbuto 'to*                      is hungerfree, fully cooled.

6 This, too, is a matter spoken by the Blessed One. Thus it was heard by me.<sup>81</sup>

— evaṃ —

### SD 43.10(3b)

## Dutiya Esanā Sutta

The Second Discourse on Seeking | It 55/48 f  
It 3.1.6 | Itivuttaka 3, Tika Nipāta 1, Paṭhama Vagga 6  
Theme: To be awakened is to be free from all seeking

1 This was spoken by the Blessed One, spoken by the arhat as heard by me:<sup>82</sup>

2 Bhikkhus, there are these 3 kinds of seeking. What are the three?

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) Seeking for sensual pleasures. | <i>kām'esanā</i>           |
| (2) Seeking for existences.        | <i>bhav'esanā</i>          |
| (3) Seeking of the holy life.      | <i>brahma, cariy'esanā</i> |

These, bhikkhus, are the 3 kinds of seeking.

3 The Blessed One spoke on this matter. Then he said this:

4<sup>83</sup> *Kām'esanā bhav'esanā*                      Seeking sense-pleasures, seeking existences,  
*brahma, cariy'esanā saha.*                      along with seeking the holy life.  
*Iti sacca, parāmāso*                      The attachment to (the idea), “This is the truth!”  
*diṭṭhi-ṭ, thānā samussayā.*                      viewpoints are the body.<sup>84</sup>

5 *Sabba, rāga, virattassa*                      For one who has rejected all lust,  
*taṇha-k, khaya, vimuttino*                      liberated with the destruction of influxes,  
*esanā paṭinissaṭṭhā*                      seekings have been forsaken,  
*diṭṭhi-ṭ, thānā samūhatā.*                      viewpoints uprooted.

6 *Sa ve santo sato bhikkhu*                      He is truly a monk at peace, mindful,  
*passaddho aparājito*                      faith-inspiring, invincible,  
*mānābhisamayā buddho*                      having broken through conceit, he is awakened—  
*patilīno 'ti vuccatīti*                      he is called “withdrawn.”

7 *esanānaṃ khayā bhikkhu*                      Through having destroyed seeking, he is a monk,  
*nirāso akathaṃ, kathī*                      hungerfree, a speaker free from doubts.

8 This, too, is a matter spoken by the Blessed One. Thus it was heard by me.

— evaṃ —

<sup>81</sup> *Ayam pi atthe vutto bhagavatā. Iti me sutan 'ti.*

<sup>82</sup> *Vuttam h 'etaṃ bhagavatā. Vuttam arahatā 'ti me sutam.*

<sup>83</sup> Verses 4+5 as in **Paṭilīna S** (A 4.38), SD 43.10, see below.

<sup>84</sup> “Viewpoints are the body” (*diṭṭhi-ṭ, thānā samussayā*) has a wordplay. See Intro (2.3.2).

3.2 As we have noted, there is a cycle (*peyyāla*) of 10 **Esanā Suttas** in each of **the 8 Esanā Vaggas**,<sup>85</sup> all located in the Mahā, vagga of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, that is,

Ch	Saṃyutta	Section	Saṃyutta.sutta	Vol:page	Cycle
1	Magga Saṃyutta	15	(S 45.161)	(S 5:54 f)	
2(a)	Bojjh'āṅga Saṃyutta	12	(S 46.111-120)	(S 5:136)	A
2(b)	Bojjh'āṅga Saṃyutta	12	(S 46.165-174)	(S 5:139)	B
3	Sati'paṭṭhāna Saṃyutta	9	(S 47.85-95)	(S 5:191)	
4	Indriya Saṃyutta	16	(S 48.159-168)	(S 5:242)	B
5	Samma-p, padhāna Saṃyutta	4	(S 49.35-44)	(S 5:247 f)	A
6(a)	Bala Saṃyutta	4	(S 50.35-44)	(S 5:250)	A
6(b)	Bala Saṃyutta	9	(S 50.89-98)	(S 5:252)	B
7	Iddhi, pāda Saṃyutta	7	(S 51.67-76)	(S 5:292 f)	A
9	Jhāna Saṃyutta	4	(S 53.35-44)	(S 5:309)	A

[1.2.4.1]

[Key: “Cycle A” = the path (*magga*), cycle, as in S 45.161. Cycle 1. “Cycle B” = The removal of the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala mūla*) cycle.]

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## The Discourse on the Withdrawn

A 4.38

1 Bhikshus, a monk who

(1) has put aside personal [private] truths,<sup>86</sup>

(2) has completely given up seeking,<sup>87</sup> and

(3) has stilled bodily formation [activity],<sup>88</sup>

is called “**one who is withdrawn**” (*paṭilīna*).<sup>89</sup>

*panuṇṇa, pacceka, sacco*

*samavaya, saṭṭh'esano*

*passaddha, kāya, saṅkhāro*

### One who has put aside personal truth

1.2 And how, bhikshus, is a monk **one who has put aside personal [private] truths**?<sup>90</sup>

Here, bhikshus, whatever, for a monk, are worldly personal truths of worldly recluses or brahmins,<sup>91</sup> that is to say<sup>92</sup>—

<sup>85</sup> The total 8 is obtained from counting the repeated numbers as 1, and excluding ch 8 (Anuruddha Saṃy), which has no Esanā Sutta cycle.

<sup>86</sup> “Who has put aside personal truths,” *panuṇṇa, pacceka, sacco*. For a word analysis, see below §1.2 n. See also Intro (1.2).

<sup>87</sup> “Completely given up seeking,” *samavaya, saṭṭh'esano*. For a word analysis, see below §2 n. See also Intro (1.3).

<sup>88</sup> “Stilled bodily formation,” *passaddha, kāya, saṅkhāro*. See Intro (1.4).

<sup>89</sup> Comy glosses *paṭilīna* as “hidden, gone into solitude” (*nilīno ekī, bhāvaṃ upagato*, AA 3:79). See Intro (2.1).

<sup>90</sup> “Who has put aside personal truths,” *panuṇṇa, pacceka, sacco*, v1 *paṇunna*~. *Panuṇṇa* (pp of *panudati*) (med & pass) “put away, rejected or rejecting, dispelled, driven away, sent,” A 2:29, 5:31; Sn 469 (~*kodha*); J 6:247, 285; Kvu 597 (*ito* ~, tr as “ending here”). See Intro (1.2).

<sup>91</sup> *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhuno yāni tāni puthu, samaṇa, brāhmaṇānaṃ puthu, pacceka, saccāni*.

<sup>92</sup> For a detailed analysis of these 10 undetermined (*avyākata*) points in terms, see **Māluṅkya, putta S** (M 63), SD 5.8 (2); Vbh 919. For a philosophical discussion, see K N Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963: 350 & P Kügler, “The logic and language of nirvāna: A contemporary interpretation.” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 53 2003:100 f. For the set of 10 doubtful points, see **Kesa, puttiya S** (A 3.65,3-14), SD 35.4a. On “private language,” see SD 21.15 (3.2).

**The world**

- (1) The world is eternal, or
- (2) The world is not eternal, or
- (3) The world is finite, or
- (4) The world is infinite, or

**The self (or soul)**

- (5) The self is the same as the body, or
- (6) The self and the body are separate, or

**The tathagata**<sup>93</sup>

- (7) The tathāgata [one thus come] exists after death, or
- (8) The tathāgata does not exist after death, or
- (9) The tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death, or
- (10) The tathāgata neither exists nor not exist after death<sup>94</sup> —

all these he has put aside, pushed aside, given up, discarded, abandoned, relinquished.<sup>95</sup>  
 Bhikshus, such a monk is one who has put aside personal truth.

**One who has completely given up seeking**

**2** And how, bhikshus, is a monk **one who has completely given up seeking**?<sup>96</sup>

Here, bhikshus, for that monk,

seeking of sensual pleasures	has been abandoned,	<i>kām'esanā pahīnā hoti</i>
seeking of existence	has been abandoned,	<i>bhav'esanā pahīnā hoti</i>
seeking of the holy life	has settled. <sup>97</sup>	<i>brahma, cariy'esanā paṭippassaddhā</i>

Bhikshus, such a monk is one who has completely given up seeking.<sup>98</sup>

**One whose bodily formation has been stilled**

**3** And how, bhikshus, is a monk **one who has stilled bodily formation**?<sup>99</sup>

Here, bhikshus, a monk, with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,<sup>100</sup> 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.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>93</sup> In speculations, clearly *tathāgata* has a broader sense of “saint” in a general sense of someone liberated, *not* necessarily only a buddha or arhat. For a canonical def of *tathāgata*, see **Pāsādika S** (D 29.28 f/3:135 f); also Toshi-ichi ENDO, *Buddha in Theravada Buddhism*, 1997:195-206 (ch V). On the ineffability of the *tathāgata*, see Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:235-245.

<sup>94</sup> On the 10 questions, see **The unanswered questions**, SD 40a.10. This tetralemma occurs often in the Canon, eg **Aggi Vaccha, gotta S** (M 72), SD 6.15. In **Param, maraṇa S** (S 16.12) the Buddha mentions it to Mahā Kassapa; in **Anurādha S** (S 22.86). The tetralemma is mentioned by lemma in 4 suttas in Saṃyutta (S 24.15-18). **Avyākata Saṃyutta** contains some suttas dealing with it (S 44.2-8): see S:B 1080 n165.

<sup>95</sup> *Sabbāni tāni nuṇṇāni honti panuṇṇāni honti cattāni vantāni muttāni pahīnāni paṭinissaṭṭhāni*. This recurs in a parallel passage in **Ariy'āvāsa S 2** (A 10.20,8/5:31,10), SD 43.15.

<sup>96</sup> “Completely given up seeking,” *samavaya, saṭṭh'esanā* (also at D 3:269) = *samava, saṭṭha*. *Saṭṭha* is pp of *sajjati*. “he dismisses, gives up.” See (2.2).

<sup>97</sup> See Intro (2.2.3).

<sup>98</sup> That is, “seeking” for objects of our desires. The teaching of this verse is found with some elaboration in **Esanā S 2** (It 55), SD 43.10(3b) above.

<sup>99</sup> “Stilled bodily formation,” *passaddha, kāya, saṅkhāro*. See Intro (1.4).

<sup>100</sup> “Joy...pain,” *sukha...dukkha*: this refers to *physical* feelings. The next phrase—“pleasure and displeasure,” *do-manassa...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'atthana S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.



Bhikshus, such a monk is one who has stilled bodily formation.<sup>102</sup>

### One who is withdrawn

4 And how, bhikshus, is a monk **one who is withdrawn**?

Here, bhikshus, the “I am” conceit has been abandoned in that monk,<sup>103</sup> having cut them off at the root, made them like a palm-tree stump, done away with them so that they are not subject to further growth.<sup>104</sup>

Bhikshus, such a monk is one who is withdrawn.

4.2 Bhikshus, a monk who has put aside personal truth, completely given up seeking, and stilled bodily formation, is called “one who is withdrawn.” [42]

### The verses on seeking

5<sup>105</sup> *Kām’esanā bhav’esanā  
brahma, cariy’esanā saha.  
Iti sacca, parāmāso  
diṭṭhi-t, thānā samussayā.*

Seeking sense-pleasures, seeking existences,  
along with seeking the holy life.  
The attachment to (the idea), “This is the truth!”<sup>106</sup>  
viewpoints are the body.<sup>107</sup>

6 *Sabba, rāga, virattassa  
taṇha-k, khaya, vimuttino  
esanā paṭinissatṭhā  
diṭṭhi-t, thānā samūhatā.*

For one who has rejected all lust,  
liberated with the destruction of influxes,<sup>108</sup>  
seekings have been forsaken,  
viewpoints uprooted.

7<sup>109</sup> *Sa ve santo sato bhikkhu  
passaddho aparājito  
mānābhisamayā buddho  
patilīno ’ti vuccatīti*

He is truly a monk at peace, mindful,  
faith-inspiring, invincible,  
having broken through conceit, he is awakened—  
he is called “withdrawn.”

<sup>101</sup> *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu sukhasa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubb’eva somanassa, domanassānam atthaṅgamā adukkham-asukham upekkhā, sati, pārisuddhiṃ catuttham jhānam upasampajja viharati.* Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana—equanimity (upekkhā), mindfulness (sati) 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).

<sup>102</sup> Comy here is silent on “bodily formation” (*kāya, saṅkhāra*), which elsewhere refers to the in-and-out-breathing, which ceases in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, which is described here. See Intro (1.4).

<sup>103</sup> *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhuno asmi, māno pahīno hoti.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ucchinna, mūlo tālā, vatthu, kato anabhāvaṃ, kato āyatim anuppāda, dhammo.* This is stock: **M** 22,32/1:139×2, 36,47/1:250×2, 43,35-37/1:298×3, 49,30/1:331×2, 68,7/1:464×2, 72,20/1:488×3, 73,6/1:490, 140,27/3:245; **S** 22,3-, 9/3:10(×3)+11, 22,25,3+5+6/3:27, 22,111,2+7/3:161, 22,112,3+6+7/3:162, 23,9,4+5+6+7/3:193, 23,10,4+5+6+7+8/3:194, 35,103,6/4:83 f, 35,104,4+9/4:85×2, 41,5,4/4:292×3, 41,7,11+12+13/4:297×3, 44,1,15+16+17+18+19+30+31+32+33+34/4:376-379, 54,12,5/5:327+328; **A** 3,69,10/1:204 f×3, 11/1:205×3, 3,33,2c/1:135 f, 4,36,38/2:38×2, 4,195,9/2:199, 4,254,1/2:249, 5,71,4+5+6+7+8/3:84+85, 5,72,4+5+6+7+8/3:85 (pl), 86, 8,11,2/4:173, 3/4:174, 8/-4:175×2, 9/176, 8,12,7/4:184×4; **Nm** 1:56, 90, 100, 189×3, 198×4, 206, 207×2, 334, 430×2, 432, 442, 443; **Nc** ×24; **V** 1:235×2, 236×2 (Mv), 3:2×2, 3×4 (Pār). §§7cd are also in **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36.47/1:250), SD 49.4.

<sup>105</sup> Verses 5+6 as in **Esanā S 2** (It 55/3.1.6/48 f), above.

<sup>106</sup> While this line refers to the attachment (parāmāsa) to views, the next refers to the accumulating of them.

<sup>107</sup> On “Viewpoints are the body,” see (2.3.2).

<sup>108</sup> “Mental influxes” (*āsava*): see (1.4.3.3) n.

<sup>109</sup> Instead of this verse [§7], **Esanā S 2** (It 55) closes with: “Through having destroyed seeking, he is a monk, one, | hungerfree, doubtfree” (*esanānam khayā bhikkhu | nirāso akatham, kathī*, It 55/3.1.6/49), SD 43.10 (3b).

— evaṃ —

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