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## Jhānābhiññā Sutta

The Discourse on Dhyana and the Superknowledges | S 16.9

Theme: The 9 progressive abodes of arhathood

Translated by Piya Tan ©2017

1 Sutta teachings**1.1 THE JHĀNĀBHIÑÑĀ SUTTA (S 16.9)**

The Jhānābhiññā Sutta, as its name suggests, is about **dhyana and the superknowledges**. Specifically, it is about how mental absorption or dhyanas (*jhāna*)—both the 4 form dhyanas [§§1-8] and the 4 formless dhyanas [§§9-16]—are used as the bases for the development of the 6 superknowledges (*cha-/-ābhiññā*) [§§19-30]. The Buddha, after stating that he is able to easily attain any of them and has fully mastered the various powers, then declares that Mahā Kassapa [2.1], too, has the same abilities and powers. [2.2.2]

**1.2 THE ATTAINMENT OF CESSATION [§§17-18]****1.2.1 Definition**

**1.2.1.1** The attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*), or more fully, “**the cessation of perception and feeling**” (*saññā, vedayita nirodha*), is listed after the 8 attainments (the 4 form dhyanas and 4 formless dhyanas as a set), marking the mid-point between the practice and its results. This attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*) actually breaks the normal sequence, since it only arises in an arhat or a non-returned. So, it is listed here *after the fact*, that is, to show that it is based on the 8 attainments and is their pinnacle.

**1.2.1.2** As a set, these 9 attainments are called **the “9 progressive abodes”** (*nava anupubba, vihāra*), and are as follows:

(1) The 1 <sup>st</sup> dhyana	<i>paṭhama jhāna</i>	SD 8.4 (5.1)
(2) The 2 <sup>nd</sup> dhyana	<i>dutiya jhāna</i>	SD 8.4 (5.2)
(3) The 3 <sup>rd</sup> dhyana	<i>tatiya jhāna</i>	SD 8.4 (5.3)
(4) The 4 <sup>th</sup> dhyana	<i>catuttha jhāna</i>	SD 8.4 (5.4)
(5) The 1 <sup>st</sup> formless attainment	<i>ākāsānañc’āyatana</i>	(S 40.5), SD 24.15
(6) The 2 <sup>nd</sup> formless attainment	<i>viññāṇañc’āyatana</i>	(S 40.6), SD 24.16
(7) The 3 <sup>rd</sup> formless attainment	<i>ākīñcaññ’āyatana</i>	(S 40.7), SD 24.17
(8) The 4 <sup>th</sup> formless attainment	<i>n’eva, saññā, nāsaññ’āyatana</i>	(S 40.8), SD 24.18
(9) The cessation of perception and feeling	<i>saññā, vedayita, nirodha</i>	SD 48.7 (3.2)

**1.2.1.3** The fact that these states are called “the 9 progressive abodes” is because they arise and develop dependent on the mastery of the previous stage. Furthermore, when we end the meditation, we have to go through them again in a reverse sequence, without omitting any of them. We can see them like a secure building with nine floors, all only successively accessible by a lift from the ground or first floor. To reach any floor, we need to take the lift and move through the floors, one by one.

**1.2.1.4** **The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26) closes with a full pericope on the 9 abodes.<sup>1</sup> The whole set of the 9 abodes is also mentioned in **the Āsava-k, khaya Jhāna Sutta** (A 9.36), where there are detailed notes on the 9 progressive abodes in its Introduction.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M 26,34.2-42 (SD 1.11).

### 1.2.2 Preconditions

The absolutely necessary preconditions for **the attainment of cessation** are the perfect mastery of all *the 8 dhyanas* as well as the attainment of non-returning or arhathood. The Commentaries say that this state may last for 7 days or even longer.<sup>3</sup> Immediately at the arising of the state, however, there also arises in the non-returned, the fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi,phala*), and in the arhat, the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta,phala*) (PmA 1:41, 321). Only an arhat or a non-returned who has mastered the 8 liberations<sup>4</sup> can experience this cessation.<sup>5</sup> On emerging from cessation, they enjoy the fruit of their respective attainments (Vism 708).<sup>6</sup>

## 1.3 THE 6 SUPERKNOWLEDGES [§§19-30]

### 1.3.1 Superknowledge

**1.3.1.1** The 6 superknowledges are:<sup>7</sup>

- (1) the knowledge of various psychic powers (*iddhi,vidhā*); [§19]
- (2) the knowledge of clairaudience or the “divine ear” (*dibba,sota*); [§21]
- (3) the knowledge of mind-reading (*parassa ceto,pariya,ñāṇa*; also called *ādesanā,pāṭihāriya*); [§23]
- (4) the knowledge of retrocognition or recollection of past lives (*pubbe,nivāsānussati,ñāṇa*); [§25]
- (5) the knowledge of clairvoyance or the passing-away and re-appearance of beings, faring according to their karma (*cutūpapāta yathā,kammāpaga,ñāṇa*) or the “divine eye” (*dibba,cakkhu*); [§27] and
- (6) the knowledge of the destruction of mental influxes (*āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa*) [§§29-30].

The first 5 superknowledges are also listed, in a slightly different context, in **the Kevaḍḍha Sutta** (D 11).<sup>8</sup> For notes on the individual powers, see the Sutta translation itself (below).

**1.3.1.2** The 6 superknowledges or supernormal faculties (*cha-ḷ-abhiñṇā*)<sup>9</sup> are listed in the ascending order of their significance. The first, being practically identical to the first eight “worldly” miraculous powers, is of the least spiritual significance. These superknowledges are actually natural powers gained by the full control of our mind through meditation and fully mastering the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.3.2 Direct knowledge

**1.3.2.1** The sixth and last superknowledge is of the highest significance—the **knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes** (*āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa*) [1.3.1.1]—as this is *the* liberating wisdom. Unlike the rest, this, by itself, is **the direct knowledge** (*aññā*), the knowledge of awakening and the knowledge that brings awakening.

**1.3.2.2** A very significant phrase in the passage on “the knowledge of the destruction of influxes” is the phrase, “**the freedom of mind, freedom by wisdom**” (*ceto,vimuttim paññā,vimuttim*). This is not a dvandva (a twin compound)—meaning a juxtaposition of two disparate elements—but a single conjunct compound that describes the same state: arhathood.

<sup>2</sup> A 9.36 + SD 33.8 (2).

<sup>3</sup> MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163.

<sup>4</sup> SD 49.5b (1).

<sup>5</sup> A 5.166/3:193 f; Vism 23.18/702, 23.49/708.

<sup>6</sup> Cf **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (2); also **Animitta Ceto,samādhī Pañha S** (S 40.9/4:268 f), SD 24.19. On cessation (*nirodha*), see **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.25/1:296) + SD 30.2 (4); **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.16-21/1:301 f) + SD 40a.9 (2.5); also SID: saññā,vedayita,nirodha.

<sup>7</sup> See **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11,55-66), SD 1.7; also SD 27.5a (5).

<sup>8</sup> D 11,55-66 (SD 1.7); also SD 27.5a (5).

<sup>9</sup> On *abhiñṇā*, see SD 27.5a (5) & Jayatilleke 1963:438-442.

<sup>10</sup> For details, see **Miracles**, SD 27.5a.

The Commentary explains “the freedom of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*) as the *attainment* of the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta, phala, samāpatti*),<sup>11</sup> and “the freedom by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*) as the *wisdom* of the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta, phala, paññā*) (SA 2:174). Together, these two terms describe both aspects in an arhat, that is, one “freed both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga vimutta*).<sup>12</sup>

In the tenfold rightness (*sammatta*) of the path, *ceto, vimutti* is “**right freedom**” (*sammā vimutti*) and *paññā, vimutti* is “**right knowledge**” (*sammā ñāṇa*). Here, “freedom” refers to the 8 attainments (*attha, samāpatti*)—the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments—mastered by the full-fledged arhat. The actual awakening is denoted by “right knowledge” (*sammā, ñāṇa*).<sup>13</sup>

**1.3.2.3** The set of **3 kinds of influxes**—those of sense-desire, existence and ignorance (omitting the influx of views)—is probably older and frequently found in the suttas.<sup>14</sup> The destruction of these influxes results in the attainment of arhathood, that is, awakening.

The Abhidhamma lists **4 kinds of influxes** (*āsava*), that is, including *the influx of views*, forming the set of the influxes of:<sup>15</sup>

(1) sense-desire,	<i>kām’āsava</i>
(2) (desire for eternal) existence,	<i>bhav’āsava</i>
(3) wrong views, and	<i>diṭṭh’āsava</i>
(4) ignorance.	<i>avijjā’sava</i>

(D 16,2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937)

These 4 are also known as the 4 “floods” (*ogha*) or the 4 “yokes” (*yoga*). When we destroy these 4 influxes, we attain arhathood.

**1.3.2.4** The following diagram shows the relationship between the 10 fetters and the mental influxes:

(1) <u>self-identity view</u>	<i>sakkāya, ditthi</i>	} (3) influx of views ( <i>diṭṭh’āsava</i> )
(2) <u>spiritual doubt</u>	<i>vicikicchā</i>	
(3) <u>attachment to rituals and vows</u>	<i>sīla-b. bata, parāmāsa</i>	
(4) sensual lust	<i>kāma, rāga</i>	} (1) influx of sense-desire ( <i>kām’āsava</i> )
(5) repulsion	<i>paṭigha</i> <sup>16</sup>	
(6) lust for form existence	<i>rūpa, rāga</i>	} (2) influx of existence ( <i>bhav’āsava</i> )
(7) lust for formless existence	<i>arūpa, rāga</i>	
(8) conceit	<i>māna</i>	} (4) influx of ignorance ( <i>avijj’āsava</i> )
(9) restlessness	<i>uddhacca</i>	
(10) ignorance	<i>avijjā</i>	

**Table 1.3.** The fetters and the mental influxes<sup>17</sup>

It is probable that during the Buddha’s time or in the sutta period, the set of **3 influxes** (overcome by the arhats) expanded into the 10 fetters (*dasa saṃyojana*) to encompass how the various levels of spiritual sainthood or nobility is attained. Probably around the same time, too, the influx of view (*diṭṭh’āsava*)

<sup>11</sup> Ordinarily, *ceto, vimutti* refers to the mind’s freedom from mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*): see SD 38.5 (8.3).

<sup>12</sup> See eg **Mahā, nidāna S** (D 15,36,2), SD 5.17.

<sup>13</sup> See SD 10.16 (9+10), esp (9.0)+(10.1.1).

<sup>14</sup> D 33,1.10(20)/3:216; M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63.

<sup>15</sup> For details on the 4 mental influxes, see SD 50.5 (2.1.3).

<sup>16</sup> In some places, *paṭigha* is replaced by ill will (*vyāpāda*).

<sup>17</sup> Compare this with the diagram on the fetters and suffering: SD 50.12 (Table 0.2).

was included to reflect *the first 3 fetters* (broken by the streamwinner), thus forming the set of 4 influxes.<sup>18</sup>

## 2 The Buddha and Mahā Kassapa

### 2.1 MAHĀ KASSAPA

#### 2.1.1 As a monk

**2.1.1.1** Mahā Kassapa is one of the 80 great elders, the seniormost members of the order.<sup>19</sup> Mahā Kassapa is also the foremost of those monks who keeps to a strict ascetic life.<sup>20</sup> **The Cīvara Sutta** (S 16.11) records the Buddha exchanging his rag-robles for Mahā Kassapa’s outer robe—as a gesture that Mahā Kassapa should live the solitary forest life,<sup>21</sup> of which he is, in fact, the best exemplar.

**2.1.1.2** Mahā Kassapa is said to have borne seven of the 32 marks of the great man on his body.<sup>22</sup> The Commentaries describe Mahā Kassapa as the “image” of the Buddha (*buddha, paṭibhāga sāvaka*, eg, SA 2:176), suggesting that he physically resembles the Buddha. **The Sambuddha Sutta** (S 22.58) attests to the Buddha’s declaring Mahā Kassapa as an example of his spiritual equal, as both have the same attainments [2.2].

#### 2.1.2 As a teacher

**2.1.2.1** Besides his strict ascetic practice, Mahā Kassapa is also well known for his **compassion** to other monks,<sup>23</sup> and towards the less fortunate in society, especially to the weavers (one of the lowest of the outcastes), to whom he often gives the privilege of offering him alms.<sup>24</sup> It is also likely that he is strict in his teachings and relationships with other monks,<sup>25</sup> so that he sometimes arouses the ire of less developed students and colleagues.<sup>26</sup>

**2.1.2.2** When the Buddha passed away, Mahā Kassapa arrives a week late to pay his last respects to the Buddha’s remains. Later, at Pāvā, after hearing Subhadda (who renounced in old age), remarking that they are “better off” with the Buddha’s death, he decides to call the 1<sup>st</sup> council or recital (*saṅgāyanā*) to preserve the Buddha’s teachings.<sup>27</sup> According to the southern schools (Sri Lanka and SE Asia), this council was the basis for the earliest canon of teachings of the historical Buddha.<sup>28</sup>

He is said to be 120 when he presided over the 1<sup>st</sup> council, which means that he was 40 years the Buddha’s senior (the Buddha passed away at 80).

<sup>18</sup> On the 10 fetters and the 3 influxes, see SD 30.3 (1.3.3.5); and the 4 influxes, see SD 50.12 (2.5.2).

<sup>19</sup> On his warning to Ānanda not to be too close to the nuns, see **Upassaya S** (S 16.10), SD 92.7. On his relations with other monks, see Nyanaponika & Hecker, 1997:125-129.

<sup>20</sup> A 1:23; AA 1:162.

<sup>21</sup> S 16.11 (SD 77.5).

<sup>22</sup> AA 1:182; ThaA 3:134; ApA 264.

<sup>23</sup> See Tha 1051-1057, 1072-1081; (**Dasaka**) **Aññā S** (A 10.86/5:161), SD 12.15.

<sup>24</sup> On Mahā Kassapa, see **Beggars can be choosers**, SD 71.2.

<sup>25</sup> S 2:203-210, 215 f, 219; J 3:71. See DPPN 2:430.

<sup>26</sup> Mahā Kassapa is known to be stern with Ānanda, despite the two being close friends: see **Cīvara S** (S 16.11/-2:215 f, 218 f), SD 77.5; DA 1:10 f.

<sup>27</sup> VA 1:4 ff; DA 1:3 f, 5f; Mahv 3.3 ff.

<sup>28</sup> For further details, see DPPN & Ency Bsm, sv Mahā Kassapa.

## 2.2 RELATED SUTTAS

### 2.2.1 The Sambodhi Sutta (S 22.58)

**2.2.1.1** If we take the **Jhānābhiññā Sutta** (S 16.9) as the Buddha’s affirmation that in terms of awakening, his is no different from that of Mahā Kassapa—they are both arhats, those who are fully liberated—then, the **Sambodhi Sutta** (S 22.58) makes a parallel statement concerning all other arhats.

Both the Buddha and the arhats are said to awaken, in the same way, “on account of revulsion towards (the 5 aggregates),<sup>29</sup> through dispassion [letting go], through cessation (of suffering).”<sup>30</sup> Like the Buddha, the arhat, too, is “freed through wisdom” (*paññā, vimutta*). Clearly here, the term **paññā, vimutta** is *not* a technical term to be contrasted with the term, *ubhato.bhāga, vimutta*, “one freed both ways,” said of an arhat, as in the **Kiṭṭa, giri Sutta** (M 70).<sup>31</sup>

**2.2.1.2** The only difference between the Buddha and the arhat is that while the Buddha is the one who discovers (*uppādetā*) and declares the path to awakening, the arhats are his disciples (*sāvaka*), the followers of the path. In other words, the Buddha is the first amongst equals. There is neither religious status involved here nor any kind of hierarchy that differentiates guru from chela—except the Buddha teaches while the others learn and follow. What makes the Buddha special is the great love and respect shown to him by his disciples.

### 2.2.2 Sutta significance

**2.2.2.1** The message of the **Jhānābhiññā Sutta** (S 26.9), the **Sambuddha Sutta** (S 22.58) and similar suttas is clear: *the awakening of the Buddha is no different from that of the arhats*—they are both fully liberated in the same way. There is no more to be done: no need for the arhats to attain buddhahood, no need for the Buddha to be anything more.

This is a clear message for us—for anyone seeking awakening—not to fall for later teachings of post-Buddha Buddhisms, not to fall for their whims and fancies of the unawakened gurus and sectarians that an arhat still has to attain buddhahood and so on. These are serious wrong views which should be taken for what they are. Seekers and others should be constantly reminded that this is still **the dispensation (sāsana) of Gotama Buddha**, and that his teachings are preserved in the suttas which are available to us for study and guidance on the path to self-awakening.

**2.2.2.2** This remark must be understood to mean that there is no compromise for wrong views which are the bases for wrong practices. Such views are said to be at best “view-truths” (*diṭṭhi, sacca*) and “private truths” (*pacceka, sacca*),<sup>32</sup> because they arise from the whims of unawakened minds and the caprices of those still ridden with greed, hate and delusion.

However, there are aspects of later Buddhist teachings, even non-Buddhist teachings, that are *not* unbuddhist—that is, where they present the universal characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self, and whose purpose is to help overcome greed, hate and delusion. In some cases, we may be able to re-present or adapt a non-buddhist teaching in a Dharma-inspired way, such as, taking them as stories or parables whose import is to be properly teased out in a Dharma-spirited manner.

The quip that there is Dharma in everything or that we can learn Dharma from anything should not be taken in a cavalier manner. The Dharma here is not *our* view—but the truth of impermanence, suffering and non-self—and what we need to learn is *not* to impose our views upon the Buddha’s teaching, but to joyfully learn, master and expose it for the sake of our awakening and that of others. — — —

<sup>29</sup> This pair of (angle brackets) means that their contents is abbreviated: the 5 aggregates are to be listed out one by one.

<sup>30</sup> S 22.58,3.2 etc (SD 49.10).

<sup>31</sup> M 70,14-15/1:477; see S:B 2 n210.

<sup>32</sup> See SD 40a.8 (5.2); SD 48.1 (6.1.2.5-6.1.2.10).

# The Discourse on Dhyana and Direct Knowledge

S 16.9

1 (The Blessed One was) dwelling at Sāvattihī.<sup>33</sup>

THE 9 PROGRESSIVE ABODES  
(*nava anupubba, vihāra*)<sup>34</sup>

## The 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana

1.2 “Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from the unwholesome,  
I attain and dwell in **the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana**,  
with its initial application, with its sustained application,  
with zest and joy born of solitude. [211]

2 Kassapa,<sup>35</sup> too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
*secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from the unwholesome,*  
attains and dwells in **the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana**,  
*with its initial application, with its sustained application,*  
*with zest and joy born of solitude.*<sup>36</sup>

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana

3 Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
with the stilling of initial application and sustained application,  
by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind,  
I attain and dwell in **the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana**,  
free from initial application and sustained application,  
accompanied by zest and joy, born of stillness.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> This is an abridgement of the *evaṃ me sutāṃ* stock formula, for which, see SD 25.3 (1.1).

<sup>34</sup> On the 9 progressive abodes, see (1.2.1.2).

<sup>35</sup> This is Mahā Kassapa: see (2.1).

<sup>36</sup> *Vivicc’eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi sa, vitakkaṃ sa, vicāraṃ viveka, jaṃ pīti, sukhaṃ paṭhama-j, jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

<sup>37</sup> *Vitakka, vicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṇṇi sampasadānaṃ cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhi, jaṃ pīti, sukhaṃ dutiya-j, jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.* In **Kolita S** (S 21.1), the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within it initial application and sustained application (*vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur (S 21.1,3-4/2:273 f), SD 24.12b; also in **Dutiya Jhāna S** (S 40.2/4:263 f), SD 24.12a. Cf **Kāma, bhū S** (S 41.6), SD 48.7, where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech (S 41.6,7/4:293). In **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie, either talk Dharma or meditate) (M 26,4/1:161), SD 1.11.

4 Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
with the stilling of initial application and sustained application,  
by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind,  
attains and dwells in **the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana**,  
free from initial application and sustained application,  
accompanied by zest and joy, born of stillness.

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana

5 Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
with the fading away of zest, I remain equanimous,  
mindful and clearly comprehending, and experience joy with the body,  
I attain and dwell in **the 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana**,  
of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’<sup>38</sup>

6 Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
with the fading away of zest, remains equanimous,  
mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences joy with the body,  
attains and dwells in the 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana,  
of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

### The 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana

7 Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,  
and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,  
I attain and dwell in **the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana** that is neither painful nor pleasant,  
and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.<sup>39</sup>

8 Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,  
and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,  
attains and dwells in **the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana** that is neither painful nor pleasant,  
and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

### The 1<sup>st</sup> formless attainment

9 Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
by completely transcending the perceptions of form,  
with the disappearance of the perceptions of sense-reaction,<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Pītiyā ca virāgā ca upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti yan taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti, “upekkhako satimā sukha, viharī ti tatiya-jjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

<sup>39</sup> *Sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbe’va somanassa, domanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkham asukham upekkhā, sati, parisuddhiṃ catuttha-jjhānaṃ 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) [5.2.1+5.4].

with non-attention to perceptions of diversity,  
aware that ‘Space is infinite,’  
I attain and dwell in **the base of infinite space**.

**10** Bhikshus, Kassapa, too, to whatever extent he wishes,  
*by completely transcending the perceptions of form,*  
*with the disappearance of the perceptions of sense-reaction,*  
*with non-attention to perceptions of diversity,*  
aware that ‘Space is infinite,’  
attains and dwells in **the base of infinite space**.

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> formless attainment

**11** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
by completely transcending the base of infinite space,  
aware that ‘Consciousness is infinite,’  
I attain and dwell in **the base of infinite consciousness**.

**12** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
*by completely transcending the base of infinite space,*  
*aware that ‘Consciousness is infinite,’*  
attains and dwells in **the base of infinite consciousness**.

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> formless attainment

**13** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
by completely transcending the base of infinite consciousness,  
aware that ‘There is nothing,’  
I attain and dwell in **the base of nothingness**.

**14** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
*by completely transcending the base of infinite consciousness,*  
aware that ‘There is nothing,’  
attains and dwells in **the base of nothingness**.

### The 4<sup>th</sup> formless attainment

**15** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
by completely transcending the base of nothingness,  
I attain and dwell in **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**.

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<sup>40</sup> “Perceptions of sense-reaction,” *pañigha,saññā*, also “sensory impact” (M:ÑB 267), “resistance-perception, reflex-perception” (BDict), said to be absent in the formless dhyanas. This is one of those terms that are only used contextually. See Vbh 245, §262; Vism 10.12-16.

**16** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
by completely transcending the base of nothingness,  
attains and dwells in **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**.

### The attainment of cessation

**17** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
by completely transcending the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception,  
I attain and dwell in **the cessation of perception and feeling**.<sup>41</sup>

**18** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
by completely transcending the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception,  
attains and dwells in **the cessation of perception and feeling**

## THE 6 SUPERKNOWLEDGES (cha-ḷ-abhiññā)<sup>42</sup>

### (1) The knowledge of various psychic powers

**19** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
I wield **the manifold psychic powers**, thus:

- (1) having been one, I become many; having been many, I become one;
- (2) I appear and vanish;
- (3) I go unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space;
- (4) I dive in and out of the earth as if it were water;
- (5) I walk on water without sinking as if it were earth;
- (6) sitting cross-legged, I go through the air like a winged bird;
- (7) with my hand I touch and stroke even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful;
- (8) I have power over my body up to as far as the Brahmā world.

**20** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
wields the manifold psychic powers, thus:

- (1) *having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one;*
- (2) *he appears and vanishes;*
- (3) *he goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space;*
- (4) *he dives in and out of the earth as if it were water;*
- (5) *he walks on water without sinking as if it were earth;*
- (6) *sitting cross-legged, he goes through the air like a winged bird;*
- (7) *with his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful;*
- (8) *he has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.*

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<sup>41</sup> “The cessation of perception and feeling,” *saññā,vedayita nirodha*, or, simply, “the attainment of cessation” (*nirodha,samāpatti*, S 14.11/2:151): see (1.2).

<sup>42</sup> See (1.3).

(2) The knowledge of the divine ear

**21** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
I hear, by means of the **divine-ear element**,<sup>43</sup> purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

**22** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
hears, by means of the **divine-ear element**, purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

(3) The knowledge of mind-reading<sup>44</sup>

**23** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
I know the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with my own mind.

<sup>45</sup> I know a mind with <u>lust</u> as	a mind with lust,
and a mind <i>without lust</i> as	a mind without lust.
I know a mind with <u>aversion</u> as	a mind with aversion,
and a mind <i>without aversion</i> as	a mind without aversion.
I know a mind with <u>delusion</u> as	a mind with delusion,
and a mind <i>without delusion</i> as	a mind without delusion.
I know a <u>contracted</u> mind [due to sloth and torpor] as	a contracted mind,
and a <i>distracted</i> mind [due to restlessness and worry] as	a distracted mind.
I know an <u>exalted</u> mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] as	an exalted mind,
and an <i>unexalted</i> mind [not developed by dhyana] as	an unexalted mind.
I know a <u>surpassable</u> mind as	a surpassable mind,
and an <i>unsurpassable</i> mind as	an unsurpassable mind.
I know a <u>concentrated</u> mind as	a concentrated mind,
and an <i>unconcentrated</i> mind as	an unconcentrated mind.
I know a <u>freed</u> mind as	a freed mind,
and an <i>unfreed</i> mind as	an unfreed mind.

**24** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
knows the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind.

<i>He knows a mind with <u>lust</u> as</i>	<i>a mind with lust,</i>
<i>and a mind without <u>lust</u> as</i>	<i>a mind without lust.</i>
<i>He knows a mind with <u>aversion</u> as</i>	<i>a mind with aversion,</i>
<i>and a mind without <u>aversion</u> as</i>	<i>a mind without aversion.</i>
<i>He knows a mind with <u>delusion</u> as</i>	<i>a mind with delusion,</i>
<i>and a mind without <u>delusion</u> as</i>	<i>a mind without delusion.</i>
<i>He knows a <u>contracted</u> mind [due to sloth and torpor] as</i>	<i>a contracted mind,</i>
<i>and a <i>distracted</i> mind [due to restlessness and worry] as</i>	<i>a distracted mind.</i>
<i>He knows an <u>exalted</u> mind [through the lower or higher dhyana]</i>	<i>as an exalted mind,</i>
<i>and an <i>unexalted</i> mind [not developed by dhyana] as</i>	<i>an unexalted mind.</i>

<sup>43</sup> "Divine-ear element," *dibba,sota,dhātu*, clairaudience.

<sup>44</sup> "The knowledge of mind-reading," *ceto pariya,ñāṇa*, ie, telepathy or mind-to-mind communication.

<sup>45</sup> The following section recurs in **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.12), SD 13.2.

<p><i>He knows a <u>surpassable</u> mind as and an <u>unsurpassable</u> mind as He knows a <u>concentrated</u> mind as and an <u>unconcentrated</u> mind as He knows a <u>freed</u> mind as and an <u>unfreed</u> mind as</i></p>	<p><i>a surpassable mind, an unsurpassable mind. a concentrated mind, an unconcentrated mind. a freed mind, an unfreed mind.</i></p>
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#### (4) The knowledge of rebirth recollection<sup>46</sup>

**25** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish,  
I recollect my manifold past lives, that is,  
one birth, two births, three births, four, five,  
ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand,  
many aeons<sup>47</sup> of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion,  
many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, [recollecting,]  
'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such the end of my life.  
Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.  
There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span.  
Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.'  
Thus, I recollect my manifold past lives in their modes and details.

**26** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
recollects his manifold past lives, that is,  
*one birth, two births, three births, four, five,  
ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand,  
many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion,  
many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, [recollecting,]  
'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such the end of my life.  
Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.  
There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span.  
Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.'*  
Thus, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.

#### (5) The knowledge of the karma of beings<sup>48</sup>

**27** Bhikshus, to whatever extent I wish, I see—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance], purified and surpassing the human—

<sup>46</sup> "The knowledge of the recollection of past lives [past abodes]," *pubbe, nivāsānussati ñāṇa*. This power is also called the divine eye (*dibba, cakkhu*) or clairvoyance.

<sup>47</sup> Aeon, *kappa*, or world-cycle.

<sup>48</sup> "The knowledge of the passing away and re-appearance of beings," *cutūpapāta, ñāṇa*, or the "divine eye" (*dibba, cakkhu*) or clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*), which refers to sainthood, esp streamwinning.

beings passing away and re-appearing, and I know how they are inferior and superior,  
beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their karma:

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

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

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

**28** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, to whatever extent he wishes,  
sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance], purified and surpassing the human—  
beings passing away and re-appearing, and he knows how they are inferior and superior,  
beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their karma:

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

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

Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and how they fare according to their karma.

## (6) The knowledge of the destruction of influxes<sup>49</sup>

**29** Bhikshus, by realizing for myself through direct knowledge, right here and now,  
with the destruction of the mental influxes,  
I attain and dwell in the influx-free<sup>50</sup> freedom of mind, freedom by wisdom.<sup>51</sup>

**30** Kassapa, too, bhikshus, by realizing for himself through direct knowledge, right here and now,  
with the destruction of the mental influxes,  
attains and dwells in the influx-free freedom of mind, freedom by wisdom.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>49</sup> “The knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes,” *āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*. See (1.3.1.1).

<sup>50</sup> “Influx-free” (*anasava*), ie, free from being conditioned by the mental influxes (*āsavānaṃ apaccaya, bhūtaṃ*, SA 2:174).

<sup>51</sup> *Ahaṃ bhikkhave āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto, vimuttiṃ paññā, vimuttiṃ diṭṭh’eva dhamme sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharāmi*. On “The freedom of mind, freedom by wisdom” (*ceto, vimuttiṃ paññā, vimuttiṃ*), see (1.3.2.2).