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Paṃsu,dhovaka Sutta

The Discourse on the Gold Panner | A 3.100a [A:Be 3.101]

Theme: Refining our meditation practice

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2005, 2007

1 Introduction: The parable of gold refining

1.1 Gold was well known in ancient India, and as such is often mentioned in the early Indian Buddhist texts, both in similes and in the Vinaya prohibiting monastics against owning or using them.¹ Indian historian, **Romila Thapar**, notes that “Sources of commercial wealth consisted of the produce from mines, plants and animals, converted to items through craftsmanship” (2002:299).

Gold was *mined* in Mysore² as early as 3000 BCE, and was imported to Harappa in the Indus Valley. In the far north of India, gold was *panned*. Artifacts such as the intricately and beautifully designed and minted Gupta coins, attest that ancient Indian gold had a high quality both of the metal and of their craftsmanship.³



Fig 1 Gold ore.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold>

1.2 The Paṃsu,dhovaka Sutta contains an extended version of a familiar parable, that of the goldsmith [§2]. A parallel goldsmith parable is found in **the Dhātu,vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 140,20).⁴ A variant of this parable is found in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2,88), **the Subha Sutta** (D 10), and **the Mahā Sakul’udāyī Sutta** (M 77).⁵ In the

latter two cases, the parable points to the psychically creative nature of the mind on emerging from dhyana. A terse version of the same parable is found in **the Mahā Nid-
desa** where the gold-purifying simile is applied to various defilements (*mala*) and to the negative opposite qualities of the eightfold path (*micchā,dīṭṭhi* etc) (Nm 2:478 f).

The Paṃsu,dhovaka Sutta opens with a unique and extended version of the parable to include “the gold panner or his apprentice” (*paṃsu,dhovako vā paṃsu,dhovak’antevasī vā*), which is nowhere else mentioned



Fig 2 Gupta gold dinar (335-370) minted by Samudra Gupta for his parents Chandragupta I & Kumaradevi (obverse). Reverse: Ambika (Durga) on a lion. 7.8 gm.

Source: <http://www.med.unc.edu/~nupam/ancient1.html>

¹ Eg Nissaggiya Pācittiya 18 = V 3:236-238; Rūpiya Saṃvohāra Sikkhāpada (Nis Pāc 19 = V 3:239 f); Rāja Sikkhāpada (Nis Pāc 10 = V 3:219-223); Meṇḍaka Anujānana (Bhesajja Khandhaka, Mv 6.34 = V 1:240-245). See **Money and monastics**, SD 3.19-23.

² Now Mysuru, 2nd largest city of Karnataka, 140 km (87 mi) SW of Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, SW coast of India.

³ On early Indian coinage, see **Money and monastics**, SD 4.19 & also <http://www.med.unc.edu/~nupam/ancient1.html>.

⁴ M 140,20/3:243 @ SD 4.17. The variance is only syntactical (grammatical structure).

⁵ (D 2,88/1:78 @ SD 8.10) = (D 10,26/1:209) = (M 77,31/2:18) respectively.

in the Suttas.⁶ Midway in the parable, however, there seems to be a break in the flow of ideas. The parable begins with the gold panner or his apprentice panning the sediment, washing away the debris [§1], so that only gold ore remains [§2]. The ore is then placed into a crucible, and the goldsmith “blows at it, blows hard at it, blows down at it” (*dhamati sandhamati niddhamati*) [§2.1].

1.3 The word *dhamati* needs some explanation. The Sanskrit form of this Pali verb is *dhāmati*, and it has a broad range of meanings as follows:

to blow (either intransitive as wind, or transitive, as to blow a conch-shell or any wind instrument), to blow into; to breathe out, exhale; to kindle a fire by blowing; to melt or manufacture (metal) by blowing; to blow or cast away. (SED 509c)

Monier Williams’ Sanskrit-English Dictionary (SED) further defines *saṁ-vdham* (or *dhmā*), that is, *saṁ-dhamati*, as “to blow together (into a flame, fuse or melt together)” (SED 1144b); and *nir-vdham* (or *dhmā*), that is, *nirdhamati*, as “to blow away, blow out of) (SED 555b). As such, it is clear that these words are pregnant verbs, some of their senses not easily translatable into a single English expression. The Paṁsu,dhovaka Sutta gold-panning parable, as such, assumes that we would know that fire and burning are also involved in the process of blowing at the crucible.

1.4 The Nimitta Sutta (A 3.100b),⁷ which immediately follows the Paṁsu,dhovaka Sutta in the Loṇa,-phala Vagga of the Aṅguttara, offers some help here. The former has another gold-smelting imagery illustrating the refining of meditative mental states leading to various attainments, including liberation.⁸ [2]



Fig 3 Amateur gold panner.

The Libby Creek Recreational Gold Panning Area is located 23 mi south of Libby, Montana, USA, within the Kootenai National Forest. The public is allowed to pan for gold within this area and any gold you happen to find is yours to keep. Source: <http://libbymt.com/areaattractions/scr-panning2.jpg>

⁶ The *paṁsu,dhovaka* (lit, “dirt-washer”) is, however, simply mentioned the Khuddaka,pāṭha Comy in the phrase, “or, just as the dirt-washers take away dirt” (*paṁsu,dhovakā vā paṁsurū gaṇhantā*) (KhpA 30).

⁷ A 3.100b,13/1:257 (SD 19.12).

⁸ This gold parable is also found in **Dhātu,vibhaṅga S** (M 140,20/3:243), SD 4.17, varying mostly only in syntax.

2 The *vārita,vato* phrase

2.1 SA, SAṆKHĀRA, NIGGAYHA, VĀRITA, VATO: POSITIVE FORM, UNWHOLESOME SENSE

2.1.1 Variant readings

2.1.1.1 All the traditional manuscripts (Ee, Ce, Se), except for the Burmese (Be), read *sa,saṅkhāra,-niggayha,vārita,vato* [§4.1]; Be reads *sa,saṅkhāra,niggayha,vārita,gato*. For convenience, we shall call this **the *vārita,vato* phrase**. However, the difference in reading here is merely in the letter. As will be seen below, both readings give effectively the same sense, that if a meditator who has difficulty gaining and keeping mental focus.

2.1.1.2 This phrase is said to be of “positive form, unwholesome sense,” meaning that it is *positively stated* but refers to *an unwholesome state*, that is, in the case of a mundane meditator, it means that he is unable to progress on account of on-going thoughts, or too much directing in his meditation.

However, when this phrase (as above) describes a **non-returner** in his efforts towards arhathood, it has a wholesome, and simply means that his applies effort in his meditation, that is directing his mind using very profound **insight** (*vipassanā*) practice.

2.1.2 Occurrences of the phrase

2.1.2.0 In the **Paṃsu,dhovaka Sutta** (A 3.100a,4/1:254,34), the ***vārita,vato*** phrase describes a mind of samadhi that is cultivated as the basis for the 6 superknowledges (*abhiññā*) [§§4.2-10], which closes the Sutta. The details on this usage will be discussed below [2.3].

This phrase does not seem to be an early one: it is not mentioned in the Majjhima at all; only once in the Saṃyutta, and once in the Dīgha, in its very last title, **the Das’uttara Sutta** [2.1.2.1]; and in the canonical Abhidhamma, only in the Vibhaṅga. However, it is found in at least 3 suttas in **the Aṅguttara**.

The phrase is found in the following texts: **D 34 = S 1.38 = A 3.100a = A 5.27 = A 9.37 = Vbh 334**. In the Das’uttara Sutta (D 34), (Pañcaka) Samādhī Sutta (A 5.27) and the Vibhaṅga, the phrase describes **“the right concentration the brings 5 kinds of knowledge”** (*pañca,ñāṇika sammā samādhī*), that arises only for oneself (*paccattaṃ yeva ñāṇaṃ uppajjati*),⁹ thus:

- (1) “This samadhi is **present happiness and as its fruit hereafter**” (*ayaṃ samādhī paccuppanna,sukho, c’eva āyatim ca sukha,vipāko*). The meditator feels the bliss with the attainment of dhyana that lasts even after the sitting.
- (2) “This samadhi is **noble, non-worldly** [spiritual]” (*ayaṃ samādhī ariyo nirāmisso*). The meditator is free from sensual lust and worldly needs.
- (3) “This samadhi has **no association with the false person**”¹⁰ (*ayaṃ samādhī akāpurisa,sevito’ti*). It is cultivated by [associated with] the “great person” [the Buddha and so on] (*mahā.purisa,sevita*).¹¹
- (4) “This samadhi is **peaceful, exquisite, gained through tranquillity, realized through mental oneness, neither curbed nor checked by suppressing (the defilements) with effort**” (*ayaṃ samādhī santi paṇīto paṭippassaddhi,laddho ekodi,bhāv’ādhigato na ca sa,saṅkhāra,niggayha,vārita,vato’ti*). It is

⁹ This phrase foll each of the samadhi definitions.

¹⁰ *Kā,purisa*, opp of *sappurisa*, “true individual”; one who does not take up the 3 training, or even keep the 5 precepts, habitually breaking them, and keeping to the 10 unwholesome course of karma [M 136,8, SD 4.16]: V 2:188; D 3:279; S 1:91, 154, 2:241, 5:204; Tha 124, 495; J 2:42, 6:437; Pv 2.930 (PvA 125 = *lāmaka*, “vilely low”).

¹¹ See **Anuruddha Mahā,vitakka S** (A 8.30) + SD 19.5 (1).

“peaceful” because of the stillness of the limbs as well as the objects, and because of the stilling of all the distress due to the defilements; it is “exquisite” in the sense of not tormenting. It is “gained through tranquillity” means it is won through the stilling of the defilements, or because of the state of having stilled the defilements. It is “realized through mental oneness” means that mental singleness has been attained or that it has been made to emerge. It is “neither curbed nor checked by suppressing with effort” means that *it is attained neither by restraining the opposing states nor holding down the defilements with the mind accompanied by prompting and effort as in the case of improperly mastered samadhi still subject to the influxes.* (The italicized explanation refers to the **vārita,vata** phrase.)

- (5) “I have myself mindfully attained this samadhi, mindfully made it to arise” (*so kho panāhaṃ imaraṃ samādhiraṃ sato’va samāpajjāmi sato vuṭṭhahāmi*).¹² This is because of the attaining an abundant mindfulness while both gaining the samadhi and emerging from it; or only either one, emerging at the predetermined time. (VbhA 420,23-421,24)

Below, we shall briefly examine its various contexts for a better understanding of its usages and significance.

2.1.2.1 Das’uttara Sutta (D 34,5.8(4)/3:279)¹³

One of the 5 states **to be made to arise** (*uppādetabbā*), that is, the right concentration that brings about the 5 kinds of knowledge (*pañca ñāṇiko sammā,samādhi*) [2.1.2.0]. Since these 5 samadhis are spoken of as being based on **right concentration** (*sammā,samādhi*), we may safely surmise them to be:

- (1) The attainment of **dhyana** in term of habitual practice, but not necessary of one having attained any state in the path. [SD 8.4]
- (2) This samadhi (not necessarily dhyana) arises with the breaking of the 3 fetters, that is, the attaining of **streamwinning**. [SD 10.16 (11)]
- (3) This samadhi (not necessarily dhyana) arises with the significant weakening of the 3 unwholesome roots (greed, hate, delusion), that is, the attaining of **once-returning**. [SD 10.16 (12)]
- (4) This samadhi marks the destruction of all the 5 lower fetters marking the attaining of **non-returning**. [2.2.2; SD 10.16 (13)].
- (5) This is the samadhi signifies the breaking of all the 10 fetters, marking the attaining of **arhathood**. [SD 10.16 (14)]

2.1.2.2 Sakalika Sutta 1 (S 1.38/1:28), SD 61.4¹⁴

The phrase forms part of a longer phrase (the full *vārita,vata* phrase) to describe the Buddha’s cultivation of samadhi, especially in dealing with excruciating pain.

The Sutta relates the Buddha recovering from the aftermath of being hurt, as a result of Devadatta’s attempt to kill him by hurling a huge rock from Mount Vulture Peak. The rock lodges between two other rocks [Cv 7.3.9], but a splinter flies off it and cuts the Buddha’s foot, drawing blood.¹⁵ The Buddha rests, enduring it, mindful and fully knowing, free from distress.

During the middle watch, 700 Satullapa deities visit him, 5 of whom praise him for his calm endurance. The 1st 4 deities respectively praise him as a naga, a lion, a thoroughbred, a bellwether [chief bull], a beast of burden, and a tamed individual.

¹² *So kho panāhaṃ imaraṃ samādhiraṃ sato’va samāpajjāmi sato vuṭṭhahāmi paccattaraṃ-yeva ñāṇaraṃ uppajjati*

¹³ Be -varita,gato; Ce Ee Ke Se -vārita,vato. There are also vll -vārita,vaṭo, -varitādhigato, which are clearly wrong.

¹⁴ Cf **Sakalika S 2** (S 4.13/1:110 f), SD 61.7.

¹⁵ Cv 7.2-4 (V 2:184-203); S 4.13/1:110 f (SD 61.7).

The 5th deity praises the Buddha's "well-cultivated samadhi and well-liberated mind, one that is neither bent forward nor bent back;¹⁶ neither curbed nor checked by suppressing (the pains) with effort (*samādhim subhāvitam cittañ ca suvimuttam na cābhinatam na cāpanatam na ca sa,saṅkhāra,niggayha,-vārita,vatam*). [2.1.4]

2.1.2.3 (Pañcaka) Samādhi Sutta (A 5.27/3:24,9), SD 33.13(3.3)

In this short sutta, the Buddha exhorts us to "carefully and mindfully cultivate boundless samādhi (*samādhim, bhikkhave, bhāvetha appamāṇam nipakā patissatā*) for the arising of the 5 knowledges. [2.1.2.0]

2.1.2.4 (Navaka) Ānanda Sutta (A 9.37/4:428,9 f)

The full formula—*samādhim subhāvitam cittañ ca suvimuttam na cābhinatam na cāpanatam na ca sa,saṅkhāra,niggayha,vārita,vatam* [2.1.2.2]—describes a samadhi called "the fruit of final knowledge" (*añña,phala*), or "with final knowledge as fruit."

2.1.2.5 The Vibhaṅga (Vbh 334,15)

The Vibhaṅga explains the samadhi bringing about the 5 knowledges as stated above [2.1.2.0]. Its Commentary (the Sammoha,vinodanī) explains each of the 5 samadhi-based knowledges, following each of these 5 knowledges. [2.1.2.0]

2.1.3 *Sa,saṅkhārā*

2.1.3.1 The phrase *sa,saṅkhārā* literally means "with formations," here referring specifically to effort (that is, mental volition that may or may not be expressed through the body-door and speech-door), in reference to deep meditation. Hence, it refers specifically to "mental effort or volition." Moreover, in a general or mundane context, it has an unwholesome sense: the mental effort itself (in the form of deciding and thinking) during meditation becomes itself a hindrance to spiritual progress.¹⁷

2.1.3.2 However, when applied to **non-returners** (*anāgāmī*), *sa,saṅkhārā* has only a wholesome sense, referring to whether the non-returner who attains arhathood "with effort" (*sa,saṅkhāra*) or "without effort" (*na sa,saṅkhārā* or *asaṅkhārā*). There are the following 5 basic kinds of non-returners, as stated in **the Niṭṭha Sutta** (A 10.63), thus:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| (1) an attainer of nirvana in the interval [the intermediate state], ¹⁸ | <i>antarā,parinibbāyī</i> |
| (2) an attainer of nirvana upon landing, ¹⁹ | <i>upahacca,parinibbāyī</i> |
| (3) an attainer of nirvana without exertion, ²⁰ | <i>asaṅkhāra,parinibbāyī</i> |
| (4) an attainer of nirvana with exertion, ²¹ | <i>sa,saṅkhāra,parinibbāyī</i> |
| (5) one bound upstream, heading for the Akaniṭṭha realm. | <i>uddhamṣota akaniṭṭha,gāmī</i> |

¹⁶ A mind filled with lust is said to be "drawn forward" (*abhinata*); one filled with hate is "bent back" (*apanata*) (AA 4:199,15 f). M 1:386,22*; S 1:28,31 f; A 4:428,4-9; Pm 1:165,14 f + 167,6-8 *apaṇatam*.

¹⁷ On the supramundane level, the phrase *sa,saṅkhāra* "with effort," can, however, have a neutral, even good, sense, as in the phrase, *sa,saṅkhāra,parinibbāyī*, descriptive of a non-returner who "attains nirvana with some effort." See (**Samādhi**) **Pañc'aṅgika S** (A 5.28,2(4) n), SD 33.13; **Saṅkhāra**, SD 17.6 (5.3(5)).

¹⁸ D 3:237. For a discussion of the doctrinal problem here and on the intermediate state, see **Is rebirth immediate?** SD 2.17 (4-5).

¹⁹ D 3:237, one who while living beyond half of his life-span, or at the moment of death, attains the path for overcoming the higher fetters (Pug 1.43). See SD 2.17 (4-5).

²⁰ D 3:237, one who overcomes the higher fetters without any exertion (Pug 1.44). See SD 2.17 (4-5).

²¹ D 3:237, one who overcomes the higher fetters with some exertion (Pug 1.45). See SD 2.17 (4-5).

These are the 5 individuals who are said to “win their goals after leaving this world” (*idha vihāya niṭṭhā*).²² (A 10.63,3), SD 3.3²³

Except for the Akaniṭṭhā non-returners, each of these individuals either attain arhathood in the respective manners mentioned or they progress, according to their faculties (*indriya*), through the higher pure abodes to reach Akaniṭṭhā, where they attain nirvana.

2.1.3.3 Of special relevance are the 3rd and the 4th kinds of non-returners. The 3rd kind, “the attainer of nirvana without exertion” (*asaṅkhāra,parinibbāyī*), apparently makes “no effort,” that is, he merely goes on cultivating dhyana, letting his remaining fetters (*samyojana*) fade away, until he gains the samadhi leading to nirvana. And the 4th kind, “the attainer of nirvana with exertion” (*saṅkhāra,parinibbāyī*), applies deeper insight into his practice until he awakens to nirvana.²⁴

Hence, in either case—whether “with effort” or “without effort,” it is a wholesome one: this is simply because the non-returner’s mind is fully free from greed and hate (a shorthand for the 5 mental hindrances), and has only to clear away the lingering defilements rooted in delusion, that is, **the 5 higher fetters**: the desire for existence, the desire for formless existence, conceit, restlessness and ignorance.²⁵ [2.2.4.1]

2.1.4 Na sa,saṅkhāra,niggayha,vārita,vato

2.1.4.1 The phrase *na sa,saṅkhāra,niggayha,vārita,vato* [§4.2], “neither curbed nor checked by the efforts of suppressing (mental defilements),” is, for convenience, called **the negative *vārita,vato* phrase**. The translation of both this compound and its positive counterpart, and their meanings, are here based on the glosses in the Commentaries. At this stage, we should have also understood that while the hindrances²⁶ prevent us from attaining *dhyanas*, the fetters [1.6.6] prevent us from *awakening*. We shall here further examine this difficult but important phrase with regards to **the mundane practitioner**, that is, one who has not yet attained arhathood, or even non-returning. [2.1.2]

The negative *vārita,vato* phrase is so called because of the negator *na*, meaning that the meditator is “neither curbed nor checked” by his efforts. He is able to overcome the defilements, or at least the mental hindrances, to attain dhyana. Hence, it has a wholesome sense in terms of meditation practice. This term, as we have noted applies in a wholesome sense in both the *mundane* way (for those not yet on the path), and for the *supramundane*, especially the non-returners [2.1.2].

2.1.4.2 The positive *vārita,vato* phrase—*sa,saṅkhāra,niggayha,vārita,vato* [2.1.3]—that is, *without* the negator *na*, with the prefix *sa-*, “with,” has an unwholesome sense, since it means that he is “curbed and checked” (*vārita,vato*) by his cognitive efforts to overcome the hindrances and the fetters (defilements) [2.1.4.1]. Hence, he has difficulties attaining dhyana, and also unable to reach the path or progressing on it.²⁷

In this “positive” statement (without the *na*), the sense is wholesome: one is unable to attain concentration and its fruit on account of one’s efforts and undertakings to restrain defilements, and is thus hindered and restrained by such efforts. Essentially, here it means that the meditator is still “directing”

²² On “after leaving this world,” see SD 3.3 (1.2.1.3).

²³ A 7.52/4:73 f (SD 82.10). For other suttas that list or define the 5 non-returners, see SD 2.17 (4-5, esp 4.4.2).

²⁴ On the 5 kinds of non-returners, see SD 10.16 (13.1.3); on these 2 kinds of non-returners (in terms of effort), see (13.1.4 (6)).

²⁵ On the 5 higher fetters, see SD 10.16 (13.1.1); on the 10 fetters, see (1.6.6).

²⁶ On the 5 hindrances, see *Nīvaraṇā*, SD 32.1.

²⁷ Comys say he is struggling with defilements (SA 1:80; AA 2:363, 3:232, 4:199; VbhA 421).

his mind to the object, and struggling to gain and maintain focus [2.1.1.2]. In other words, the meditator should be skillful to know when to direct his mind, and when to simply “let go” and flow with it.

However, as we have noted [2.1.2], this phrase has a wholesome sense for **the non-returner**, who has overcome all the mental hindrances and all the 5 lower fetters [2.2.2.3]. Thus, the non-returner is only mildly “curbed and checked” in his meditation efforts, that is, in terms of the remnants of the 5 higher fetters” [2.1.3.3; 2.2.3.3].

2.2 THE 3 LEVELS OF DEFILEMENTS

2.2.1 The gross defilements

2.2.1.1 With all the analyses and information we have gathered above, we can safely conclude the following regarding **the 3 levels of defilements** [§3.1], beginning with **the gross defilements** (*oḷārika upakkilesa*). They are said to arise “by way of misconduct through the 3 doors of karmic action: the body, speech and mind [§3.1].

Since these defilements are said to be “**gross**” (*oḷārika*), clearly, they arise through intentional acts of body and speech that are unwholesome. In other words, they are body-based acts, and related to the views or opinions we express. On a simple level, we can imagine this level of defilements to be related to our lapses in keeping the precepts, that is, the level of the training in moral virtue (*sīla, sikkhā*).

2.2.1.2 Coherent as this notion [2.2.1.1] may be, it is too broad to be useful except in a theoretical way of talking about it. In practice, it is more useful to understand these gross defilements as related to our existence on a bodily and verbal level. In other words, they refer to **the 1st 3 fetters**: those of *self-identity view, of doubt, and of attachment to rituals and vows*.²⁸

Self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*) is, simply, the notion that we *are* our body, it is our “self”: we identify with it. Everything seems to be seen in the self-appropriating notions of “I, me, mine.” Since nothing in the world is really ours, the notion of *I* only reinforces self-identity; the notion of *me*, conceit; and *mine*, craving.²⁹

Doubt (*vicikicchā*) is basically the refusal to learn, to keep an open mind, so that we are deeply rooted in ignorance, and severely limited by what we know. We are unwilling or unable to see or accept anything useful, true or even real beyond our self-constructed virtual world. Hence, our life is a routine of self-affirming rituals and self-fulfilling vows.

Our religion, whatever it is called, is that of affirming our instincts and inherent beliefs. It is a predictably animal-like routine of feeding, chores, pleasure-seeking and sundry collection of wealth, power, status and things of personal and immediate gratification. Even religion for us is nothing more than an **attachment to rituals and vows** (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*).

2.2.1.3 These are our **gross defilements** that imprison us to a subhuman virtual reality of:
animal-like pursuit of food, play, sex, rest, the crowd;
preta-like insatiability, routine life, addictiveness;
asura-like measuring and collecting of people and things, and exploiting them for ourselves;
 even exhibiting hellish violence.

These are our mental chains and fetters to the samsaric suffering world of birth and death.

²⁸ On the 3 fetters, see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8; SD 3.3 (5).

²⁹ See: **I: The nature of identity**, SD 19.1; **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a; **Mine: The nature of craving**, SD 19.3.

We see all stark reality with “**the higher mind**” (*adhicitta*), beginning with a mindfulness of impermanence; then, cultivating better focus to gain some level of samadhi (mental concentration), so that, in due course, we are able to attain dhyana, if we choose to. Even on a simple level, such a Dharma-inspired mind is easily able to break free of the 3 fetters. When we do so, we reach the path as **streamwinners** (*sot’āpanna*), never to fall into the subhuman states again.

2.2.2 The middling defilements

2.2.2.1 The middling defilements (*majjhima,sahagata upakkilesa*) arise “by way of thoughts of sensual pleasure, thoughts of ill will, thoughts of violence” [§3.2]. The 3 kinds of thoughts stated here are the opposites of the 3 aspects of right intention (or thought) (*sammā saṅkappa*), the 2nd factor of the noble eightfold path.³⁰ This, of course, has to do with the mind, that is, these are defilements regarding our feelings and thoughts.³¹

2.2.2.2 On a practice level, we can see this as, firstly, relating to how the streamwinner, with abundant mindfulness, begins to see the disadvantages and dangers in the 3 unwholesome roots: greed, hate and delusion. With the weakening of these roots, the streamwinner—who may take up to 7 lives before awakening—becomes a **once-returned** (*sakad-āgāmī*), with only one more life to remove the remaining fetters before becoming an arhat.

2.2.2.3 When the streamwinner or the once-returned is able to overcome all of the 5 lower fretters (*oram,bhāgiya saṃyojana*)—the 1st 3 fetters [2.2.1.2], sensual lust and repulsion—he becomes a **non-returned** (*anāgāmī*). Notice that “sensual lust” (*kāma-c, chanda*) and “repulsion” (*paṭigha*) are subtler, deeper roots of liking and disliking, greed and hate. The non-returned, on account of mastering dhyana (*jhana*), which transcends all bodily feelings, is free from any need or want of sensual pleasures.

The non-returned has overcome all these “**middling defilements**” which are better known as the 5 lower fetters, thus:

(1) self-identity view	<i>sakkāya,ditṭhi</i>
(2) spiritual doubt	<i>vicikicchā</i>
(3) attachment to rituals and vows	<i>sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa</i>
(4) sensual lust	<i>kāma,rāga</i>
(5) repulsion.	<i>paṭigha</i>

2.2.3 The subtle defilements

2.2.3.1 The subtle defilements (*sukhuma,sahagata upakkilesa*) arise “by way of thoughts of *relatives*, thoughts of *home* [his country], and thoughts related to *reputation*” [§3.3]. Such thoughts are clearly mundane, those of the world. Indeed, when such thoughts continue to be harboured and habituated by monastics and practitioners, then, they only serve to fetter them to the world and prevent their spiritual progress.

³⁰ See (**Magga**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 45.8/5:8-10), SD 14.5.

³¹ We see the same sequence of contemplations (*anupassanā*) in satipatthana practice, ie, the contemplations of: (1) the body (*kāyānupassanā*); (2) feelings (*vedanā’nupassanā*); (3) the mind (*cittānupassanā*); and (4) realities (*dhammānupassanā*). See **Satipatṭhāna S** (M 10, esp §3/1:56), SD 13.1,3.4-3.7, 5.

2.2.3.2 “Thoughts of relatives” is a colloquial way of saying “attachment to family and society” (*jāti, vitakka*) (which also suggest some sense of sexuality); “**thoughts of home and country**” (*janapada, vitakka*) clearly suggests harbouring thoughts of the past (when the monastics were lay people, enjoying sensual pleasures), or ethnicity, racial pride and nationalism, even using Buddhism to promote one’s culture (rather than enriching one’s culture with Buddhist values); and of politics, that is, power, even racism.

“**Thoughts related to reputation**” (*anavaññati, paṭisaṃyutta vitakka*) is literally: “thoughts related to (ideas of) not being despised or disregarded by others.” **The (Iti) Vitakka Sutta** (It 4.1) speaks of this as being the 1st of 3 interconnected unwholesome thoughts (*akusala vitakka*), thus:³²

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) a thought connected with not being despised | <i>anavaññati, paṭisaṃyutto vitakko</i> |
| (2) a thought connected with gain, respect and renown | <i>lābha, sakkāra, siloka, paṭisaṃyutto vitakko</i> |
| (3) a thought connected with consideration by others. | <i>parānu(d)dayatā, paṭisaṃyutto vitakko</i> |

Such wrong views are deeply rooted in a non-understanding or wrong view of **non-self**, the notion that there is something we can and must identify with what we are, what we have, what we do. It is the desperate drive for **status** and titles that glitter and glare enticingly to vainly fill our dark hollowness of being.

2.2.3.3 When such worldly thoughts are strong or habitual, they will continue to subtly work on our minds even though we may have become well known or celebrity teachers, or even mastered dhyanas. We may know the 10 fetters by word, even *by meaning*, but our minds’ strings are still subtly pulled by the master puppeteer, our unconditioned, **the latent tendencies** (*anusaya*).

We still think in terms of success and ambitions (*bhavābhava*), of “existence and becoming.” On a higher level, we wonder about the **form existence** and **formless existences**, and may even wish for them, despite all the training and teaching. Since we are caught up with wealth, fame and honours, we learn to measure others by how much they are worth to us, or of little use to us. We still have **conceit**.

On account of constant social engagements and social work, we begin to feel a respectable concern for the world and its suffering. We become **restless**. On account of our busyness and worldliness, we remain **ignorant** of the true nature of reality, and fail to fully understand the 4 noble truths, except by eloquent lipservice.

2.2.4 The arhat

2.2.4.1 With the abandoning of the “subtle defilements” [§3.3], the Sutta goes on to say that “only **thoughts of the teaching** remain” (*athāparam dhamma, vitakkāvasissanti*). This same phrase is used in **the (Yuganaddha) Paṭipada Sutta** (A 4.70), in its explanation of *dharm’uddhacca*, which may be rendered either as “restlessness regarding mental states” or “restlessness on account of the Dharma.”³³

Although some subtle level of restlessness regarding mental states may arise in a non-returner, especially on account of his compassion and concern for the world’s well-being, this is impossible in an arhat,

³² It 72,22 (ItA 2:69,15-22); A 3.100a/1:254,22 (*jāti, vitakko* +), SD 19.11; Vbh 356,37 (*ñāti, vitakko* +; VbhA 491); Nm 1:386,30 (= NmA), 501,24 (*do*); UA 236,33.

³³ A 4.170/2:156 f (SD 41.5). Comy gives a scholastic gloss of **dharmā, vitakka** as “the 10 defiling thoughts connected with insight” (*dasa vipassan’upakilesa, vitakkā*) (AA 2:362), namely, light or aura (*obhāsa*), knowledge (*ñāṇa*), zest (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), determination (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggāha*), mental focus (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and delight (*nikanti*). A meditator with incipient insight (*taruṇa vipassanā*) often mistakes any of these as the fruiting of the path (ie attaining of sainthood). These are listed and detailed at Vism 105-128/633-638. **Bodhi**, however, disagrees with Comy, asserting, “it seems more natural to understand it simply as obsessive reflections about the Dhamma” (*In the Buddha’s Words*, 2005:440 n16).

whose awakening is no different from that of the Buddha.³⁴ In other words, only “thoughts on the teaching” may arise in an arhat’s mind without any restlessness. In fact, the arhat has overcome all the 10 fetters, of which the last 5, **the higher fetters** (*uddham,bhāgiya saṃyojana*) are as follows:

(6) lust for form existence	<i>rūpa,raga</i>
(7) lust for formless existence	<i>arūpa,raga</i>
(8) conceit	<i>māna</i>
(9) restlessness	<i>uddhacca</i>
(10) ignorance.	<i>Avijjā</i>

2.2.4.2 The Commentary and Subcommentary (*ṭīkā*) to **the Sakalika Sutta 1** (S 1.38) [2.1.2.2] deal with a very similar *vārita,vata* context, as the phrase is used here in **the Paṃsu,dhovaka Sutta**, in its closing section, dealing with arhathood (SA 1:80,25-28). According to the Commentary on the Sakalika Sutta 1, the samadhi in question is that of the fruit of arhathood (*arahatta,phala,samādhī*). Such a mind is said to be **well freed** (*svimuttam*) because it is freed by the fruit (of arhathood).

The Sakalika Sutta 1 (describing the Buddha’s mind) adds that it is **neither bent forward nor bent back**, that is to say: the mind with *lust* is said to be “bent forward” (*abhinata*), the mind with *hate* is “bent back” (*apanata*). Hence, it is said that the Buddha’s and arhat’s mind neither bends towards lust nor bends back with hate.

2.2.4.3 The Paṃsu,dhovaka Sutta has the phrase, **neither curbed nor checked by suppressing (the defilements) with effort**: meaning that it is neither hindered nor blocked on account of forcefully, with effort, suppressing the defilements forcefully. Rather, the (unwholesome) mind is stopped because the defilements have been cut off. The meaning is that the mind is concentrated by the samadhi of fruition.³⁵

2.2.4.4 The **Porāna Ṭīkā** (SAṬ:Be) similarly explains: This (samadhi) is neither attained nor fixed with effort, forcefully, by the abandoning through displacement (*tad-aṅga-p,pahāna*),³⁶ or the abandoning through suppression (*vikkhambhan,pahāna*), as is the mundane-dhyana mind or insight; but rather (it is attained) by the defilements having been completely cut off.³⁷

2.2.4.5 One final, instructive, note is that the phrase *vārita,vata*, translated here as “curbed and checked,” has an interesting nuance, when the phrase is applied the streamwinner, or rather to our efforts to attain streamwinning. Here, *vārita,vata* can mean “attachment to rituals and vows” [2.2.1.2], as a fetter in itself, and as a synecdoche for the 3 fetters that prevent us from reaching the path.

³⁴ See **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58), SD 49.10.

³⁵ **Na ca sa,saṅkhāra,niggayha vāita,vataṅ’ti** na sa,saṅkhārena sappayogena kilese niggahetvā, vārita,vataṅ: kilesānaṃ pana chinnattā,vataṅ, pahala,samādhinā samāhitan’ti attho. The S:Be lemma reads -vārita,gataṅ but has -vārita,vataṅ in the gloss.

³⁶ On *tad-aṅga,pahāna*: SD 10.16 (1.6.5.2); SD 15.1 (10.2); SD 20.4 5.1 + 7.1); SD 41.4 (2.3.1).

³⁷ *Lokiya-j,jhāna,cittam viya vipassanam viya ca sa,saṅkhārena sappayogena tad-aṅga-p,pahāna,-vikkhambhana-p,pahāna,vasena ca vikkhambhetvā na adhigatam na ṭhapitam, kiñcarahi kilesānam sabbaso chinnattāya.* (SAṬ:Be 1:116,9-12). For other philological details of the *vārita,vata* phrase, see S:B 371-373 n88.

3 Variance in sutta numbering³⁸

Be (Chatṭha Saṅgīti ed) (10) 5. Loṇaka,palla Vagga	Ee (Pali Text Society ed) (A 1:253-256) X. A Grain of Salt	S:B Connected Discourses V. A Lump of Salt
93 (1) Accāyika Sutta	91 Urgent (i, ii) SD 47.13	92 (1) Urgent
94 (2) Paviveka Sutta	92a Aloofness (i-iiii) SD 44.2	93 (2) Solitude
95 (3) Sarada Sutta	92b [(iv)] SD 70.14	94 (3) Autumn
96 (4) Parisā Sutta	93 Companies (i-iv)	95 (4) Assemblies
97 (5) Paṭhama Ājaniya Sutta	94 (1) The thoroughbred (i-v)	96 (5) Thoroughbred (1)
98 (6) Dutiya Ājaniya Sutta	95 (2) The thoroughbred (i-v)	97 (6) Thoroughbred (2)
99 (7) Tatiya Ājānīya Sutta	96 (3) The thoroughbred (i-v)	98 (7) Thoroughbred (3)
100 (8) Potthaka Sutta	97 Rough cloth (i-iv)	99 (8) Bark fabric
	98 Cloth of Benares (i-iv)	
101 (9) Loṇaka,palla Sutta	99 A grain of salt (i-viii) SD 3.5	100 (9) A lump of salt
102 (10) Paṃsudhovaka Sutta	100a Gold-refiner (i-x) SD 19.11	101 (10) The soil remover
103 (11) Nimitta Sutta	100b (Gold-refiner) (xi-xv) SD 19.12	102 (11) A goldsmith

Table 3. Differences in sutta numbering (*loṇa,phala vagga*)

The suttas that have been translated in **the SD series** are indicated in the middle (Ee) column. The titles of the SD translations, however, often differ from those of the Ee.

— — —

³⁸ This table is based on the one I received from Clement Tan of Malaysia with thanks (9 Aug 2021).

Paṃsu,dhovaka Sutta

The Discourse on the Gold Panner

A 3.100a

Parable of the gold panner

1 “There are, bhikshus, gross impurities in gold, such as dirt and sand, grit and gravel. Now, a **gold panner**³⁹ or his apprentice, having spread *the sediment*⁴⁰ in a pan [a rocker], washes it, rinses it, cleans it, removing and getting rid of *the impurities*.⁴¹

When this is got rid of, when this is done,
there are middling impurities remaining by way of fine gravel and coarse sand.

1.2 Now the gold panner or his apprentice, washes *the sediment*, rinses it, cleans it, removing and getting rid of them.

When this is got rid of, when this is done,
there are fine impurities remaining by way of fine sand and black dirt.⁴²

1.3 Now the gold panner or his apprentice, washes *the sediment*, rinses it, cleans it, removing them and getting rid of them.

When this is got rid of, when this is done, thereafter, only the gold ore remains.

2 Then, bhikshus, **the goldsmith** or his apprentice, having placed that gold into a **crucible**,⁴³ blows (with bellows) *at the blaze*, blows hard at it, blows down at it.⁴⁴

2.2 The gold that is blown, blown hard at, blown down at, still has dross, [254] its debris is still not removed,

³⁹ “Gold panner,” *paṃsu,dhovaka*, lit, “dust/dirt washer.” In Malaysian tin mines, we find “dulang washers” who pan for tin on a small scale. “Dulang” is the Malay word for “pan” (*doniya*). Gold panning is an ancient manual technique of sorting gold. Wide, shallow pans are filled with sand and gravel that may contain gold. Water is added and the pans are moved and shaken, separating the gold from gravel and other debris. As gold is denser than gravel, it quickly settles to the bottom of the pan. The silt is usually removed from streambeds, often at a bend in the stream, where the gold ore, by its own weight, is shown up by the flow of water. This type of gold, found in streams or dry streams, are called *placer deposits*. Although panning is the easiest technique, it is rarely used today as it is not commercially viable. However, it is a good way for identifying placer gold deposits which may be evaluated for commercial viability.

⁴⁰ “Having spread *the sediment*,” *ākiritva*, from *ākirati*, “to scatter, sprinkle over, strew over, disperse, spread out, fill, heap.” Here *ākiritvā* has a pregnant sense, ie, in Pali, it is understood that “having spread” refers to the sediments or dirt (italicized), but this has to be specifically mentioned in idiomatic English. See foll n.

⁴¹ “Removing and getting rid of *the impurities*,” *tasmim pahīne tasmim vyantikate*, lit “abandoning it (loc), making an end of it (loc).” The vbs have a pregnant sense lacking in English, and the object (italicized) has to be supplied in the tr. See prec n.

⁴² “Fine sand and black dirt,” *sukhuma,vālikā kāḷi,jallikā*. DP says *kāḷi,vallikā* (Ee Se) is prob wr for *kāḷa,jallika* (Be, Ce).

⁴³ *Tam enaṃ suvaṇṇa,kāro vā suvaṇṇa.kār’antevāsī vā jāta,rūpaṃ mūsāyaṃ pakkhipivā*. “A crucible,” *mūsā* (not in PED, but in DPL), or “mortar” (Malay “lesong”); a pestle is *musala* (DPL).

⁴⁴ I have tr the vbs *dhamati sandhamati niddhamati* here almost literally. See Intro 3. PTS is unsure of the reading and adds [*na*] (within parentheses) before *niddhamati*. Woodward thinks that the *na* “should be read. The process is not final yet” (A:W 1:231 n4). On the other hand, it is clear from the text that the phrase *dhamati sandhamati niddhamati* are intensifiers or refer to different ways in which the blaze is attended to. As such, the *na* is indeed not needed.

so that it is neither pliant nor malleable nor bright, and still brittle [breakable],⁴⁵
and cannot be properly worked on.⁴⁶

2.3 Then, bhikshus, the time comes when the goldsmith or his apprentice blows (with bellows) **at the blaze**, blows hard at it, blows down at the gold, so that its debris is removed, so that it is pliant, malleable, bright, and durable [unbreakable], and can be properly worked on.⁴⁷

Whatever ornament that he wishes to make,
be it jewelled ornaments, or a gold-strip, or earrings, or a necklace,⁴⁸ or a gold chain,
that gold can now be used for that purpose.

The 3 levels of defilements

3 In the same way, bhikshus, for a monk devoted to the higher mind, there are **gross defilements**,⁴⁹ by way of misconduct of *the body*, misconduct of *speech*, misconduct of *the mind*.

The intent, capable monk abandons, dispels, eliminates, makes an end,
brings them to non-existence.⁵⁰

3.2 Bhikshus, for a monk devoted to the higher mind,
having abandoned them, making an end of them,⁵¹ there are **middling defilements**,⁵²
by way of thoughts of *sensual pleasure*, *thoughts of ill will*, *thoughts of violence*.

The intent and capable monk abandons, dispels, eliminates, makes an end of them,
brings them to non-existence.

3.3 Bhikshus, for a monk devoted to the higher mind,
having abandoned them, making an end of them, there are **subtle defilements**,⁵³
by way of thoughts of *relatives*, thoughts of *home and country*, and thoughts related to *reputation*.⁵⁴

The intent and capable monk abandons, dispels, eliminates, makes an end of them,
brings them to non-existence.

⁴⁵ “Become pliant ... not breakable,” *mudu ca hoti kammaññañ ca pabhassarañ ca na ca pabhaṅgu*. Gold is so ductile that **an ounce [113.4 gm]** of it may be drawn into a thin thread 219 mi [352.4 km]; and so pliant that it can be beaten into 160 leaves of 9 in sq [58 cm sq], and moved by the slightest breeze. It is so malleable that it can be rendered into any shape (eg as ornaments). It is the densest (heaviest) of all metals, except platinum (which is more precious than gold). Its colour does not change, and it can be polished to shine brightly. It is indestructible by any of the elements (earth, water, fire or air). As such, it is one of the most precious metals and commodities.

⁴⁶ I follow Se here: *Taṃ hoti jāta,rūpaṃ dhantaṃ sandhantaṃ niddhantaṃ, anihitaṃ anikkhitta,kasāvaṃ, na c’eva mudu hoti na ca kammaniyaṃ na ca pabhassaraṃ pabhaṅgu ca, na ca sammā upeti kammāya*. PTS *Taṃ hoti jāta,rūpaṃ dhantaṃ sandhantaṃ aniddhantaṃ anihitaṃ aninnīta,kāvaṃ,...*

⁴⁷ PTS has *sammā upeti kammāya*, which is clearly wr. It should read *na ca sammā upeti kammāya*, as found in (S 46.33/5:92).

⁴⁸ This + next line: *Yassa yassa ca pilandhana,vikatiyā ākaṅkhati, yadi paṭṭakāya yadi kuṇḍalāya yadi giveyyake yadi suvaṇṇa,mālāya, yañ c’assa atthaṃ anubhoti*.

⁴⁹ On the gross defilements, see [2.2.1].

⁵⁰ *Tam enaṃ sa,cetaso bhikkhu dabba,jātiko pajahati vinodeti vyantīkaroti anabhāvaṃ gameti*.

⁵¹ *Tasmim pahīne, tasmim vuantikate*. Ee puts this line in the prec para, giving the impression that it modifies the prec sentence.

⁵² On the middling defilements, see [2.2.2].

⁵³ On the subtle defilements, see [2.2.3].

⁵⁴ “Thoughts of ... related to reputation,” *ñāti,vitakko janapada,vitakko anuviññatti,paṭisaññutto vitakko*. *Ñāti,-vitakko*, vl (prob wr) *jāti,vitakko*, “thought of birth.”

4 Having abandoned them, making an end of them, thereafter, only **thoughts of the teaching** remain.⁵⁵
And that concentration [samadhi] is neither peaceful nor sublime.
neither has it won full tranquillity nor come to mental unification.
It is curbed and checked by the efforts of **suppressing** (mental defilements).⁵⁶

The 6 superknowledges

4.2 But, bhikshus, there comes a time,
when the mind stands steady inwardly, composed, unified, **concentrated**.⁵⁷

That concentration is then peaceful and sublime.

It has won full tranquillity and has come to mental unification.

It is *neither curbed nor checked*⁵⁸ by suppressing (the defilements) with effort.⁵⁹ [255]

4.3 ⁶⁰Then, when he directs his mind towards the attaining of any mental state
attainable through **direct knowledge**,

he gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein,

whenever the conditions are right [whenever there is a basis for mindfulness].⁶¹

(1) PSYCHIC POWERS

5 If he wishes,⁶²

‘May I wield **the manifold supernormal powers**.⁶³

Having been one, may I become many; having been many, may I become one.

⁵⁵ *Athâparam dhamma, vitakkâvasissanti*. See nn [2.2.4].

⁵⁶ *Sa, saṅkhāra, niggayha, vārita, vato* (Be only -gato): [2].

⁵⁷ *Hoti so bhikkhave samayo, yaṃ taṃ cittaṃ ajjhatañ-ñeva santiṭṭhati sannisīdati ekodihoti samādhiyati*. The last 3 verbs literally tr “it sits down together, it becomes one, it concentrates.”

⁵⁸ “Neither curbed nor checked” (*vārita, vata*) means that the samadhi arises not by forcefully suppressing (with effort) the defilements or hindrances, but because the defilements have been cut off or uprooted (in the arhat). In other words, the samadhi is that of the concentration of fruition (*phala, samādhi*) (ie, the attaining of arhatood) (SA 1:80,25-28). [2.3]

⁵⁹ Cf SA 1246: 比丘。得諸三昧不為有行所持得寂靜勝妙。得息樂道。一心一意盡諸有漏。bīqiū, dé zhū sānmèi bù wéi yǒu xíng suǒ chí dé jìjìng shèngmiào。dé xī lè dào。yì xīn yì yì jìn zhū yǒu lòu, “The monk gains concentration that is *not* maintained by exertion; he gains the peaceful and sublime, the still happy state, the unified mind, in which all the influxes are destroyed.” (T99.2.341c21-22)

⁶⁰ From hereon throughout, it is the same as **Nimitta S** (A 3.12,14.2-20/1:257 f), SD 19.12.

⁶¹ *Yassa yassa ca abhiññā, sacchi, karaṇiyassa dhammassa cittaṃ abhininnāmeti abhiññā, sacchikiriyāya, tatra tatr’eva sakkhi, bhābataṃ pāpuṇāti sati sati āyatane*. This is a locative absolute construction indicating *time*: the 1st sati is loc present part from vb *atthi*, is, the 2nd is the n (Anandajoti). The latter phrase—*tatra tatra ... sati sati āyatane*—is a common stock phrase that introduces the attainment of the direct knowledges (*abhiññā*): **Mahā Vaccha, -gotta S** (M 73,19/1:494), SD 27.4; **Kāya, gata, sati S** (M 119,29 f/3:96 f), SD 12.21; **Paṃsu, dhovaka S** (A 3.100a,4/-1:255), SD 19.11a; **Upakkilesa S** (A 5.23/3:16-19); **Iddhi, pāda S 2** (A 5.68/3:82 f); **Sakkhi, bhābba S** (A 6.71/3:426 f); **Gāvi Upamā S** (A 9.35/4:421 f). It refers to the preliminary conditions (*āyatana*) for the 6 direct knowledges (*abhiññā*) which follow later. The preliminary condition for the first 5 knowledges (the mundane ones) is the 4th dhyana; for the 5th (the only supramundane one), it is insight. See SD 12.21 (6).

⁶² *So sace ākaṅkhāti*. This does not mean that he could simply “wish” for such powers [§§5-9] or for freedom [§10], but that, when his mind “has won full tranquillity and come to mental unification,” ie, attained to the 4th dhyana, he has to “direct his mind” (*cittaṃ abhininnāmeti*) towards that goal [§4b]. The attainment of the spiritual states is the result of conscious effort.

⁶³ Cf **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11.5) where the Buddha disapproves of the exhibiting of such powers.

May I appear, may I vanish. May I move unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains, as if through space.

May I dive in and out of the earth as if it were water.

May I walk on water without sinking as if it were dry land.

Sitting cross-legged, may I fly through the air like a winged bird.

With my hand, may I touch and stroke even the sun and the moon, so mighty and powerful.

May I have power over my body, up to as far as the Brahmā world.’

5.2 He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right. [§4.3]

(2) CLAIRAUDIENCE

6 If he wishes,

‘May I hear, by means of the **divine-ear element**,⁶⁴ purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds, divine and human, whether near or far.’

6.2 He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right. [§4.3]

(3) TELEPATHY

7 If he wishes,

‘May I **know the minds of other beings**, other individuals, having encompassed them with my own mind.’⁶⁵

May I know a mind with <u>lust</u> as	a mind with lust,
and a mind without lust as	a mind without lust.
May I know a mind with <u>aversion</u> as	a mind with aversion,
and a mind without aversion as	a mind without aversion.
May I know a mind with <u>delusion</u> as	a mind with delusion,
and a mind without delusion as	a mind without delusion.
May I know a <u>contracted mind</u> [due to sloth and torpor]	as a contracted mind,
and a <u>distracted mind</u> [due to restlessness and worry]	as a distracted mind.
May I know an <u>exalted mind</u> [in dhyana]	as an exalted mind,
and an <u>unexalted mind</u> [not developed by dhyana]	as an unexalted mind.
May I know a <u>surpassable mind</u> as	a surpassable mind,
and an <u>unsurpassable mind</u> as	an unsurpassable mind. ⁶⁶
May I know a <u>concentrated mind</u> as	a concentrated mind,
and an <u>unconcentrated mind</u> as	an unconcentrated mind.
May I know a <u>released mind</u> as	a released mind,
and an <u>unreleased mind</u> as	an unreleased mind.’

7.2 He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.

(4) RETROCOGNITION⁶⁷

8 If he wishes,

‘May I **recollect my manifold past lives**, that is, 1 birth, 2 births, 3 births, 4 births, 5 births, 10 births, 20 births, 30 births, 40 births, 50 births, 100 births, 1,000 births, 100,000 births,

⁶⁴ “Divine-ear element,” *dibba,sota,dhātu*, clairaudience.

⁶⁵ This list of mental states also appears in **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22,12/2:299 = M 10,34/1:59), SD 13.

⁶⁶ Unsurpassable (*anuttaram*) mind, prob synonymous with “developed” mind. See D:W 592 n667.

⁶⁷ *Pubbe,nivāsanānussati*, lit “recollection of past abodes.”

many aeons of cosmic contractions, many aeons of cosmic expansions,
 many aeons of cosmic contractions and expansions, [recollecting],
 “There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.
 Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life.
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.

There too [256] I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.
 Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life.”
 Thus may I recollect my manifold past lives in their modes and details.⁶⁸

8.2 He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.

(5) CLAIRVOYANCE

9 If he wishes,

‘By means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],⁶⁹ purified and surpassing the human:
 may I see beings passing away and re-appearing, and
understand how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate,
 faring in accordance with their karma:

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

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

9.4 By means of the divine eye, *purified and surpassing the human*:
 may I see beings passing away and re-appearing, and
understand how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate,
 faring in accordance with their karma.’

9.5 He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.

(6) GNOSIS

10 If he wishes,

‘May I, by realizing for myself through direct knowledge, right here and now,

⁶⁸ This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

⁶⁹ *Dibba, cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*): **Pacalā S** (A 7.58,1.2), SD 4.11.

with **the destruction of the mental influxes**,⁷⁰

attain and dwell in the influx-free⁷¹ freedom of mind, freedom by wisdom.⁷²

10.2 —he gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right.”⁷³

— evaṃ —

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⁷⁰ *Āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto, vimuttiṃ paññā, vimuttiṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upa-sampajja viharati.* This is stock, found throughout the 4 Nikāyas. *Āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie, either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, bad (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 influxes: of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence or becoming (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16,2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*oghā*) and “yokes” (*yogā*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influxes of views) is prob older and is found more frequently in the suttas (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216; M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these influxes is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: *āsava*.

⁷¹ “Influx-free” (*anasava*), ie, free from being conditioned by the mental influxes (*āsavānaṃ apaccaya, bhūtaṃ*, SA 2:174).

⁷² “The freedom of mind, freedom by wisdom,” *ceto, vimuttiṃ paññā, vimuttiṃ*. This is not a dvandva, but a single conjunct cpd that describes the same state, arhathood. Comy explains “the freedom of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*) as the attainment of the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta, phala, samāpatti*), and “the freedom by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*) as the wisdom of the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta, phala, paññā*) (SA 2:174). A common term for both aspects is “freed both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga vimutta*): see **Mahā, nidāna S** (D 15,36,2), SD 5.17. In the tenfold rightness (*sammatta*) of the path, *ceto, vimutti* is “right freedom” (*sammā vimutti*) and *paññā, vimutti* is “right knowledge” (*sammā ñāṇa*). Here, “freedom” refers to the 8 attainments (*attha, samāpatti*)—the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments—mastered by the full-fledged arhat. The actual awakening is denoted by *sammā, ñāṇa*. See SD 10.16 (9+10). On the 2 kinds of freedom, see **Jhānābhiñña S** (S 16.9,29 n), SD 50.7. On *ceto, vimutti* as the mind’s freedom from the hindrances, see SD 38.5 (8.3).

⁷³ The PTS ed includes the foll Sutta, conflating them as A 3.100. While they share a common theme on mental cultivation, related parables on gold, and an identical conclusion (of the 6 direct knowledges), it clear that they are separate suttas, as found in Be, Ce, Se and AA.