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Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta

The Lesser Discourse on the Heartwood Parable | **M 30**
 Theme: The spiritual goal is not acquisition but awakening
 Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2009, 2018

1 Sutta summary and highlights

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

1.1.1 The Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta (M 30), the “lesser discourse on the heartwood parable,” records a brahmin asking the Buddha whether the claim of any of the 6 heretical teachers to having realized direct knowledge is justified¹ [§2.1]. The Buddha sets aside the brahmin’s question and tells the brahmin that he would rather teach him the Dharma, to which the brahmin agrees.

1.1.2 Applying **the parable of a heartwood-seeker**, the Buddha impresses on the brahmin that worldly gains, moral virtue, samadhi (mental concentration), and knowledge and vision are not the final goal of the spiritual life. That final goal is the attainment of the unshakeable freedom of mind (*akuppā ceto, vimutti*) [§24].

1.2 SUTTA HIGHLIGHTS

1.2.1 The parable and its application

1.2.1.1 The Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta follows the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta (M 29) in the Majjhima Nikāya. From their titles, it is obvious that they deal with the same parable—that of heartwood (*sārôpama* = *sāra*, “essence, core, heartwood” + *upama*, “simile, parable”). The parts mentioned in the parable are: branches and foliage; outer bark; inner bark; sapwood; and heartwood—these are illustrated in this picture:

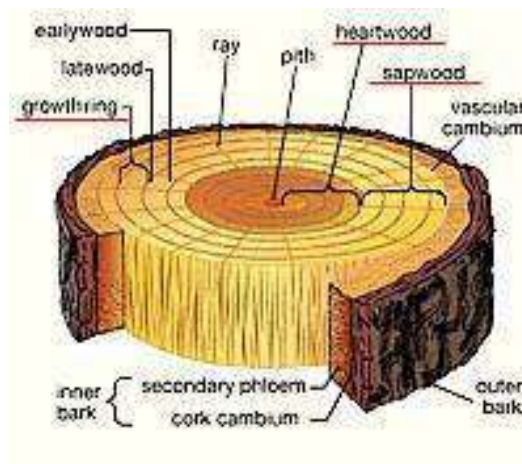


Fig 1.1.3: The layers of good wood

<http://selectwoodfloorsonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/heart.jpg>

¹ M 30/1:198,7. Mahā, parinibbāna S and several of its Chinese parallels report the wanderer Subhadda approaching the Buddha, during his last days, with the same question, regarding the 6 contemporary sectarian teachers: D 16/2:150,26; DĀ 2 (T1.25a19); T6 (T1.187b21); T7 (T1.203c24); SĀ 979 (T2.254b2).

1.2.2 Key differences in the two Suttas

1.2.1.2 Interestingly, both Pali suttas (M 29 and M 30) have the same Chinese parallel, that is, in a sutra in the Ekottarika Agama.² Hence, what has been said in the M 30 Sutta summary [1.1.2] applies just as true to the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta (M 29).³

1.2.2.1 The key difference between **the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** (M 29) and **the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30) starts after §11 below—that is, after the teaching of rejecting of both worldly and religious attainments: gains, honours and fame, moral virtue, samadhi, and knowledge and vision. All this is to be set aside for what are “higher and sublimer” (*uttaritarā ca paṇītatārā ca*) than even knowledge and vision [§12.10].

Both **the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** (M 29) and **the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30) employ the same set of the 5 main layers of good wood in its parable. While the former presents the similes of parable only once, the latter does it twice. The similes of the heartwood parable are organized in the two Suttas as follows:

		<u>attainments</u>	<u>M 29 (SD 53.8)</u>	<u>M 30 (SD 53.9)</u>
(1) branches and foliage	<i>sākha, palāsa</i>	gains, honours and fame	§§4-5	§§4, 9
(2) outer bark	<i>papaṭika</i>	moral virtue	§§6-8	§§5, 10
(3) inner bark	<i>taca</i>	samadhi (meditation)	§§9-11	§§6, 11
(4) sapwood	<i>pheggu</i>	knowledge and vision	§§12-14	§§7, 12
(5) heartwood	<i>sāra</i>	(true freedom)	§§15-16	§§8, 13

Table 1.2.2.1. The similes of the M 29 and M 30⁴

The key difference between the two Suttas is in how each Sutta state its **goal**. In (5), **the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** states its goal as “the unshakeable freedom” (*akuppa ceto, vimutti*), that is, *the 4 paths, the 4 fruitions and nirvana*. The Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta, on the other hand, calls it “permanent liberation” (*asamaya vimokkha*), which refers to *the fruition of arhathood*. Essentially, both goals are the same—while the former states the goal more *broadly*—as the whole path of awakening—the latter states it as the specific ultimate goal, the path’s end, *nirvana*—represented by the “attainment of the cessation of perception and feelings.”⁵

1.2.2.2 While **the Māha Sārôpama Sutta** (M 29) simply speaks of permanent liberation (*asamaya vimokkha*)⁶ (that is, the 4 paths, 4 fruitions and nirvana),⁷ **the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** [§13 onwards] lists those “other states higher and sublimer” than knowledge and vision. The two presentations of teachings and goals are what we may call “practice package” or “training alternative.” **The Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** present us with Package A or Training Alternative A—that is, the “general approach” of the path of

² The parallel is **EĀ 43.4** (T2.759a-759c). Both M 29 and EĀ 43.4 locate the Sutta outside Rāja, gaha, in different venues: the former at Mount Vulture Peak and the latter in the squirrels’ feeding-ground in the Bamboo Grove. The summary verse at T2.764c11 refers to EĀ 43.4 as “Devadatta,” 提婆達 tí pó dá.

³ See M 29 @ SD 53.8 (1.1.1).

⁴ See SD 53.8 (1.3.3).

⁵ See **Cūḷa Sārôpama S** (M 30,20), SD 53.9.

⁶ M 29,15.7 (SD 53.8).

⁷ The 4 paths are the streamwinner-to-be, the once-returned-to-be, the non-returned-to-be and the arhat-to-be; the 4 fruitions are, respectively, the full-fledged streamwinner, once-returned, non-returned and arhat. Collectively, they are called the 8 individuals (*aṭṭha, purisa, puggala*): see **Aṭṭha Puggala S 2** SD 15.10a(1.5).

awakening as a whole: this is the approach suitable for the laity and those monastics who feel that they are unable to attain arhathood in this life itself. In short, this path starts with streamwinning—the minimum goal we should aspire for in this life itself.

The Cūḷa Sārōpama Sutta offers Package B or Training Alternative B—that is, the “specific approach” of the fruition of arhathood. This is the goal that can be easily attained if we diligently keep to the monastic training: cultivating moral virtue, mental concentration, wisdom and freedom. This is the highway, the straight path, to awakening.

In either case, the Buddha reminds that “other states higher and sublimer” than knowledge and vision [1.2.2.3]. The significance of this statement is that that we should attain at least streamwinning [2.1.2], which conduces to our attaining the other paths in due course. In the meantime, streamwinning (which is irreversible) prevents us from being reborn in any of the subhuman states. As streamwinners, we are inspired and empowered to live a moral life of mental cultivation that bring us greater wisdom, preparing us to move further up the path of awakening. We are, in fact, true **bodhisattvas**, bound to awakening, like the Buddha himself.

1.2.2.3 The “other states higher and sublimer” than knowledge and vision listed in full are as follows:⁸

(1) the 1 st dhyana	<i>paṭhama jhāna</i> ⁹	§14	} The form dhyanas (<i>rūpa jhāna</i>)
(2) the 2 nd dhyana	<i>dutiya jhāna</i> ¹⁰	§13	
(3) the 3 rd dhyana	<i>tatiya jhāna</i> ¹¹	§15	
(4) the 4 th dhyana	<i>catuttha jhāna</i> ¹²	§17	
(5) the attainment of the base of infinite space	<i>ākāsānañc’āyatana samāpatti</i> ¹³	§18	} The formless attainments (<i>rūpa jhāna</i>)
(6) the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness	<i>viññāṇaṇṇ, c’āyatana samāpatti</i> ¹⁴	§19	
(7) the attainment of the base of nothingness	<i>ākiñcaññ’āyatana samāpatti</i> ¹⁵	§20	
(8) the attainment of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception	<i>n’eva, saññā, nāsaññ’āyatana samāpatti</i> ¹⁶	§21	
(9) the attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings. ¹⁷	<i>saññā, vedayita, nirodha samāpatti</i> ¹⁸	§22	

This sequential set of 9 states is known as “**the 9 progressive abodes**” (*nava anupubba, vihāra*).¹⁹ The set of the 9 progressive abodes appears in the following Suttas:

⁸ See diagram at SD 50.7 (1.2.1.2).

⁹ See SD 8.4 (5.1).

¹⁰ See SD 8.4 (5.2).

¹¹ See SD 8.4 (5.3).

¹² See SD 8.4 (5.4).

¹³ See **Ākāsānañc’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.5), SD 24.15.

¹⁴ See **Viññāṇaṇṇ, c’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.6), SD 24.16.

¹⁵ See **Ākiñcaññ’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.7), SD 24.17.

¹⁶ See **N’eva, saññā, nāsaññ’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.8), SD 24.18.

¹⁷ M 30/1:203,25.

¹⁸ For an overview on cessation, see D 13, SD 1.8 (2.2.3) (3) n; SD 48.7 (3.2). On cessation, **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). On cessation and arhathood, see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,42), SD 1.11.

• Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta	M 26,34.2-42 (Pāsa,rāsi Sutta section)	SD 1.11
• Jhānābhīññā Sutta	S 16.9	SD 50.7 (1.2.1.2)
• (Navaka) Jhāna Sutta	A 9.36	SD 33.8

1.2.2.4 Hence, it seems to be an old formula that is a summary of the full meditative progress of one skilled in meditation, and attaining arhathood. Technically, someone who masters all these 8 bases of meditation (the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments), and becomes an arhat, is said to be “freed both ways” (*ubhato,bhāga,vimutta*).²⁰

The Commentaries explain the term ***ubhato.bhāga,vimutta*** as meaning (1) freed *through* two “parts,” and (2) freed *from* two “parts” (*ubhato,bhāga*). Through attaining the formless spheres, he is freed from the body (*kāya*), that is, the 5 physical senses, and through attaining the path of arhathood (*agga,magga*, “the foremost path”) he is freed from the mind (*nāma*).²¹

While the former is also called “freedom of mind” (*ceto,vimutti*), the latter is also called “freedom by wisdom” (*paññā,vimutti*). Hence, in **the Te,vijja Vaccha,gotta Sutta** (M 71), the Buddha describes his awakening thus:

For, I, Vaccha, by realizing for myself through direct knowledge, right here and now,
with the destruction of the mental influxes,²²
attain and dwell in **the influx-free²³ freedom of mind, freedom by wisdom.**²⁴ (M 71,9), SD 53.3

1.2.2.5 The Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta’s listing the whole set of **the 9 progressive abodes** [1.2.2.2] is clearly to show the ideal stages of spiritual progress to arhathood. However, it should be understood that neither any of the form dhyanas nor any of the formless attainments, nor these 8 dhyanas, lead to arhathood. It is not what the meditator does within these states that brings them to arhathood, but rather what they do *on emerging* from them that prepares him for awakening.

A dhyana is a thought-free state, a temporary release—what is called “**temporal liberation**” (*samaya,vimokkha*), meaning a temporary freedom, or being free from time. It basically purges us of all our thoughts and views, at least for the duration of the dhyana. Hence, we emerge from dhyana, as it were, with a “brand-new” mind, one that is so calm and clear that it works wonders wherever we direct it for spiritual development, that is, either that of psychic powers or refining our insight for higher states.²⁵

¹⁹ See **Jhānābhīññā S** (S 16.9), SD 50.7 (1.2.1.2); **(Navaka) Jhāna S** (A 9.36) + SD 33.8 (2), on its difference from the 8 liberations (*aṭṭha vimokkha*).

²⁰ See SD 4.25 (3.2); SD 10.16 (14.3); SD 50.26 (1.4.3).

²¹ DA 2:524, 3:889; SA 1:278; AA 2:147 (the 7 types of saints), 4:2, 207; PugA 191.

²² There are the 4 influxes (*āsava*), ie, those of: (1) sensual desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), and (4) ignorance (*avijjā’sava*). The set of 3 influxes (omitting “view”) is prob older. See D 16,-10.4 n (SD 9).

²³ “Influx-free” (*anasava*), ie, free from being conditioned by the mental influxes (*āsavānaṃ apaccaya,bhūtaṃ*, SA 2:174).

²⁴ *Ahaṃ hi vaccha āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto,vimuttiṃ paññā,vimuttiṃ diṭṭh’eva dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharāmi*, this statement, in 1st person, recurs in the set of 6 knowledges: **Jhānābhīññā S** (S 16.9,29/2:214), SD 50.7; **Upassaya S** (S 16.10/2:217), SD 92.7. This statement in the 3rd person is much more common. For full def in the set of 6 knowledges, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,99), SD 8.10; **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,42-44), SD 49.4.

²⁵ It is this understanding that sets apart the true Buddhist meditator and the “scholar or academic” of meditation who often view dhyana as still having some kind of thinking going on. On this vital point, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.2.2).

1.2.2.6 Once we accept this understanding [1.2.2.5], we are in a good position to translate this key passage from **the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30):

... *bhikkhu sabbaso n'eva,saññā,nāsaññ'āyatanam samatikkamma saññā'vedayita'nirodham upasampajja viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti.*
Ayam pi kho brāhmaṇa dhammo ñāṇa,dassanena uttaritaro ca pañītataro ca. [§22.1]

... the monk [ie, the meditator],²⁶ by completely transcending the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception—
 having seen with it with wisdom and the influxes are utterly destroyed—
 attains and dwells in **the cessation of perception and feeling**. [§22.1]

This state—the cessation of perception and feeling or, simply, “cessation”—is “a state that is higher and sublimer than knowledge and vision” [§22.2]. However, the Sutta declares that this is **the heart-wood**, the goal of the spiritual life [§23], that is, the “unshakeable freedom of mind” (*akuppā ceto,vimutti*) [§25]. This is the “freedom of the fruition of arhathood” (*arahatta,phalla,vimutti*, MA 2:232,15).

2 The dhyana puzzles in the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta

2.1 THE 1ST PUZZLE (DHYANA AND KNOWLEDGE AND VISION)

2.1.1 On a textual level, we seem to have a **puzzle**, one that has stumped even the best scholars and translators of our times.²⁷ For example, clearly, the 4 dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments belong to the “aggregate of concentration” (*samādhi-k,khandha*), and thus would have been included in the earlier mentioned “accomplishment of samadhi” (*samādhi,sampadā*) [§11.7].²⁸ Indeed, other than the 4 dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments, there is nothing else that constitutes the “accomplishment of samadhi.”

2.1.2 This is no more a puzzle when we understand the meditator’s progress *before* reaching the path and *after* reaching it, and also the nature of the purification of the knowledge and vision. First, we must understand that the dhyanas *before* the attaining of “knowledge and vision”—or technically, the “purification of knowledge and vision” (*ñāṇa,dassana,visuddhi*)²⁹—are all mundane (*lokiya*), not yet of the path, not even streamwinning. The purification of knowledge and vision refers to the attaining of streamwinning, once-returning, non-returning and arhathood.

The dhyanas detailed after the purification of knowledge and vision [§13.9] are **supramundane dhyanas** (*lok'uttara,jhāna*),³⁰ cultivated by the saints of the path [§§14-21]. Hence, the streamwinner

²⁶ On the phrase, “a monk,” as referring to a Buddhist meditator, see **Satipaṭṭhāna** Ss,SD 13.1 (3.1.1). On the vocative forms, “monk, monks,” as referring to any listener, see SD 46.18 (2.1.3.2).

²⁷ See, eg, Analayo 2011:201 f.

²⁸ M 30/1:201,24.

²⁹ **Ratha Vinīta S** (M 24) + SD 28.3 (1). See also BDict: ñāṇadassana-visuddhi.

³⁰ Although the process itself is clear here, the term **lok'uttara jhāna** is not used. The term is first used prob in **Paṭisambhidā** (Pm 1:127), and is common in the early Abhidhamma works, especially **Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** (Dhs 60, occurring some 77x) and **Vibhaṅga** (Vbh 106, occurring some 64x). It is found in most commentaries and later works.

cultivates dhyana to attain once-returning or higher; so, too, the once-returner, and the non-returner. These saints cultivate supramundane dhyana and go on to attain arhathood.³¹

2.2 The 2nd puzzle (*Mahā* and *Cūḷa*)

2.2.1 This next “puzzle” is more of a curiosity than a problem. Although **the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta** (M 30) has the title of being the “lesser” (*cūḷa*) version of the two Suttas, its full exposition on the 9 progressive abodes—the 4 dhyanas, the 4 formless attainments and cessation—makes it actually longer than its “greater” (*mahā*) counterpart, **the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta** (M 29).³²

2.2.2 It is possible, even likely, that any religious text—even those of early Buddhism—may continue to be worked on and to grow as the religion faced new challenges and works to make itself relevant to the times. There is a scholarly opinion—as in the case of the Mahā Sārôpama Sutta and the Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta—where “the small *sutta* is larger than the large *sutta* ... we must conclude that further contraction or expansion has taken place since the *suttas* received their names.”³³

Such a statement is challenging and demands that we seek other possible insight into this interesting problem. We need to look deeper into the suttas for what they really are—spiritual teachings—that have been diligently preserved for us so that we can work out the path of awakening for ourselves. If there are more than one way to see such a problem, we should clearly choose one that gives us a better vision of the truth and beauty of the early teachings.

2.2.3 In general, the reasons for distinguishing between a “greater” (*mahā*) and a “lesser” (*cūḷa*) version of a sutta could be due to the importance of their respective subject. In the present case, however, the two suttas are so similar that to distinguish them into a greater version and a lesser one cannot be their respective lengths (the “lesser” is the longer!). It is likely, then, that the *mahā* version records an earlier occasion than the *cūḷa* version.

2.3 Scholarship and profession

2.3.1 Scholarship

2.3.1.1 Although academic discipline and ingenuity can help us to understand the Buddhist texts better, that is as far as it goes. Scholars who are not practising Buddhists (who do not give the Buddha Dhamma their life’s priority), it is impossible for them to realize its higher teachings and ideals. Academic scholarship may perhaps explain the Buddhist texts and tradition—the word of the teaching—but ultimately, scholarship by itself can only promote itself.

Only when we truly profess the Buddha Dhamma and practise it, can we begin to know its spirit. In fact, most scholars often take Buddhism merely as a stepping-stone in their academic life, that is, so long as it is seen as a profitable or worthwhile field for exploration and livelihood. Understandably, the reality is that such a profession must be able to financially support the scholars.

³¹ **Sandha S** (A 11.10) speaks of 2 kinds of meditation: that of the “restive” (*khaluṅka*) and of the “thoroughbred.” While the former is a faulty, worldly engagement, the latter refers to the “supramundane dhyanas” (*lok’uttara jhāna*), SD 82.5.

³² See also Pande 1957:122.

³³ K R Norman, 1997:16.

2.3.1.2 When **scholars** are truly open and respectful to early Buddhism, they are more likely to taste its truth, beauty and freedom. Scholars who capably and sensitively apply the best of academic standards and imagination to the study of early Buddhism often help us with a greater insight into the social background and literary wealth of Buddhism, even to its religious insights.

The courage and honesty of academic scholars in our own time have often helped in clarifying the early Buddhist teachings, and even defended them against scholarly hubris.³⁴ Other contemporary scholars have produced painstaking studies and analyses of the various traditions of ethnic Buddhism. Such valuable expositions, especially in Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism and Zen, give refreshing views and revealing reviews of their historical origins, social developments and divergence from early Buddhism.

Such writings are valuable studies warning us how Buddhism can be transformed by worldly forces or even by the very hands of those who claimed to uphold it. We should understand our past so that we do not repeat its mistakes, and that we are wary of the worldly distractions and dangers to the study, practice and perpetuation of the Buddha word.³⁵

2.3.2 Profession

2.3.2.1 Scholars who are truly **professional** in all the wholesome senses of the term are of great value to our study and understanding of the early Buddhist texts, and in promoting this wise and liberating faith for a wide, even non-Buddhist, audience. Indeed, scholars, dedicated to early Buddhism—especially in the study of Pali and Pali texts—will leave their indelible mark in the history of our faith for helping to bring it closer to our hearts.

Hence, a scholar should not only be “professional” in the sense of being skilled in their specialized field of study and affairs as a lucrative occupation, but they should show an amazing love and respect for their field—for early Buddhism—so that we benefit from their having lived the faith that they profess to teach and also to uphold. This is certainly more noble than merely living off the faith, and to do so with hubris. It would certainly be foolish and vain on our part to define our faith by such lack of it.

2.3.2.2 Spirituality is a personal excellence and freedom that can only be attained individually beyond the words of faith. It must rise from a heart of wise faith to taste and share the truth and beauty of that faith. The path of faith may be studied in the best and most detailed manner, but it is the journey of faith taken that transforms us into liberated beings—scholars who do not live the faith may only retire in the sunset. The study, practice and understanding of the Buddha Dharma is like awaiting the sunrise.

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³⁴ See eg the works of Paul Fuller, Rupert Gethin, Peter Harvey, Damien Keown, NAKAMURA Hajime, K R Norman, Sarah Shaw, A K Warder, and Analayo.

³⁵ See eg Wendi Adamek, Bernard Fauré, Paul Harrison, Jamie Hubbard, John R McRae, Jan Nattier, Morten Schlüter, Andrew Skilton, Albert Welter: see SD 40b Biblio.

Cūḷa Sārôpama Sutta

The Lesser Discourse on the Heartwood Parable

M 30

[Internal numbering follows that of the Buddha Jayanti Tipiṭaka edition]

1 [198] Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's park-monastery in Jeta's grove outside Sāvattihī.

1.2 Then, the brahmin **Piṅgala,koccha**³⁶ approached the Blessed One and exchanged friendly words and cordial greetings with him. When the friendly greetings were concluded, he sat down at one side. Sitting at one side, the brahmin Piṅgala,koccha said to the Blessed One:

2 "Master Gotama, those recluses and brahmins who are the heads of an order, heads of a group [congregation], congregation teachers, well known and famous, ford-makers [who bring others across the river of suffering], regarded as saints³⁷ by the masses,³⁸

2.2 that is, to say, Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambala, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Belaṭṭha,puttā and Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta.³⁹

2.3 All of them declare that they have each directly understood.⁴⁰ Have they all actually directly understood, or some have directly understood, and some have not directly understood?"⁴¹

3 "Enough, brahmin, let it be, that is to say:

'All of them declare that they have each directly understood. Have they all actually directly understood, or some have directly understood, and some have not directly understood?'

I will teach you the Dharma. Listen! Pay close attention! I will speak!"

"All right, sir," replied the brahmin Piṅgala,koccha to the Blessed One.

THE HEARTWOOD PARABLE (IN BRIEF)

The heartwood-seeker who takes only branches and foliage

The Blessed One said this:⁴²

³⁶ *Piṅgala* ("yellow") is his element (*piṅgala,dhātuko*) (ie, he is tawny, the colour of tanned leather, from light brown to brownish orange), and *koccha* is his given name (*assa nāmaṃ*) (MA 2:232,25).

³⁷ ie, as being "morally good, beautiful (charismatic), true individuals" (*sadhu sundarā sappurisa*, MA 2:233,2).

³⁸ "Head of a sangha ... by the masses," *saṅghī c'eva gaṇī ca gaṇ'ācariyo ca ñāto yasassī titthakaro sādhu,sammato bahu,janassa*. In **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,2-7/1:47 + 16-32/1:52-59), they are also said to be "one of great experience, long gone forth, advanced in years" (*rattaññū cira,pabbajito addha,gato vayo anuppatto*), SD 8.10. This suggests that **Cūḷa Sārôpama S** (M 30) may be older than *Sāmañña,phala S*. Similar stock passage at D 16,5.26/2:150; cf **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35,2/1:227) n, SD 26.5. On the 6 teachers, see also **Kutūhala,sālā S** (S 44.9), SD 23.15 (2) & **Silence and the Buddha**, SD 44.1 (1.2.1).

³⁹ These 6 sectarian teachers (*cha titthiyā*, lit "6 ford-makers"): see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,2-7/1:47 f), SD 8.10. A list of 6 past sectarian teachers (*cha satthāra tittha,kara*) is given in **Dhammika S** (A 6.54/3:371) as being virtuous and exemplary (SD 96.15).

⁴⁰ *Sabb'ete sakāya paṭiññāya abbhaññāmsu*. By "understood" is meant "attained awakening or release or some supernatural knowledge."

⁴¹ *Sabb'eva nābbhaññāmsu, udāhu ekacce abbhaññāmsu, ekacce nābbhaññāmsūti*. The very same question (§2) is asked by the wanderer **Subhadda** while the Buddha lies on his deathbed. The Buddha essentially replies that no saints of the path are found outside the teaching: **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,5.26-27/2:250-152), SD 9.

4 “Suppose, brahmin, a person needing **heartwood**, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.⁴³

4.2 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark and the outer bark, he trims off **the branches and foliage**, and takes them away, thinking that they were heartwood.

4.3 **A man with good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

‘Alas! This good man knows not heartwood. He knows not sapwood. He knows not the inner bark. He knows not the outer bark. He knows not branches and foliage.

4.4 *Thus, this good man, needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

4.5 *Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark and the outer bark, he trims off the branches and foliage and takes them away, thinking that they were heartwood.*

4.6 *Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be no such benefit for him!’⁴⁴ heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

The heartwood-seeker who takes only the outer bark

5 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.

5.2 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood and the inner bark, he trims off **the outer bark [199]** and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.

5.3 **A man with good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

‘Alas! This good man knows not heartwood. He knows not sapwood. He knows not the inner bark. He knows not the outer bark. He knows not branches and foliage.

5.4 *Thus, this good man, needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

5.5 *Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood and the inner bark, he trims off the outer bark and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.*

5.6 *Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be no such benefit for him!’*

The heartwood-seeker who takes only the inner bark

6 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.

6.2 Disregarding the heartwood and the sapwood, he trims off **the inner bark** and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.

6.3 **A man with good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

‘Alas! This good man knows not heartwood. He knows not sapwood. He knows not the inner bark. He knows not the outer bark. He knows not branches and foliage.

⁴² The Buddha’s teaching (1st person) starts here and ends at the end of §23.

⁴³ *Seyyathā’pi brāhmaṇa puriso sār’atthiko sāra, gavesī sāra, pariyesanaṃ caramāno mahato rukkhassa tiṭṭhato sāravato.* As at **Mahā Sārōpama S** (M 29,4), SD 53.8. (**Sāriputta**) **Cunda S** (S 47.13) records Ānanda’s grief on hearing of Sāriputta’s final nirvana from Cunda, describing it as if “the largest branch had broken off a great tree standing possessed of heartwood” (S 47.13/5:164), SD 110.5.

⁴⁴ *Yañ c’assa sārena sāra, karaṇīyaṃ tañ c’assa atthaṃ nānubhavissatīti.* The former *assa* is 3 sg pot (or opt, expressing “wish”; Sn 49; Dh 10, 123) of *atthi*, “to be, exist, to be found,” while the latter is sg dat/gen of *idaṃ*, “this” (esp in sandhi or compounds). The former *assa* cannot be sg dat/gen since what he has is *not sāra*. This applies to the 1st 4 occurrences [§§4.6, 5.6, 6.6, 7.6] but not the last [§8.6].

6.4 *Thus, this good man, needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

6.5 *Disregarding the heartwood and the sapwood, he trims off the inner bark and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.*

6.6 Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be no such benefit for him!

The heartwood-seeker who takes only the sapwood

7 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

7.2 Disregarding the heartwood, he trims off **the sapwood** and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.

7.3 **A man with good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

'Alas! This good man knows not heartwood. He knows not sapwood. He knows not the inner bark. He knows not the outer bark. He knows not branches and foliage.

7.4 *Thus, this good man, needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

7.5 *Disregarding the heartwood, he trims off the sapwood and takes it away, thinking that it were heartwood.*

7.6 Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be *no* such benefit for him!

The heartwood-seeker finds heartwood

8 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

8.2 Trimming off only **the heartwood**, he would take it away, knowing that it *is* heartwood.⁴⁵

8.3 **A man of good eyes**, seeing him, would say:

*'Indeed, this good man is one who knows heartwood. He *knows* sapwood. He *knows* the inner bark. He *knows* the outer bark. He *knows* branches and foliage.*

8.4 *Thus, this good man, needing heartwood, wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, comes to just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

8.5 Trimming off only **the heartwood**, [200] he would take it away, knowing that it *is* heartwood.

8.6 Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there *will be* such benefit for him!⁴⁶

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

(1) The heartwood-seeker who takes only the branches and foliage

9 Even so, brahmin, a certain person,⁴⁷ out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

⁴⁵ *Sārañ-ñeva chetvā ādāya pakkameyya'sāran'ti jānamāno.*

⁴⁶ *Yañ c'assa sārena sāra,karaṇīyaṃ tañ c'assa atthaṃ anubhavissatīti.* The *assa* in both cases is sg dat/gen of *idam*, "this" (esp in sandhi or compounds). They refer to *sāra*. This is not the case in their previous occurrences [§§4.6, 5.6, 8.6, 11.6], where see §4.6 n.

⁴⁷ This para as at **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,2), where the subject is "a certain person" (*ekacco puggalo*) throughout; but M:ÑB misreads this as "clansman" (*kula,putto*) (as in M 29) throughout.

9.2 'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.'⁴⁸

Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'⁴⁹

9.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him **gains, honours and fame**.⁵⁰

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.⁵¹

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:⁵²

'I am one with gains, honours and fame, but these other monks are *little known, of no account*.'⁵³

9.4 Thus, he neither shows the desire nor makes any effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *the gains, honours and fame*.

He is habitually sluggish and slack.⁵⁴

9.5 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood*, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.

9.6 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark and the outer bark, he trims off **the branches and foliage** and takes it away, thinking that it is heartwood.

Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be *no* such benefit for him.

9.7 Brahmin, it is in accordance with this parable that I call this person.⁵⁵

(2) The heartwood-seeker who takes only the outer bark

10 Here, brahmin, a certain person, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

10.2 'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.'

Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'

10.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.

⁴⁸ *Otiṇṇo'mhi jātiyā jarāya maraṇena sokehi paridevehi dukkhehi domanassehi upāyāsehi*. This and the foll sentence occurs 10x in **Mahā Sārōpama S** (M 29,2.2+5.2+6.2+8.2+9.2+11.2+12.2+14.2+15.2+17.2) and 4x in **Cūḷa Sārōpama Sutta** (M 30,6/1:200), SD 53.9; also 4x in **Cātuma S** (M 67,16+17+18+29), SD 34.7; 4x in **Ūmi,bhaya S** (A 4.132,-4+13+28+40), SD 47.9.

⁴⁹ *Dukkho'tiṇṇo dukkha,pareto, app'eva nāma imassa kevalassa dukkha-k,khandhassa anta,kiriyā paññāyethāti*.

⁵⁰ *So evaṃ pabbajito samāno lābha,sakkāra,silokaṃ abhinibbatteti*. This sentence occurs 10x in in **Mahā Sārōpama S** (M 29) in the same context as above, and 4x here in **Cūḷa Sārōpama Sutta** (M 30,8.3+9.3+10.3+11.3). The phrase *lābha,sakkāra,silokaṃ abhinibbatteti* (other than here) occurs 9x in **Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S** (D 25,10+13), SD 1.4. See also S 2:226 ff; A 2:73, 343.

⁵¹ *So tena lābha,sakkāra,silokena attamano hoti paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*.

⁵² *So tena lābha,sakkāra,silokena attānukkaṃseti param vambheti*.

⁵³ *Aham asmi lābha,sakkāra,silokavā, ime pan'aññe bhikkhū appa-ñ,ñātā app'esakkhāti*. Comy explains *app'esakkha* monks as those "having a small retinue; going before or after a meal-offering, they receive nothing" (MA 2:231,-24 f); MA 3:204,5; MA ad M 3:38,23; AA ad A 2:203,3.

⁵⁴ This whole para: *Lābha,sakkāra,silokena ca ye aññe dhammā uttari,tarā ca paṇīta,tarā ca, tesam dhammānaṃ sacchikiriyāya na chandaṃ janeti, na vāyamati, olīna,vuttiko ca hoti sāthaliko*. *Olīna* is past part of *olīyati*, "hangs down; sinks down, cowers; hangs back; falls behind." The parable of the heartwood in this Sutta is the same as that of **Mahā Sārōpama S** (M 29), except for this key line which replaces "On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness. Being heedless, he dwells in suffering." (M 29,3.2), SD 53.8.

⁵⁵ *Tathūpamāhaṃ brāhmaṇa imam puggalam vadāmi*. In **Mahā Sārōpama S** (M 29,5), he is said to be "one who grasps the branches and foliage of the holy life" (*sākhā,palāsam aggahesi brahma,cariyassa*), SD 53.8. This line occurs 5x here [§§9.7+10.8+11.11+12.13+23.3], but is inadvertently omitted throughout in M:ÑB.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is neither satisfied nor his intention fulfilled.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

10.4 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *the gains, honours and fame*.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.⁵⁶

10.5 He gains **accomplishment in moral virtue**.⁵⁷

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is *satisfied*, his intention *fulfilled*.

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:

'I am one morally virtuous, good by nature, but these other monks are *immoral, bad by nature*.'⁵⁸

10.6 Thus, he neither shows the desire nor makes any effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer [201] than *the accomplishment in moral virtue*.

He is habitually sluggish and slack.

10.7 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood*, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.

10.8 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, and the outer bark, he trims off **the outer bark**, and takes them away, thinking that they are heartwood.

Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be *no* such benefit for him

10.9 *Brahmin, it is in accordance with this parable that I call this person*.⁵⁹ [9.7]

(3) The heartwood-seeker who takes only the inner bark

11 Here, brahmin, a certain person, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

11.2 'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.

Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'

11.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is neither satisfied nor his intention fulfilled.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

11.4 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *the gains, honours and fame*.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

11.5 He gains accomplishment in moral virtue.

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is neither satisfied nor his intention fulfilled.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Here, **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,3.2) reads "On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is intoxicated, heedless, falls into heedlessness. Being heedless, he dwells in suffering"; so, too, at **M 29**,5.4+6.5+8.5+9.6+11.6+12.7+14.7. But at **M 29**,15.7: "On account of knowledge and vision, he is not intoxicated, *not* heedless, falls *not* into heedlessness. Being diligent [not heedless], he gains permanent liberation."

⁵⁷ *Appamatto samāno sīla,sampadaṃ ārādheti*.

⁵⁸ *Aham asmi sīlavā kalyāṇa,dhammo, ime pan'aññe bhikkhū dussīlā papa,dhammāti*.

⁵⁹ In **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,8), he is said to be "one who grasps the outer bark of the holy life" (*papaṭikarṃ aggahesi brahma,cariyassa*), SD 53.8.

⁶⁰ Be *Ee attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa,sankappo*; Ce *Se na attamano na paripuṇṇa,sankappo*. The same at §§12.3+12.5+12.7+13.3+13.5+13.9 ad loc. Cf **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,9.3) n ad loc.

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

11.6 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *the accomplishment in moral virtue*.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

11.7 He gains **accomplishment in samadhi**.

On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is satisfied, his intention fulfilled.

On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:

'I am one mentally concentrated, with oneness of mind, but these other monks are *mentally unconcentrated, scatter-brained*.'⁶¹

11.8 Thus, he neither shows the desire nor makes effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *accomplishment in samadhi*.

He is habitually sluggish and slack.

11.9 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood*, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.

11.10 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, and the outer bark, he trims off **the inner bark**, and takes them away, thinking that they were heartwood.

Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be *no* such benefit for him

11.11 *Brahmin, it is in accordance with this parable that I call this person*.⁶² [9.7]

(4) The heartwood-seeker who takes only the sapwood

12 Here, brahmin, a certain person, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

12.2 '*I am beset by birth, decay, death, [202] sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.*

Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'

12.3 When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, this brings him gains, honours and fame.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is neither satisfied nor his intention fulfilled.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

12.4 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *the gains, honours and fame*.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

12.5 He gains **accomplishment in moral virtue**.⁶³

*On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is neither satisfied nor his intention fulfilled.*⁶⁴

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

12.6 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *accomplishment in moral virtue*.

⁶¹ *Aham asmi samāhito ek'agga,citto, ime panaññe bhikkhū asamāhitā vibbhanta,cittāti*

⁶² In **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,11), he is said to be "one who grasps the inner bark of the holy life" (*tacam agga-hesi brahma,cariyassa*), SD 53.8.

⁶³ *Appamatto samāno sīla,sampadam ārādheti.*

⁶⁴ Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa,sankappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa,sankappo*. See §11.5 n ad loc.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

12.7 He gains **accomplishment in samadhi**.

On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is neither satisfied nor his intention fulfilled.⁶⁵

On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

12.8 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *the gains, honours and fame*.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

12.9 He gains **knowledge and vision**.⁶⁶

On account of the knowledge and vision, he is *satisfied*, his intention *fulfilled*.

On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he lauds himself and blames others, thus:

'I am one who dwells knowing and seeing, but these other monks dwell *with neither knowing nor seeing*.'⁶⁷

12.10 Thus, he neither shows the desire nor makes any effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *knowledge and vision*.

He is habitually sluggish and slack.

12.11 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood*, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.

12.12 Disregarding the heartwood, the sapwood, the inner bark, and the outer bark, he trims off **the sapwood**, and takes them away, thinking that they were heartwood.

Whatever it is that is to be made from heartwood, there will be *no* such benefit for him!

12.13 *Brahmin, it is in accordance with this parable that I call this person*.⁶⁸ [9.7]

(5) The heartwood-seeker who finds heartwood

13 Here, brahmin, a certain person, out of faith, goes forth from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

13.2 'I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering.

Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.'

13.3 (1) When he has thus gone forth as a recluse, **[203]** this brings him **gains, honours and fame**.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he is neither satisfied nor his intention fulfilled.

On account of the gains, honours and fame, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

13.4 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of **those other states that are higher and sublimer than the gains, honours and fame**.

⁶⁵ Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa,saṅkappo*. See §11.5 n ad loc.

⁶⁶ "Knowledge and vision," *ñāṇa,dassana*. Comy understands the term here as referring to 5 (mundane) super-knowledges (*pañcābhīñṇā*), but here it refers to the one standing as the last, ie, karmic recollection or the divine eye (*dibba,cakkhu ca pañcannaṃ abhiñṇānaṃ matthake ṭhitaṃ, tam imasmiṃ vuttarṃ*, MA 2:231,31-33). However, pace Buddhaghosa, we can take *ñāṇa,dassana* as "knowledge and vision" of the path (*magga ñāṇa,dassana*), which is still not nirvana: see **Ratha Vinīta S** (M 24,12), SD 28.3.

⁶⁷ *Aham asmi jānaṃ passam viharāmi, ime pan'aññe bhikkhū ajānaṃ apassam viharantīti*.

⁶⁸ In **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,14), he is said to be "one who grasps the sapwood of the holy life" (*pheggurṃ ag-gahesi brahma,cariyassa*), SD 53.8.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

13.5 (2) He gains **accomplishment in moral virtue**.⁶⁹

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he is *neither* satisfied *nor* his intention fulfilled.⁷⁰

On account of the accomplishment in moral virtue, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

13.6 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of *those other states that are higher and sublimer than accomplishment in moral virtue*.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

13.7 (3) He gains **accomplishment in samadhi**.

On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he is *neither* satisfied *nor* his intention fulfilled.⁷¹

On account of the accomplishment in samadhi, he *neither* lauds himself *nor* blames others.

13.8 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of those other states that are higher and sublimer than *samadhi*.

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

13.9 (4) He gains **knowledge and vision**.⁷²

On account of the knowledge and vision, he is neither satisfied nor his intention fulfilled.

On account of the knowledge and vision, he neither lauds himself nor blames others.

13.10 Thus, he shows the desire and makes effort for the realization of *those other states that are higher and sublimer than knowledge and vision*.⁷³

He is *neither* sluggish *nor* slack in habit.

THE HIGHER AND SUBLIMER STATES

The 4 form dhyanas

14 And what, brahmin, are the states that are higher and sublimer than knowledge and vision?

14.2 Here, brahmin, monk,

quite secluded [detached] from sense-objects,⁷⁴ secluded from unwholesome mental states,

attains and dwells in **the 1st dhyana**,

accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and

with zest and joy born of solitude.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ *Appamatto samāno sīla, sampadaṃ ārādheti.*

⁷⁰ Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*. See §11.7 n ad loc.

⁷¹ Be Ee *attamano no ca kho paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*; Ce Se *na attamano na paripuṇṇa, saṅkappo*. See §11.7 n ad loc.

⁷² “Knowledge and vision,” *ñāṇa, dassana*. Comy understands the term here as referring to 5 superknowledges (*pañcābhiññā*), but here it refers to the one standing as the last, ie, karmic recollection or the divine eye (*dibba, cakkhu ca pañcannaṃ abhiññānaṃ matthake ṭhitaṃ, tam imasmim vuttarṃ*, MA 2:231,31-33). However, pace Buddhaghosa, we can take *ñāṇa, dassana* as “knowledge and vision” of the path (*magga ñāṇa, dassana*), which is still not nirvana: see **Ratha Vinīta S** (M 24,12), SD 28.3. The “knowledge and vision” here is “the purification of knowledge and vision” (*ñāṇa, deassana, visuddhi*). For the significance of this, see (2.1.2).

⁷³ *Ñāṇa, dassanena ca ye aññe dhammā uttaritarā ca paṇītarā ca, tesaṃ dhammānaṃ sacchikiriyāya chandaṃ janeti vāyamati.*

⁷⁴ On the tr of *kāmehi* (pl), see SD 8.4 (5.1.1.1).

14.3 This, brahmin, is a state that is higher and sublimer than knowledge and vision.⁷⁶

15 And further, brahmin, a monk,
with the stilling of initial application and sustained application,

by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind,
attains and dwells in **the 2nd dhyana**,
free from initial application and sustained application,
with zest and joy born of stillness [samadhi].⁷⁷

15.2 This, brahmin, is a state that is higher and sublimer than knowledge and vision.

16 And further, brahmin, monk,
with the fading away of zest,

remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and
feels joy with the body.⁷⁸

He attains and dwells in **the 3rd dhyana**,
of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

16.2 This, brahmin, is a state that is higher and sublimer than knowledge and vision.

17 And further, brahmin, a monk,
with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,⁷⁹

and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,
attains and dwells in **the 4th dhyana**
that is neither painful nor pleasant, and
with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.⁸⁰

17.2 This, [204] brahmin, is a state that is higher and sublimer than knowledge and vision.

⁷⁵ “Born of solitude,” *viveka,ja*; ie, it is the result of abandoning the hindrances: on the 3 kinds of solitude, see **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (1.5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “stillness” (*samādhi*) here, see **The layman and dhyana** (SD 8.5).

⁷⁶ Although the dhyanas are included in the attainment of samadhi [§11.7] and knowledge and vision are said to be higher than the attainment of samadhi, the dhyanas now are higher than knowledge and vision because here they function as the basis for the attainment of cessation and the destruction of the influxes. This is a characteristic of teaching “by context” (*pariyāyena*): see eg (**Navaka**) **Diṭṭha,dhamma Nibbāna S** (A 9.51) + SD 50.29 (1.2).

⁷⁷ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuñhī,bhāva*) because within it initial application and sustained application (thinking and discursion, *vitakka,vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī,sañkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate). See **Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.-2/4:263 f), SD 24.12.

⁷⁸ On this point, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.4.1): On coming out of dhyana.

⁷⁹ “Joy and pain,” *sukha-dukkha*: this refers to the physical feelings. The next phrase—“pleasure and displeasure,” *domanassa-somanassa*—refers to mental feelings, which have been transcended earlier. Mental feelings need to 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 its significance, see **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.

⁸⁰ Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4th dhyana—**equanimity** (*upekhā*), **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 **Dhyana @** SD 8.4 (5.4).

The 4 formless attainments

18 And further, brahmin, a monk,
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**.

18.2 This, brahmin, is a state that is *higher and sublimer* than knowledge and vision.

19 And further, brahmin, a monk,
by completely transcending the base of infinite space,
aware that ‘Consciousness is infinite,’
attains and dwells in **the base of infinite consciousness**.

17.2 This, brahmin, is a state that is *higher and sublimer* than knowledge and vision.

20 And further, brahmin, a monk,
by completely transcending the base of infinite consciousness,
aware that “There is nothing,”
attains and dwells in **the base of nothingness**.

20.2 This, brahmin, is a state that is *higher and sublimer* than knowledge and vision.

21 And further, brahmin, a monk,
by completely transcending the base of nothingness,
attains and dwells in **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**.

21.2 This, brahmin, is a state that is *higher and sublimer* than knowledge and vision.

The cessation of feeling and perception

22 And further, brahmin, a monk,
by completely transcending the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception—
having seen with it with wisdom and the influxes⁸¹ are utterly destroyed⁸²—
attains and dwells in **the cessation of perception and feeling**.⁸³

22.2 This, brahmin, is a state that is *higher and sublimer* than knowledge and vision.

⁸¹ On these *influxes*, see (1.2.2.4) n on “influx-free” in the quote.

⁸² *Paññāya c’assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti*. See (1.2.2.6).

⁸³ *Saññā,vedayita,nirodham upasampajja viharati*. This is stock: **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,3.2.(6)/3:266); **Das’uttara S** (D 34,-2.3(8)/3:290); **Nivāpa S** (M 25,20/1:160); **Cūla Sārōpama S** (M 30,22/1:175), SD 53.9; **Bahu,vedanīya S** (M 59,15/-1:400); **Laṭṭikikōpama S** (M 66,34/1:456); **Mahā Sakul’udāyi S** (M 77,22/2:13); **Anupada S** (M 111,19/3:28); **Sappurisa S** (M 113,29/3:45); **Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137,27/3:222); **Jhānābhiññā S** (S 16.9/2:212); **Uppati Pāṭika S** (S 48.10/5:215); **Aṭṭha Vimokkha S** (A 1.447/1:41). It is said to be the “8th liberation” (*aṭṭha,vimokkha*: SD 5.17 (10)): **Rāga Peyyālā** (A 8.120/4:349); **Anupubba,vihara Samāpatti S** (A 9.33/4:414); **Nibbāna,sukha S** (A 9.34/4:418); **Gāvī Upamā S** (A 9.38/4:431); **Lok’āyatika S** (A 9.38/4:431); **Sambādha S** (A 9.42/4:451); **Kāya,sakkhī S** (A 9.43/4:452); **Paññā,vimutta S** (A 9.44/4:453); **Ubhato,bhāg Vimutt S** (A 9.45/4:453); **Sandiṭṭhika Dhamma S** (A 9.46/4:453); **Sandiṭṭhika Nibbāna S** (A 9.47/4:453 f); **Diṭṭha Dhamma S** (A 9.48/4:454); **Khema S** (A 9.52/4:455); **Anupubba Nirodha S** (A 9.61/4:456); **Upāli S** (A 10.99/5:209); NC:Be 188, 245; Pm 2:40; Vbh 343.

22.3 These, brahmin, are the states that are higher and sublimer than knowledge and vision.

23 Suppose, brahmin, a person needing heartwood, *wandering about seeking heartwood, in quest of heartwood, passes by just such a huge tree standing possessed of heartwood.*

23.2 Trimming off **the heartwood**, he would take it away, knowing⁸⁴ that it is heartwood.⁸⁵

23.3 *Brahmin, it is in accordance with this parable that I call this person.*⁸⁶ [9.7]

The heartwood of the holy life

24 In this way, brahmins, the holy life is not about the benefit of gains, honours and fame, nor the benefit of the attainment of moral virtue, nor about the benefit of the accomplishment of samadhi, nor about the benefit of knowledge and vision.

25 Now, it is [205] this **unshakeable freedom of mind**⁸⁷—this, brahmin, is the goal of the holy life; this is *the heartwood*; this is *the end*.⁸⁸

Piṅgala,koccha goes for refuge

26 When this was said, the brahmin Piṅgala,koccha said to the Blessed One:

“Wonderful, master Gotama! Wonderful, master Gotama! Just as if one

were to place upright what had been overturned, or

were to reveal what was hidden, or

were to show the way to one who was lost, or

were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,
in the same way master Gotama has, in numerous ways, made the Dharma clear.

I go to master Gotama for refuge, and to the Dharma, and to the community of monks, too.

May master Gotama remember me as a layman who has gone for refuge from this day forth for life.”⁸⁹

— evaṃ —

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⁸⁴ “Knowing,” *jānamano*, which appears only in this connection (the heartwood). In all the previous cases of the other tree-parts, the verb is “thinking” (*maññamāno*) [§4.2+]. Cf **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,16.2) n, SD 53.8.

⁸⁵ *Sārañ-ñeva chetvā ādāya pakkameyya ‘sāran’ti jānamāno.*

⁸⁶ In **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 29,19), he is one who acts “knowing that this is the heartwood” (*sāran’ti jānamāno*), SD 53.8.

⁸⁷ The “**unshakeable freedom of mind**” (*akuppā ceto.vimutti*) is the fruit of arhathood, the highest goal of the spiritual life. “**Permanent liberation**” (*asamaya.vimutti*) [1.2.2.2]—which encompasses only the 4 paths and 4 fruit-ions—has a wider range of meaning than “unshakeable freedom of mind,” but which, as *the fruit of arhathood*, is alone declared to be the goal of the holy life (MA 2:232,15). See **Mahā Sārôpama S** (M 28,18) + SD 53.9 (1.2.3). Cf “temporal liberation” (*samaya.vimutti*): SD (1.2.2.5).

⁸⁸ *Yā ca kho ayaṃ brāhmaṇa akuppā ceto,vimutti, etad attham idaṃ brāhmaṇa brahma,cariyaṃ, etaṃ sāraṃ, etaṃ pariyoṣānan’ti.* This is the closing of the Buddha’s teaching that starts at §4.1 (“Suppose ...”).

⁸⁹ This is an example of an individual refuge-going: see SD 44.2 (2.3).