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Kāma,bhū Sutta 2

Or, **Dutiya Kāma,bhū Sutta**, The Second Discourse to Kāma,bhū | S 41.6

Theme: The meditating mind and body during suspended animation

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1 Sutta protagonists

1.1 KĀMA,BHŪ

1.1.1 There are two Kāma,bhū Suttas—the **Kāma,bhū Sutta 1** (S 41.5)¹ and the **Kāma,bhū Sutta 2** (S 41.6)²—and they both have the same protagonists, that is, the monk Kāma,bhū and the houselord Citta. In the first Sutta, the monk Kāma,bhū gives Citta a cryptic stanza spoken by the Buddha in reference to the arhat monk, **Lakuṅṭaka Bhaddiya**,³ whose meaning Citta rightly explains.⁴

1.1.2 While the monk Kāma,bhū is clearly an arhat, the layman is probably a non-returner, as deducible from the context of Kāma,bhū Sutta 2. Citta asks Kāma,bhū 11 questions, on formation (*saṅkhāra*, singular) and the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha,samā-patti*),⁵ a state accessible only to arhats and non-returners. [2]

1.1.3 Since Kāma,bhū gives all the right answers, it is very likely that he is an arhat. Besides the two Kāma,bhū Suttas we have mentioned, we know Kāma,bhū from only one other discourse, that is, **the (Ānanda) Kāma,bhū Sutta** (S 35.233), where he asks Ānanda a question of fetters and the 6 sense-bases. That is all we know about Kāma,bhū from the suttas.

1.2 CITTA THE HOUSELORD

1.2.1 Citta the houselord (*citta gaha,pati*) is from Macchika,saṅḍa where he is a seth house-lord (*seṭṭhī,-gaha.pati*).⁶ Citta is declared by the Buddha to be the foremost of Dharma-speakers amongst the laymen disciples (A 1:26). He is also an able, even humorous, debater and defender of the Dharma.⁷ Even as a layman, he is an accomplished Dharma teacher, whom even the monks consult.⁸ **The Gilāna Dassana Sutta** (S 41.10) records that even at the point of dying, he is said to be admonishing the devas on impermanence.⁹

¹ S 41.5/4:291 f (SD 71.9).

² S 41.6/4:293-295 (SD 48.7).

³ **Lakuṅṭaka S** (U 7.5/76), SD 71.8 :: UA 370 f.

⁴ **Kāma,bhū S 1** (S 41.5), SD 71.9.

⁵ On cessation, see SD 30.2 (4).

⁶ A *gaha,pati* (houselord) was an owner of land employed in agriculture, or in charge of an agricultural enterprise. He was either a kshatriya or a brahmin (but never a shudra). A *seṭṭhī* (seth) was a merchant, financier or banker. One who was both house-owner and seth was known as a *seṭṭhī,gahapati* (seth houselord), as in the case of Citta. The three terms, *gahapati*, *seṭṭhī* and *seṭṭhī,gahapati* were not synonyms. See Chakravarti, *The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, 1987:65-94 (ch 3).

⁷ See eg **Nigaṅṭha Nāta,putta S** (S 41.8), SD 40a.7.

⁸ Teachings in connection with Citta are found in **Citta Saṃyutta** (S 41/4:281-304).

⁹ **Gilāna Dassana S** (S 41.10/4:303 f) + SD 16.16 (1). For more details on Citta the householder, see SD 8.6 (8.3).

1.2.2 As a questioner regarding formation (*saṅkhāra*, singular) and the attainment of the cessation of the perception and feeling, **Citta** shows that he knows the topics well, or, at least, knows how to ask such difficult questions. The Sutta Commentary, in fact, says that he frequently resorts to the attainment of cessation (*nirodham valañjēti*), and, as such, decides to question Kāma,bhū about them to see if he is familiar with them (that is, whether he is an arhat) (SA 3:393). Since Citta is not recorded as being an arhat, and he is here said to enjoy attaining cessation, he must surely be a non-returner.

2 Citta's questions

2.1 The questions that Citta the householder asks the monk Kāma,bhū are found elsewhere. Those on the nature of formation (*saṅkhara*) [§3-5] recur in **the Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43), where the arhat monk Mahā Koṭṭhita questions Sāriputta, and the questions on the cessation of feeling and perception (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*) [§6-9] recur in **the Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta** (M 44), where the lay non-returner Visākha questions his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma,dinnā.¹⁰

2.2 These **11 questions** asked by Citta are here collated with their parallels in the other two Suttas, as follows:¹¹

Questions	Kāma.bhu Sutta (S 41.6)				
1-5	§§3-11	=	Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta	(M 44,13-17)	SD 40a.9
6	§13	=	Mahā Vedalla Sutta	(M 43,25)	SD 30.2
7-11	§§15-22	=	Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta	(M 44,18-21)	SD 40a.9

Questions on formation	S 41.6	M 44	M 43
(1) How many kinds of formation are there?	[§3]	§13	--
(2) What are these 3 kinds of formation?	[§5]	§14	--
(3) Why are they so called?	[§7]	§15	--
Questions on cessation			
(4) How does cessation occur?	[§9]	§16	--
(5) The sequence of formation when attaining it	[§11]	§17	--
(6) The difference between a dead person and one who has attained cessation	[§13]	--	§25
(7) How does emergence from cessation occur?	[§15]	§18	--
(8) The sequence of formation when emerging	[§17]	§19	--
(9) The contacts experienced by one emerging	[§19]	§20	--
(10) Where does the mind tend upon emerging?	[§22]	§21	--
(11) What conditions conduce to cessation?	[§24]	--	--

While in the Mahā Vedalla Sutta and the Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta, the questions on formation and cessation are asked in a broader context of other teachings, in the Kāma,bhū Sutta 2, they are specific questions in themselves, totalling only 11 in number, asked by Citta the householder to check if the monk Kāma,bhū has experienced them.

¹⁰ M 44,13-21/1:301-303 @ SD 40a.9.

¹¹ Vol:page,line refs of suttas. Questions 1-5: S 41.6/4:293,7-294,10 = M 44/1:301,17-302,5 (SD 40a.9); question 6: S 41.6/4:294,11-24 = M 43/1:296,11-23 (SD 30.2); questions 7-11: S 41.6/4:294,26-295,21 = M 44/1:302,6-27 (SD 40a.).

3 Sutta teachings

3.1 FORMATION

3.1.1 The first 3 questions that Citta asks relates to “formation” (*saṅkhāra*) [§§3-7]. Ordinarily, the term “formations” (*saṅkhārā*, plural) refers to the psychological aspects of karma, that is, its roots in thought, speech and action. This refers to karma as arising as our thought (*citta,saṅkhārā*), expressed as speech (*vacī,saṅkhārā*) and as bodily action (*kāya,saṅkhārā*).¹²

Technically, this *saṅkhāra* (sg) is the same as the *saṅkhārā* (pl) or volitional formations of dependent arising.¹³ Dependent arising is, of course, the whole *active* existential process of an unawakened being, who is caught up and conditioned by it. An unawakened being is, as such, the *passive* result of dependent arising: he has no real control over the process.

In the case of an arhat, the formation occurs *passively* but naturally in him, and he can choose how he wants to respond to such formation, as he has full *active* control of thought, speech or action.¹⁴ Such actions are best described as spontaneous responses that have no karmic significance for the arhat because his mind is not rooted in any unwholesome roots (that is, greed, hate or delusion).¹⁵

3.1.2 Throughout the Kāma,bhū Sutta 2, however, *saṅkhāra* is used in the singular and uncountable form. This is because both the questioner, a non-returner layman, Citta the householder, and the arhat monk, Kāma,bhū, are referring to an arhat’s mind. Such a mind neither “multiplies” thoughts nor motivates speech or bodily action as it does in the unawakened. In other words, the “formation” of an arhat has no karmic consequences.¹⁶

In other words, such formation (singular), is also uncountable because it is no more “mental proliferation” (*papañca*),¹⁷ as in the case of the unawakened. They do not multiply themselves, but simply arise and fall away as functional karma, that is, action without karmic consequences. In short, an arhat does not create karma: he simply acts *naturally* in the true sense of the word.¹⁸

3.2 THE ATTAINMENT OF CESSATION

3.2.1 How cessation is attained

3.2.1.1 Cessation, or “the attainment of cessation (*nirodha,samāpatti*), or more fully, “the cessation of perception and feeling” (*saññā,vedayita nirodha*),¹⁹ is the last in a series of **9 progressive meditative**

¹² See SD 17.6 (5.3 (6)).

¹³ See eg (Paṭicca,samuppāda) Vibhaṅga S (S 12.2,14), SD 5.15.

¹⁴ See eg Ti,kaṇḍaki S (A 5.144), SD 2.12. Bodhi gives a somewhat different (more technical) explanation at S:B 1442 n298.

¹⁵ On the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala,mūla*), see Mūla S (A 3.69/1:201-205), SD 18.2 & (Kamma) Nidāna S (A 3.33) @ SD 4.14 (1.5).

¹⁶ For a survey, see *Saṅkhāra*, SD 17.6.

¹⁷ On *papañca*, see SD 6.14 (2).

¹⁸ For a survey on arhats and karma, see *Beyond good and evil*, SD 18.7.

¹⁹ Eg *Satta Dhātu S* (S 14.11/2:151), SD 71.14.

states of “cessation” (*anupubba,nirodha*) of subtle aspects of consciousness.²⁰ **The (Anupubba) Vihāra Sutta 2** calls them “the successive attainments” (*anupubba,samāpatti*) (A 9.33).²¹

The meditator begins with the 4 form dhyanas (*rūpa-j,jhāna*), where the physical senses and thinking are transcended.²² On the basis of the 4th dhyana, he then goes on to the finer states of the formless dhyanas (*arūpa-j,jhāna*) or attainments (*samāpatti*), which ultimately transcends even consciousness itself.²³

3.2.1.2 Some of the best meditators up to the Buddha’s time were able to attain to the highest of the “8 liberations” (*aṭṭha,vimokkha*), which are experiential descriptions of the form dhyanas and the formless attainments.²⁴ No one before the Buddha was able to progress beyond this, mainly due to their being limited by the notion of some kind of abiding entity, “soul” or selfhood (*attā*).

In our history, the Buddha is the first to transcend these 8 attainments or dhyanas with his rejection of any notion of such an entity, that is, with the understanding of non-self (*anattā*).²⁵ Hence, cessation is often equated with awakening itself, as seen in **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26).²⁶

3.2.1.3 According to Buddhaghosa, those who practise the **calm** (*samatha*) aspects of meditation, that is, the attaining of dhyana, will only reach the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.²⁷ Those meditators who practise only the **insight** (*vipassanā*) aspects of meditation, that is, reflect on impermanence, and so on,²⁸ will only reach the fruition attainment (*phala,samāpatti*) [3.2.1.4]. In both cases here, this term refers specifically to the fruitions of streamwinning and of once-return.

3.2.1.4 However, only with the balanced practice of both calm and insight, would the meditator be able to attain non-return or even arhathood. With proper practice, the meditator progresses through the 8 dhyanas [3.2.1.2], that is, emerging from each dhyana, he reflects on it with the insight of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self.²⁹

He keeps doing this up to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and bringing it to an end, reaches cessation, which according to the Commentaries, may last for 7 days or even longer.³⁰ On emerging from the cessation, a non-returner of the path gains the fruition of non-return, and an arhat of the path gains the fruition of arhathood (that is, they respectively attain full-fledged sainthood).³¹

²⁰ On *anupubba,vihāra*, see **Tevijja S** (D 13) @ SD 1.8 (2.2) (3) n; **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,34.2-42/1:174 f), SD 1.11. Also D 33,3.2(6)/3:266, 290; A 9.31/ 4:409, 456; Pm 1.35.

²¹ A 9.33/4:410-414 @ SD 95.2. On “the progressive cessation of formations” (*anupubba,saṅkhārānaṃ nirodho*), see **Raho,gata S** (S 36.11/4:217), SD 33.6. As a spiritual skill, they are known as the wisdom in attaining of the 9 successive abodes (*navānupubba,vihāra,samāpatti,paññā*), and is attr to Sāriputta: see SD 44.12 (1.8) n.

²² See **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.2.2).

²³ On the 4 form dhyanas, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5). On the formless dhyanas, see **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1) @ SD 24.11 (4.2, 5).

²⁴ On the 8 liberations, see SD 49.5b (1).

²⁵ See **Is there a soul?** SD 2.16 (1.1).

²⁶ M 26,42 (SD 1.11).

²⁷ *Ne’va,saññā,nāsaññāyatana*, see **N’eva,saññā,nāsaññāyatana Pañha S** (S 40.8), SD 24.18. See also **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 16,16.2), SD 1.11.

²⁸ The sequence of practice, beginning with the knowledge of rise and fall, according to Abhidhamma, is given in Vism 23.6-15.

²⁹ These are the 3 universal characteristics (*sāmañña,lakkhaṇa*): see **Atam,mayatā**, SD 19.13 (1).

³⁰ MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163.

³¹ For details, see Vism 23.31-52/705-709.

3.2.1.5 THE 3 CHARACTERISTICS. The Visuddhi, magga explains how cessation is attained by first entering each form dhyana and formless attainment, and then reflecting with insight any of the 3 characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self).³² This means that if he enters the fruition attainment by reflecting on non-self, the fruition is called **the emptiness liberation**; if by reflecting on impermanence, it is called **the signless liberation**; and if by suffering, it is called **the desireless or undirected liberation**.

However, generally speaking, all paths and fruits can be called by all three names because they take nirvana—which is empty, signless and undirected—as their object, and they all share the characteristics of being empty, signless, and undirected.³³

3.2.1.6 A note on fruition attainment (*phala, samāpatti*). This is a special meditative attainment where the mind directly experiences the bliss of nirvana. This is said of any of the 4 levels of awakening, that is, the fruition attainment of streamwinning, of once-return, of non-return and of arhathood. While in the case of the first three—the learners (*sekha*)—this vision of nirvana is temporary, in the arhat, the non-learner or adept (*asekha*), it is complete and permanent.³⁴

According to the Abhidhamma, such fruition attainments each lasts only a mind-moment.³⁵ This is a novel view, as it is not attested by the suttas.³⁶ When a noble disciple enters his respective fruition attainment, the experience is named after the type of insight that immediately brings the attainment, not after the original path attainment in the cognitive or mental process of the path.

3.2.2 Non-returners and arhats

3.2.2.1 However, as a meditative state, cessation is attainable not only by arhats, but also by non-returners, but only by them.³⁷ Non-returners are able to enjoy this state because they have broken all the 5 lower fetters,³⁸ which hold them back to the sense-world (*kāmaḥvacara*).³⁹ Moreover, with their mastery of the form dhyanas and the formless attainments, non-returners have transcended any need or want for sensual pleasures, and they are also not troubled by any kind of thought or feeling.

3.2.2.2 The absolute necessary preconditions to the attainment of cessation are said to be the perfect mastery of both aspects of meditation, that is, calm and insight (*samatha, vipassanā*) [§24].⁴⁰ This holistic meditation is the basis for the 8 dhyanas, and a prerequisite for the attainment of non-return or arhathood.

Even streamwinners and once-returners are unable to attain the level of cessation because they have only overcome the first 3 fetters, and the 5 higher fetters⁴¹ are still unbroken by them [cf 3.2.1.4].

³² Vism 23.31-43/705-707.

³³ See Abhs:BRS §37 (Guide), 1999:358, §42 (Guide), p363..

³⁴ Vism 23.3-15/698-702.

³⁵ See eg Abhs:BRS §22 1999:176-178.

³⁶ See eg (**Hatthi, gāmika**) **Ugga S** (A 8.22,10) + SD 45.15 (3.2.2). See also Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001:129-133.

³⁷ Vism 23.18/702.

³⁸ The 5 lower fetters (*orāma, bhāgiya saṃyojana*) are: (1) self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), (5) repulsion (*paṭigha*).

³⁹ For a schematic diagram of Buddhist cosmology, see SD 1.7 (Table 1.7).

⁴⁰ Vism 23.16-60/702-710. See also **Samatha & Vipassanā**, SD 41.1.

⁴¹ The streamwinner has broken only the first 3 fetters: (1) self-identity view, (2) spiritual doubt, and (3) attachment to rituals and vows: see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8. The once-returner has broken all the 3 fetters

3.2.2.3 It is said that only arhats and non-returners can attain cessation. Even then, only those who have mastered the 8 liberations (PmA 1:319) [3.2.1.2] can do so. In other words, they must have mastered all the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments.⁴²

A possible explanation is that cessation is like an ante-nirvana state, experienced only just before awakening, but only once by those who have no mastery of the 8 liberations (or the formless attainments, especially the last, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception). Hence, cessation is not nirvana,⁴³ but is the closest to nirvanic experience in a mundane way, so to speak.

Cessation can be said to be like a portal—a sort of “door to the death-free” (*amata,dvāra*)⁴⁴—that we go through into nirvana. Only those who have mastered the 8 liberations are able to re-enter that portal that is cessation. Others who have attained nirvana, but lack mastery of the 8 liberations would not be able to return to that portal, so to speak, and don’t need to.⁴⁵

3.2.3 What happens during cessation?

3.2.3.1 Cessation, because it has transcended all perception and feeling, is effectively a state of suspended animation. In other words, although the meditator, by worldly (or medical) definition, is dead, he is actually still alive [§13]. What keeps the meditator alive is, according to Theravāda, the “life continuum” (*bhavaṅga*),⁴⁶ or, according to the Yogācāra, the “store-house consciousness” (*ālaya,vijñāna*).⁴⁷

3.2.3.2 It is, however, a temporary state, since the body needs nourishment and other natural processes (such as getting rid of waste). However, while in this state, the meditator is said to be impervious to any kind of physical or external stimulation, even those of a raging fire or wild carnivores.

The Commentaries say that the state of cessation may last for 7 days or even longer.⁴⁸ Immediately at the arising of the state, however, there arises in the non-returner, the fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi,phala*), and in the arhat, the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta,phala*) (PmA 1:41, 321). As already stated [3.2.2], only an arhat or a non-returner can experience the state of cessation. On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainments.⁴⁹

3.2.3.3 The Kāma,bhū Sutta 2 here defines the key aspects of the experience of cessation [§§9-24; 2.2]

and weakened the 3 unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion): see **Mūla S** (A 3.69/1:201-205), SD 18.2 & **(Kamma) Nidāna S** (A 3.33) @ SD 4.14 (1.5). The 5 higher fetters are: (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa,rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa,rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*). So called because they fetter us to the higher world, viz, the form worlds (*rūpa,loka*) and the formless worlds (*arūpa,loka*).

⁴² Vism 23.16-60/702-710.

⁴³ Nyanatiloka 1982:190 (§206); Somaratna 2006, Ency Bsm 7:745

⁴⁴ That is, in a non-technical sense. M 1:353,2 = A 5:346,33; M 1:227,11*; S 2:43,33 = 45,8 = 58,24 = 80,11.

⁴⁵ For a careful investigation, see Johansson 1969:29 f, 97-108. For a scholarly survey, see Boyd 1980:35-38. See also Somaratna 2006, in Ency Bsm 7:742-750.

⁴⁶ On *bhav’āṅga*, see SD 8.3 (12+13).

⁴⁷ On *ālaya,vijñāna*, see SD 17.8b (4.2); also SD 5.16 (14.2).

⁴⁸ MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163.

⁴⁹ Vism 708. Cf Sappurisa S (M 113), SD 23.7 (2); also Animitta Ceto,samādhi Pañha S (S 40.9/4:268 f) @ SD 24.19 (4.2). On cessation (*nirodha*), see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,42), SD 1.11 cessation and arhathood; **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).

3.2.4 The story of the elder Sañjīva. The *Māra Tajjanīya Sutta* (M 50) recounts the story of the elder **Sañjīva**, the left-hand monk of the Buddha Kakusandha (the right-hand monk was the elder Vidhura).⁵⁰ It is said that Sañjīva was adept in samadhi, and went in the attainment of cessation, meditating under a tree or an empty hut. One day, while he was deep in the attainment of cessation under a tree, cowherds, shepherds, ploughmen and travellers, thinking that he was dead, brought grass, wood, and dried cow-dung, and having piled them up against him, set it on fire to cremate him.

However, on account of his meditative state, not even the corner of his robe was singed. At dawn, he emerged from his meditation, shook the debris off his robe, and entered the village for alms. Seeing him, people thought that the monk who had died while sitting had come back alive! Hence, his name Sañjīva (“the living one”).⁵¹

This is an example of “success by samadhi-intervention” (*samādhi, vipphāra iddhi*).⁵² It is brought about by the power of meditative calm (*samatha*) occurring in successive attainments for each of the 8 attainments or dhyanas [3.2.1.2].⁵³

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Dutiya Kāma,bhū Sutta

The Second Discourse to Kāma,bhū

S 41.6

1 At one time, the venerable Kāma,bhū was staying in a hog-plum [wild mango] grove⁵⁴ in Macchikā,saṇḍa.⁵⁵

2 Then, Citta the houselord approached the venerable Kāma,bhū, and having gone up to him, sat down at one side.

Formation

3 Sitting thus at one side, Citta the houselord said this to the venerable Kāma,bhū:

(1) **“Bhante, how many kinds of formation are there?”**⁵⁶

3.2 **“There are 3 kinds of formation, houselord.”**⁵⁷

⁵⁰ D 14,1.9/2:4; J 1:42; B 23.20. Kakusandha was the 3rd past buddha from our Gotama Buddha: SD 36.2 (3.4.3). On past buddhas, see Dharma-ending age, SD 1.10 (2.1); names and qualities, SD 36.2 (3); names, SD 49.8 (2).

⁵¹ M 50,11/1:333 @ SD 36.4; MA 2:366; SA 3:96; PmA 3:670.

⁵² Vism 12.30+32/380, 23.37/706; B 23.20; BA 256.

⁵³ Vism 12.31/380.

⁵⁴ “In a wild mango grove,” *ambāṭaka, vane*. According to DP, *ambāṭaka* (Skt *āmrātaka*; cf *amlavāṭaka, āmra-vātaka*), the hog-plum tree (*Spondias mangifera*) and its fruit; CPD: the hog-plum, wild mango. Its Indian name is prob “ambatekai,” the Indian hog-plum, Malay “buah kedondong,” and its fruit is sour and crisp.

⁵⁵ *Macchikā,saṇḍa*, lit “fishers’ clump,” a grove belonging to Citta. Hence, he is sometimes known as Macchika,-saṇḍika, “the one from Macchika,saṇḍa (A 1:16, 3:451).

⁵⁶ *Kati nu kho bhante saṅkhārā’ti?* This is the same question (no 12) that the layman Visākha asks (a non-returner) his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma,dinnā and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,13/1:301), SD 40a.9. On formations (*saṅkhārā*), see SD 17.6. On *saṅkhāra* (sg), see (3.1) and SD 40a.9 (2.4).

bodily formation,	<i>kāya,saṅkhāra</i>
verbal formation,	<i>vacī,saṅkhāra</i>
thought-formation. ⁵⁸	<i>citta,saṅkhāra</i>

4 “Sadhu, bhante,” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma,bhū, and then asked him another question:

5 (2) **“But what, bhante, is bodily formation, what is verbal formation, what is thought-formation?”⁵⁹**

5.2 “Houselord,
the in-and-out-breaths are bodily formation;⁶⁰
thinking and pondering are verbal formation,⁶¹
perception and feeling are thought-formation.”⁶²

6 “Sadhu, bhante,” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma,bhū, and then asked him another question:

7 (3) “But, bhante,
why are the in-and-out-breaths bodily formation;
why are thinking-and-pondering verbal formation;
why are perception and feeling thought-formation?”⁶³

7.2 “The in-and-out-breaths, houselord, are bodily. These states are dependent on [bound up with] the body. Therefore, the in-and-out-breaths are bodily formation.⁶⁴

Houselord, first we think and ponder, after that speech follows. Therefore, thinking and pondering are verbal formation.⁶⁵

Perception and feeling, houselord, are mental. These states are dependent on [bound to] the mind. Therefore, perception and feeling are thought-formation.⁶⁶

The attainment of cessation of perception and feeling

8 “Sadhu, bhante,” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma,bhū, and then asked him another question:

⁵⁷ Notes that the refs is to *saṅkhāro* (sg): this is in reference to an arhat’s mind. If Citta has experienced cessation himself (which is probable), then he is already a non-returner at this time.

⁵⁸ “Thought-formation” is a non-karmic functional process, referring to the mind of an arhat or a non-returner: see SD 40a.9 (2.4.3).

⁵⁹ This is the same question (no 13) that the layman Visākha (a non-returner) asks his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma,dinnā, and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,14/1:301), SD 40a.9.

⁶⁰ *Assāsa,passāsā kho gaha,pati kāya,saṅkhāro*: note that *saṅkhāro* is sg. See SD 40a.9 (2.4.1).

⁶¹ *Vitakka,vicārā vacī,saṅkhāro*: note that *saṅkhāro* is sg. See SD 40a.9 (2.4.2).

⁶² *Saññā ca vedanā ca citta,saṅkhāro*: note that *saṅkhāro* is sg. See SD 40a.9 (2.4.3).

⁶³ This is the same question (no 14) that the layman Visākha (a non-returner) asks his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma,dinnā, and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,15/1:301), SD 40a.9.

⁶⁴ *Assāsa,passāsā kho gaha,pati kāyikā ete dhammā kāya-p,paṭibaddhā, tasmā assāsa,passāsā kāya,saṅkhāro*. Note that *saṅkhāro* is singular throughout. On “formations and formation,” see SD 40a.9 (2.4.4).

⁶⁵ *Pubbe kho gaha,pati vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācam bhindati, tasmā vitakka,vicārā vacī,saṅkhāro*. This is a normal mental process, esp that of an arhat. In a meditative context, *vitakka,vicāra* is tr as “initial application and sustained application”: see SD 33.4 (2.1).

⁶⁶ *Saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā citta-p,paṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca citta,saṅkhāro*.

9 (4) “Now, bhante, how does the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling occur?”⁶⁷

9.2 “Houselord, it does not occur to a monk who is attaining the cessation of perception and feeling, thus:

‘I will attain the cessation of perception and feeling,’ or

‘I am attaining the cessation of perception and feeling,’ or

‘I have attained the cessation of perception and feeling.’ [294]

but, rather, the mind is first cultivated in such a way so that it leads him to such a state.”⁶⁸

10 “Sadhu, bhante,” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma, bhū, and then asked him another question:

11 (5) “When a monk is attaining the cessation of perception and feeling, bhante, which states end first: is it the bodily formation, or the verbal formation, or the thought-formation?”⁶⁹

11.2 “Houselord, when a monk is attaining the cessation of perception and feeling, the verbal formation ends first,⁷⁰ then the bodily formation, and then the thought-formation.”⁷¹

Cessation and death

12 “Sadhu, bhante,” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma, bhū, and then asked him another question:

13 (6) “What, bhante, is the difference between someone who is dead, done his time, and a monk who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling?”⁷²

13.2 “Houselord, in the case of the dead, whose time is done, his bodily formation has ceased, subsided; his verbal formation has ceased, subsided; his thought-formation has ceased, subsided. His vitality (*āyu*) is exhausted. His vital heat has settled. His faculties are all broken up.”⁷³

13.3 However, houselord, in the case of a monk who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling,

his bodily formation has ceased, subsided;

his verbal formation has ceased, subsided;

his thought-formation has ceased, subsided.

But his vitality is *not* exhausted. His vital heat has *not* settled. His faculties are clarified.”⁷⁴

⁶⁷ *Katham pana bhante saññā, vedayita, nirodha, samāpatti hotīti.* This is the same question (no 15) that the layman Visākha (a non-returner) asks his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma, dinnā and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,16/1:301), SD 40a.9. On cessation, see SD 30.2 (4).

⁶⁸ *Atha khv-assa pubb’eva tathā cittaṃ bhāvitam hoti, yaṃ taṃ tathattāya upanetīti.* Comy explains that before attaining cessation, he has resolved the duration of the attainment, thus, “I will be mindless (*acittaka*, ie, thought-free) for such a duration.” (*nirodha, samāpattito pubbe addhāna, pariccheda, kāle yeva “ettakaṃ kālaṃ acittako bhavissāmīti addhāna, paricchedaṃ cittaṃ bhāvitam hoti,* SA 3:94).

⁶⁹ This is the same question (no 16) that the layman Visākha (a non-returner) asks his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma, dinnā, and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,17/1:301 f), SD 40a.9.

⁷⁰ Speech, as we know it, actually ends with the attaining of the 1st dhyana: see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5.1.3).

⁷¹ Verbal formation (initial application and sustained application) ceases in the 2nd dhyana (cf prec n). Bodily formation (in-and-out-breath) ceases in the 4th dhyana. Thought-formation ceases upon attaining cessation.

⁷² *Yvāyaṃ bhante mato kālaṃ, kato, yo cāyaṃ bhikkhu saññā, vedayita, nirodhaṃ samāpanno, imesaṃ kiṃ nānā, - karaṇan’ti.* This question is not found in **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44), SD 40a.9: see (2.2).

⁷³ *Yvāyaṃ gahapati mato kālaṃ, kato, tassa kāya, saṅkhāro niruddho paṭippassaddho, vacī, saṅkhāro niruddho paṭippassaddho, citta, saṅkhāro niruddho paṭippassaddho, āyu parikkhīṇo, usmā vūpasantā, indriyāni viparibhin-nāni.*

13.4 This, houselord, is the difference between someone who is dead, done his time, and this monk who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling.⁷⁵

Emerging from cessation

14 “*Sadhu, bhante,*” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma, bhū, and then asked him another question:

15 (7) “**But how, bhante, does emergence from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling occur?**”⁷⁶

15.2 “Houselord, it does not occur to a monk who is emerging from the cessation of perception and feeling, thus:

‘I will emerge from the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling,’ or

‘I am emerging from the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling,’ or

‘I have emerged from the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling.’

but, rather, the mind is first cultivated in such a way so that it leads him to such a state.”⁷⁷ [295]

16 “*Sadhu, bhante,*” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma, bhū, and then asked him another question:

17 (8) “**When a monk is emerging from the cessation of perception and feeling, bhante, what states arise first: bodily formation, or verbal formation, or thought-formation?**”⁷⁸

17.2 “Houselord, when a monk is emerging from the cessation of perception and feeling, the thought-formation arises first, then the bodily formation, and then the verbal formation.”⁷⁹

18 “*Sadhu, bhante,*” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma, bhū, and then asked him another question:

19 (9) “**Now, bhante, when a monk has emerged from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling how many kinds of contacts touch him?**”⁸⁰

⁷⁴ *Āyu aparikkhīṇo, usmā avūpasantā, indriyāni vipasannāni.* Comy says that the sense-faculties are tired when active and stimulated by external sense-objects. They are as if afflicted and soiled, like a mirror placed at a cross-roads collects dust brought by the wind and so on. The mind of a monk who has attained cessation, however, is like a mirror in the casket, kept in a bag, his 5 senses shine (*virocati*) within brightly in cessation (SA 3:95). It should be noted that the “senses” here are not physical, but their mental aspects as they are indistinguishable in their radiance: see esp **Pabhassara S** (A 1.6.1+2), SD 8.3 (6). Further see SD 33.6 (3.5).

⁷⁵ A well known example is that of the elder Sañjīva, the left-hand monk of the Buddha Kakusandha: see (3.2.4).

⁷⁶ This is the same question (no 17) which the layman Visākha (a non-returner) asks his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma, dinnā, and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,18/1:302), SD 40a.9.

⁷⁷ Comy: Before attaining cessation, at the time of limiting the duration, he resolves. “I will be mindless (thought-free) for such a time, and afterwards will become mindful again.” (SA 3:95)

⁷⁸ This is the same question (no 18) which the layman Visākha (a non-returner) asks his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma, dinnā, and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,19/1:302), SD 40a.9.

⁷⁹ Comy: When one emerges from cessation, the fruition of attainment (*phala, samāpatti*) arises first. “The thought-formation arises first” refers to the perception and feeling associated with that mind. Then, at the time of the life-continuum (*bhav’āṅga*), bodily formation (breathing) occurs. After that, during regular activity, verbal formation (thinking and pondering) returns, reactivating speech. (AA 3:96)

⁸⁰ This is the same question (no 19) which the layman Visākha (a non-returner) asks his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma, dinnā, and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,20/1:302), SD 40a.9.

20 “Houselord, when a monk has emerged from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling, 3 kinds of contacts touch him, that is,

the empty contact, ⁸¹	<i>suññata phassa</i>
the signless contact,	<i>animitta phassa</i>
the undirected contact.” ⁸²	<i>appaṇihita phassa</i>

Benefits of cessation

21 “*Sadhu, bhante,*” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma, bhū, and then asked him another question:

22 (10) “**Bhante, when a monk has emerged from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling, to what does his mind bend, to what does it slope, to what does it tend?**”⁸³

22.2 “The mind of a monk who has emerged from the attainment of perception and feeling, houselord, bends to solitude, slopes to solitude, tends to solitude.”⁸⁴

Conditions for cessation

23 “*Sadhu, bhante,*” said Citta the houselord. He joyfully approved of the venerable Kāma, bhū, and then asked him another question:

24 (11) “**Bhante, how many conditions are of great help to the attainment of the cessation of preception and feeling?**”⁸⁵

24.2 “Now, houselord, you have asked last what should be asked first. However, I will still answer you.

⁸¹ They are all called “contact” (*phassa*) to denote the arising of consciousness. These conscious moments are said to be so because their mental object is nirvana, and these three names are those of the contact associated with fruition. See SD 40a.9 (2.5.3).

⁸² Comy: These terms can be explained by their own quality (*sa,guṇa*) or by their object (*ārammaṇa*). By way of **quality**: the attainment of fruition (*phala,samāpatti*) [3.2.1.5] is called “emptiness,” and the accompanying contact is called “emptiness-contact.” The same applies to the other two. By way of **object**: nirvana is called “emptiness” because it is empty of lust, hate, or delusion; “signless” because it is without any sign of lust, etc; it is “undirected” because it is not directed to lust, etc. The contact of the arisen fruition-attainment, which takes nirvana as emptiness (*suññatam nibbānam*) as object, is called “emptiness-contact”; the same method applies to the other two. (SA 3:96). On the 3 liberations, see DhsA 222-226.

⁸³ *Saññā,vedayita,nirodha,samāpattiyā vuṭṭhitassa pana bhante bhikkhuno kiṃ,ninnaṃ cittaṃ hoti kiṃ,poṇaṃ kiṃ,pabbhāraṇ’ti*. This is the same question (no 20) that the layman Visākha (a non-returned) asks his erstwhile wife, the arhat nun, Dhamma,dinnā and the answer is the same, too: see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,21/1:302), SD 40a.9.

⁸⁴ *Viveka,ninnaṃ cittaṃ hoti viveka,poṇaṃ viveka,pabbhāra*, where “**solitude**” (*viveka*) refers to nirvana. This phrase recurs in **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,20), SD 40a.9. A more common stock is that of “who bends towards nirvana, slopes towards nirvana, tends towards nirvana,” *nibbāna,ninno hoti nibbāna,poṇo nibbāna,pabbhāro*: **Mahā Vaccha S** (M 73.14/1:493); **Mahā.nāma S 2** (S 55.22,4.2/5:371), **Dāru-k,khandhōpama S 1** (S 35.241/4:180), **Pācīna Ninna S 1-6** (S 45.115-120/5:41), **Samudda Ninna S 1-6** (S 45.121-126/5:41), **Pācīna Ninna S 7-12** (S 45.127-132/5:41), **Samudda Ninna S 7-12** (S 133-138/5:41). This phrasing is a way of stressing the fact that streamwinning surely ends in arhathood in due course. In fact, the very notion of a “stream” (*sota*) is to show that the journey of awakening has begun before we become fully awakened at the journey’s end.

⁸⁵ This question is not found in **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44), SD 40a.9. See (2.2).

24.3 Two conditions, houselord, are greatly helpful for the attaining of the cessation of perception and feeling, that is, calm and insight.⁸⁶

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⁸⁶ See (3.2.1.3 + 3.2.1.4).