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Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) Sutta

The Discourse on (the Exposition on) Penetrating Insight | A 6.63

Theme: A novel application of the noble truths as an overview of the way to spiritual freedom

Translated with notes by Piya Tan ©2003, 2011

1 Sutta highlights

1.1 This popular sutta is often quoted in the Commentaries.¹ It is a summary of the whole Teaching as the Way in six parallel methods, each with six steps: sensual desire, feelings, perceptions, mental influxes, karma, and suffering —each to be understood by its definition, diversity (of manifestation), result, cessation and the way to its cessation. It is a sort of extended “noble truth” formula [§13].

In fact, each of analytical schemes of the six defilements (sensual desire, etc) is built on the structure of the 4 noble truths with the additional factors of “diversity” and of “result.” The Aṅguttara Commentary glosses “diversity” as “various causes” (*vemattatā ti nānā, kāraṇam*, AA 3:406). In other words, it serves as an elaboration of the 2nd noble truth, the various internal or subjective causes of *dukkha*. “Result” (*vipāka*), on the other hand, shows the external or objective causes of *dukkha*.

1.2 The Aṅguttara Commentary takes *pariyāya* here to mean “cause” (*kāraṇa*), that is, a means of penetrating (that is, destroying) the defilements: “It is called ‘penetrative’ (*nibbedhika*) because it penetrates the mass of greed, etc, which had never before been penetrated or cleaved.” (AA 3:223)

The highlight of the exposition is found in these two remarkable lines of the sutta’s only verse:

The thought of lust is a person’s desire:

The wondrous in the world remain just as they are. [§3]

This essentially means that the real world is not what we think of it: it is our mind that we have to deal with without blaming the world (as evil, etc). We tend to project our preconceived minds onto the world. Our daily existence tends to be autopiloted by the shadows of our past or by the mirages of the future.

1.3 The list of spiritual methods listed here ends with the one dealing with suffering. This last method is related to the one given in **the Upanisā Sutta** (S 12.23) that applies the causal method of analysis, or what I call “the extended *pāmojja* formula,” thus:²

Suffering (<i>dukkha</i>)	is the immediate cause of	faith;
Faith (<i>saddhā</i>) ³	is the immediate cause of	joy [gladness];
Joy (<i>pāmojjā</i>)	is the immediate cause of	zest;
Zest (<i>pīti</i>)	is the immediate cause of	tranquillity;
Tranquillity (<i>passaddhi</i>)	is the immediate cause of	happiness;

¹ UA 176; DhsA 369 f; etc.

² For the better known “*pāmuja* formula,” see (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,2.14), SD 40a.13 & **Bhikkhuṇī Vāsaka S** (S 47.10,7/5:156), SD 24.2.

³ “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlaka, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati, saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 47,16/-1:320,8), SD 35.6; (M 60,4/1:401,23), SD 35.5; also called *avecca-p, pasāda* (S 12.41,11/2:69), SD 3.3. “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). Further, see SD 10.4 (2.2).

Happiness (<i>sukha</i>)	is the immediate cause of	concentration;
Concentration (<i>samādhi</i>)	is the immediate cause of	knowledge and vision of reality;
Knowledge and vision of reality (<i>yathā, bhūta, ñāna, dassana</i>)	are is the immediate cause of	revulsion;
Revulsion (<i>nibbidā</i>)	is the immediate cause of	dispassion;
Dispassion (<i>virāga</i>)	is the immediate cause of	freedom;
Freedom (<i>vimutti</i>)	is the immediate cause of	knowledge of the destruction [of the influxes].

(S 12.23/3:29-32), SD 6.12

1.4 The Nibbedhika Pariyāya Sutta closes on a very positive note, dropping a broad hint that we can work our way out of suffering with a clear mind:

... there is one who although overwhelmed by suffering, his mind overcome by suffering, but is one who searches outside, asking, ‘Who knows a way or two to end this suffering?’

The result of suffering, bhikkhus, is either confusion or search, I say! (A 6.63.13e/3:416)

1.5 Prayudh Payutto, in his *Dependent Origination: The Buddhist Law of Conditionality*, briefly discusses the main point of this sutta (1994:94 f).

2 Translation of *kāma* and *kāmā*

2.1 KĀMĀ BHIKKHAVE VEDITABBĀ

2.1.1 The key line, *kāmā bhikkhave veditabbā* [§3] and the term *kāmā* thereafter, have their difficulties. The canonical commentary, **Mahā Niddesa**, says that *kāma* here may refer to “sensuality as defilement” (*kilesa, kāma*) or to “the sensual object or object of desire” (*vatthu, kāma*),⁴ that is, either to subjective sensuality (arising in the mind: *kāma-c, chanda, kāma, rāga*, etc) or to objective defilement (arising through any of the 5 physical senses, that is, as the “objects of sensual desires,” *kāma, guṇa*) (Nm 2).⁵ [2.2.1]

2.1.2 Technically, when two or more senses are applicable, we should either use a “pregnant” word (that covers or suggests all the intended senses) or apply some kind of “amplified translation” that reflects the polysemy. Or, they should at least be some kind of note informing us of this polysemy or the Pali word’s difficulty.⁶

2.2 KĀMĀ AS “SENSUALITY”

2.2.1 *Kilesa, kāma* and *vatthu, kāma*

2.2.1.1 The suttas, as noted in the commentaries, such as the Mahā Niddesa (Nm 1 f), uses the word *kāma* in at least 2 important senses—as subjective defilement and as objective “external” sense-objects [2.1.1]. Both these senses are found in the Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) Sutta, but none of them are used polysemously, that is, each usage is monosemous (has a single sense). Both usages of *kāma* are found in “**the**

⁴ On *kāma* as subjective “desire as defilement” (*kilesa, kāma*) and objective “desire as object” (*vatthu, kāma*), see SD 38.4 (3.1.2); SD 41.4 (2.3.1).

⁵ See SD 32.2 (1.2.2) The 2 kinds of sensuality; also BDict: *kāma*.

⁶ On Pali polysemy, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2).

kāma verse” [§3.4], where *kāmo* in **line a+c** means “desire” as a defilement (*kilesa, kāma*), but in **line b**, “sensual pleasures” (*kāmā*) are simply sense-objects (as *vatthu, kāma*). In the rest of the Sutta (that is, the prose sections), *kāma* has the sense of “desire” (as a defilement).

2.2.1.2 The Sutta Nipāta Commentary (the Param’attha Jotika II), in fact, glosses *kāma* as “objects of pleasure that are considered to be states (or “things”) that are agreeable, pleasant, beautiful, etc, in the 3 worlds (the sense-world, the form world and the formless world)” (*kāman’ti manāpa, piya, rūp’ādi, te. bhūmika, dhamma, saṅkhataṃ vatthu. kāmaṃ*, SnA 512,25). Notice here that these states or “things” are simply said to be enticing, but without specific mention that they are defiling or not. This fact will become clear and significant as we examine the “*kāma* verse” in some detail below. [2.2.2]

2.2.2 Meaning of the *kāma* verse [§3.4]

2.2.2.1 (1) The *kāma* verse [§3.4] contains the key teaching and also the versification of the prose teaching of **the Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) Sutta** [§3.4]. The same verse—without line a—recurs in **the Na Santi Sutta** (S 1.34 = S 103).⁷

While the Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) Sutta teaching elaborates on our own thinking or intention, and mastering them, the Na Santi Sutta stresses on the nature of the world. Note how each line of the verse flows naturally from line a into b; line c into d. Finally, line e points to what we should do.

The *kāma* verse (§3.4 ≈ S 103)

<i>saṅkappa, rāgo purisassa kāmo</i>	The thought of lust is a person’s desire:	[2.2.2.2]
<i>n’ete⁸ kāmā yāni citrāni loke</i>	there are no sensual pleasures in the wondrous ⁹	
	in the world.	[2.2.2.3]
<i>saṅkappa, rāgo purisassa kāmo</i>	The thought of lust is a person’s desire.	[2.2.2.4]
<i>tiṭṭhanti citrāni tath’eva loke</i>	The wondrous in the world remains just as they are.	[2.2.2.5]
<i>ath’ettha dhīrā vinayanti chandan’ti</i>	So here ¹⁰ the wise remove desire (for them).	[2.2.2.6]
	(A 6.63,3.4 ≈ S 1.34 (S 103))	

(2) This verse is an example of Pali polysemy [2.1.2], where a word—here *kāma*—has more than one sense, all of which apply simultaneously or whose sense depends on the context. The verse plays upon the double meaning of *kāma*, stressing that our goodness depends on our mind, and that purity and liberation is to be achieved by overcoming the defilement of sensuality instead of being overwhelmed by our clinging to pleasurable objects.¹¹ [2.3]

2.2.2.2 [Line a] “The thought of lust is a person’s desire” (*saṅkappa, rāgo purisassa kāmo*):¹²

(1) ***Saṅkappa, rāga*** means “thought or intention” (*saṅkappa*) of “lust” (*rāga*). The Aṅguttara Commentary on the Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) Sutta glosses *saṅkappa, rāga* as “lust arisen by way of thought (or intention)” (*saṅkappa, vasena uppanna, rāgo*) (AA 3:407,5). The Saṃyutta Commentary on the Na Santi

⁷ S 1.34/1:22 = S 103 (SD 42.6).

⁸ S 103 *na te*.

⁹ “Wondrous,” *citra*, has a broad range of meanings: see (2.2.2.3).

¹⁰ “So here the wise” (*ath’ettha dhīrā’ti atha etesu ārammaṇesu paṇḍitā chanda, rāgaṃ vinayanti*, “here then the wise removes lust and desire in the sense-objects,” SA 1:63). In other words, “here” refers to our minds.

¹¹ See also SD 3.2. (1.2.2.3).

¹² For the key points of the full explanations, see SD 58.5 (1.1.3).

Sutta similarly glosses it as “intentional lust” (*saṅkappita,rāga*) (SA 1:63,3). The “Ancient Subcommentary” (Porāṇa Tīkā) on the Saṃyutta Commentary (Sār’attha-p,pakāsini) adds it is “lust towards objects thought about as being beautiful, etc” (*subh’ādi,vasena saṅkappita,vatthumhi rāgo*, SAT:Be 1:106).

(2) Two other verses—Dh 339 and Tha 760—and their commentaries help us to better understand the significance of the *kāma* verse [§3.4].

<p><i>Yassa cha-t,timsati sotā manāpassa bhusā vāhā vahantā dudhitthim saṅkappā rāga,nissitā</i></p>	(Dh 339)	<p><i>Uddhacca,megha,thanitam saṃyojana,valāhakam vāhā vahanti kuddhitthim saṅkappā rāga,nissitā</i></p>	(Tha 760)
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translated as:

<p>For whom the 36 streams, flowing to what is exceedingly pleasing, that one, with false view, the torrents— thoughts caught on lust—wash away. (Dh 339)</p>	<p>Thoughts caught on lust are the torrents that wash away the one with wrong view, like a thunder-cloud of agitation, a storm-cloud of fetters. (Tha 760)</p>
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(3) Note that Dh 339d = Tha 760d, and that Dh 339c and Tha 760c have the same sense. All the 3 verses centre on craving (*taṇhā*) in the phrase, *saṅkappa,rāga ...* “thoughts caught on lust” (§3.4ac = **Dh 339d = Tha 760d**), that is, it is our mental that defines the morality or immorality of our deeds. **The 36 streams** (*cha-t,timsati sotā*) refer to the 18 “internal” courses of craving (*taṇhā,vicarita*) and the 18 “external” courses of craving.¹³ “Internal” (*ajjhattik’upādāya*) refers to one’s own sense-faculties over the 3 periods of time (past, present, future), and “external” (*bāhir’upādāya*) refers to those of others over time.¹⁴

(4) The Saṃyutta Commentary summarizes the import of **the *kāma* verse** [§3.4] as follows: “Here the sensual object (*vatthu,kāma*) is rejected; it is the sensual defilement (*kilesa,kāma*) that is called sensuality (*kāma*)” (*evam ettha vatthu,kāmam parikkhipitvā kilesa,kāmo kāmo’ti vutto*, SA 1:63,4). This Commentary then quotes **the Pasūra Sutta** (Sn 4.8 = 824-834) citing 3 embedded verses (that is, verse not found in the actual Sutta).¹⁵

2.2.2.3 [Line b] “There are no sensual pleasures in the wondrous in the world” (*n’ete* [S 103, *na te*] *kāmā yāni citrāni loke*):

(1) **Citra**, “wondrous, diversely beautiful,” has a broad range of meanings:

1. (mfn) (i) bright, bright-coloured, decorated, many-coloured; extraordinary, wonderful; (ii) variegated, speckled; (iii) various, different, manifold.
2. (n) a kind of bird (the speckled cuckoo?).
3. (n) (i) something brilliant or diverse or extraordinary; (ii) a painting, a picture.¹⁶
Meaning (1) applies to the Sutta context. [2.2.5]

¹³ DhA 4:48,13-49,11.

¹⁴ See D 3:243,14; M 3:32,3, 216,2 f; A 2:212,9 = Vbh 392,20; A 5:52,31; Khp 4.6 (qu at DhsA 46,12); Vbh 79,27. See **Kāma,bhū S 1** (S 41.5/4:292), SD 71.9, where “stream” (*sotā*) = “craving” (*taṇhā*). (**Vicarita**) **Taṇhā S** (A 4.199/-2:211 f), SD 16.2, lists the 36 streams in similar structure but in reference to craving arising from self-views, which are explained in **Vibhaṅga** (Vbh 392-400).

¹⁵ SA 1:63,8-21 ad S; SnA 539,20-24.

¹⁶ See DP: citra² for details.

(2) The Aṅguttara Commentary glosses *citra* as “diverse and exquisite sense-objects” (*citrānīti citra, -vicitr’ārammaṇāni*)¹⁷ (AA 3:407). Hence, *citra* refers to the countless possible manifestations of things, states and events that occur in the external world. It refers to “things,” such as the mountains, rivers, the sun, the wind; and to the kind of things that we see, hear or notice around us or that we have. There are “states,” such as other people and beings, how they appear to us, how they feel, and so on. Then, there are “events” we experience: we see forms, smell odours, taste food, touch tactile objects and feel the air and so on, and notice thoughts about such states, things and events—which we generally call our “experiences.” That’s all they really are—experiences—until we start to “value-add” them. [2.2.2.4]

2.2.2.4 [line c] “The thought of lust is a person’s desire” (*saṅkappa,rāgo purisassa kāmo*):

(1) This line is a repetition of line a. Notice that this same line appearing as line a is basically *theoretical*: it simply tells us about how the Buddha teaches what **craving** (*taṇhā*) is—basically, it is a thought. Here—in **line b**—the line is repeated. If we are mindful enough, we realize that it is *our* own thought. It is no more “theoretical,” but our own experience.

(2) The deeper we understand this, the clearer we see how our sufferings arise, whether as physical pain or as mental pain. However, real insight only arises when we are able to see and understand how we are composed and conditioned by the 5 aggregates: form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness—how we cling to them. We can call this clinging (*upādāna*) the “will to live,” which is so ingrained and tenacious in us that we never really know that it is working.

(3) Early Buddhism speaks of a conscious mind, which entails a **preconscious** dimension,¹⁸ that aspect of the mind which precedes our acts, moralizing it with our intention (*cetanā*), making them “karmic formations” (*saṅkhārā*). The opening twin verses of **the Dhammapada** (Dh 1-2) famously declares how “the mind” (our intention) is behind all our conscious actions.¹⁹ If there is clinging behind our act, it is effectively unwholesome. “Clinging” here is a shorthand for the 3 unwholesome roots: greed (or lust), hate and delusion.

2.2.2.5 [Line d] “The wondrous in the world remain just as they are” (*tiṭṭhanti citrāni tath’eva loke*):

(1) As we have noted [2.2.2.3(2)], *citra* refers to “diverse and exquisite sense-objects.” This refers to our experience of the “external” world in a non-technical (that is, general) sense. It is helpful to distinguish here two kinds of “external” objects: physical objects and mental objects. The unawakened person, as a rule, sees only “mental images” (*ārammaṇa*) or “formations” (*saṅkhārā*) of the physical world.

(2) In the case of the Buddha and the arhats, their minds, too, “form” images of the physical world. However, such a formation (abstract singular *saṅkhāra*) is a kind of “photo-perfect” vision of what is really out there. In other words, unlike the unawakened (who tend to project their preconstructed images onto the world outside), the arhats see things as they really are. Hence, the arhats do not cling to any sense-objects, since they know them to be impermanent, unsatisfactory and without any essence (non-self).

¹⁷ In the suttas, *ārammaṇa* has a non-technical or general sense of “support” (Sn 945c, 506c, 1069c), or “basis” for rebirth (Sn 474c), for consciousness (S 2:65,16 f; 3:53,21+25, 55,16 +21). In Abhidhamma, later works and comys, it tends to be a tt for “sense-object” (Vbh 319,18 f, 332,20) or “meditation object” (Vism 3.102, 23.10).

¹⁸ On the preconscious, see SD 17.8b esp (1.1.2; 2.2); SD 7.10 (3.3).

¹⁹ See 8.3 (3).

(3) The arhats, including the Buddha, are able to respond wholesomely towards any kind of sense-stimuli (including mental stimuli, that is, thoughts) because they are overcome all self-views, which means that they are free from craving and clinging. They experience a sense-object on the body level, just the way we do. Such experiences, as it were, remains on the body level without affecting the arhat's mind, as explained in **the Sall'atthana Sutta** (S 36.6).²⁰

The arhat's mind is lust-free; hence, he is without desire for anything, even "the wondrous in the world." He is the true renunciant—he has removed all desire for the world, and has left the world where it is. He may be *in* the world—for our benefit—but he is no more *of* the world. He does not identify himself with the world (*atam, mayatā*).²¹

In short, the arhats only enjoy the objects (*vatthu, kāma*) without any defiling desires (*kilesa, kāma*).

2.2.2.6 [Line e] "So here the wise remove desire (for them)" (*ath'ettha dhīrā vinayanti chandan'ti*):

(1) The Commentary, explaining the phrase "so here the wise," says, "Here then the wise removes lust and desire in the sense-objects" (*ath'ettha dhīrā'ti atha etesu ārammaṇesu paññitā chanda, rāgaṃ vinayanti*, SA 1:63). In other words, "here" refers to "in the mind." The problem is not with the world—"there are no sensual pleasures in the wondrous in the world," it is our mind that is filled with desire: "The thought of lust is a person's desire." Hence, we need to remove desire for the world.

(2) Now that we have examined all the lines of the "*kāma* verse," we can better understand what its preceding prose line—one of the most enigmatic statements in the early canon—means, when the Buddha declares: "**These are not sensual objects**, but in the noble discipline, they are called '**the cords of sensual pleasures**.'" [§3.3]

In the suttas, sense-objects (*kāmā*) are called "the cords of sensual pleasure" (*kāma, guṇa*) because we make them so in our minds. We "desire" (*kāmeti*) them; we accumulate them: we make a "pile" and proliferation (*guṇa*) of them—so that they become a "cord" (*guṇa*) that binds and plays with us. When the enemy is named, it is known—we are in a better position to defend, strengthen and free ourselves.²²

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Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) Sutta The Discourse on (the Exposition on) Penetrating Insight

A 6.63

[410]

1 "Bhikshus, I shall teach you a Dharma exposition on penetrating insight. Listen to it, pay careful attention, I will speak."

"Yes, bhante!" the monks answered the Blessed One in assent.

The Blessed One said this:

²⁰ S 36.6,7-11 (SD 5.5); SD 48.9 (6.2.5); SD 51.14 (3.2.3).

²¹ See *Atam, mayatā*, SD 19.13.

²² See *Kāma, guṇa* S (S 45.176/5:60). Further see **Mine: The nature of craving**, SD 19.3 (1.2).

Synopsis

2 “And what, bhikshus, is this Dharma exposition on penetrating insight?”

Sensual desire , bhikshus,	should be known.	<i>kāma</i> ²³
<u>The source for the arising</u> of sensual desire	should be known.	<i>nidāna,sambhava</i> ²⁴
<u>The diversity</u> of sensual desire	should be known.	<i>vemattatā</i> ²⁵
<u>The result</u> of sensual desire	should be known.	<i>vipāka</i>
<u>The cessation</u> of sensual desire	should be known.	<i>nirodho</i>
<u>The way to the cessation</u> of sensual desire	should be known.	<i>nirodha,gāmini,paṭipadā</i>
2.2 Feelings (<i>vedanā</i>), bhikshus,	should be known.	
The source for the arising of feelings	should be known.	
The diversity of feelings	should be known.	
The result of feelings	should be known.	
The cessation of feelings	should be known.	
The way to the cessation of feelings	should be known.	
2.3 Perception (<i>saññā</i>), bhikshus,	should be known.	
The source for the arising of perceptions	should be known.	
The diversity of perceptions	should be known.	
The result of perceptions	should be known.	
The cessation of perceptions	should be known.	
The way to the cessation of perceptions	should be known.	
2.4 The mental influxes (<i>āsava</i>), bhikshus,	should be known.	
The source for the arising of mental influxes	should be known.	
The diversity of mental influxes	should be known.	
The result of mental influxes	should be known.	
The cessation of mental influxes	should be known.	
The way to the cessation of mental influxes	should be known.	
2.5 Karma (<i>kamma</i>), bhikshus,	should be known.	
The source for the arising of karma	should be known.	
The diversity of karma	should be known.	
The result of karma	should be known.	
The cessation of karma	should be known.	
The way to the cessation of karma	should be known.	
2.6 Suffering (<i>dukkha</i>), bhikshus,	should be known.	
The source for the arising of suffering	should be known.	
The diversity of suffering	should be known.	
The result of suffering	should be known.	
The cessation of suffering	should be known.	
The way to the cessation of suffering	should be known.	

²³ See n on §3.

²⁴ “Origin,” *nidāna,sambhavo*. I follow Comy: *nidānam eva sambhavo* (AA 3:406).

²⁵ See UA 176; DhsA 369 = DhsA:PR 292; Abhs:SR 476.

Sensual desires

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| <p>3 (1) Sensual desires (<i>kāmā</i>),²⁶ bhikshus,
The source for the arising of <i>sensual desires</i>
The diversity of <i>sensual desires</i>
The result of <i>sensual desires</i> [411]
The cessation of <i>sensual desires</i>
The way to the cessation of <i>sensual desires</i>
—so it is said, but in what connection is this said?</p> | <p>should be known;
should be known.
should be known.
should be known.
should be known.
should be known.</p> |
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The 5 cords of sensual pleasures

- 3.2 There are these **5 cords of sensual pleasures** (*kāma, guṇa*):
- forms cognizable by the eye,
desirable, attractive, pleasant, endearing, associated with sensual desires, delightful;²⁷
- sounds cognizable by the ear,
desirable, attractive, pleasant, endearing, associated with sensual desires, delightful;
- smells cognizable by the nose,
desirable, attractive, pleasant, endearing, associated with sensual desires, delightful;
- tastes cognizable by the tongue,
desirable, attractive, pleasant, endearing, associated with sensual desires, delightful;
- touches cognizable by the body,
desirable, attractive, pleasant, endearing, associated with sensual desires, delightful.

The *kāma* verse

- 3.3 Bhikshus, **these are not sensual objects (*kāma*)**, but in the noble discipline, they are called ‘**the cords of sensual pleasures.**’²⁸ [2.2.2.6(2)]

²⁶ “Sensual desires,” *kāmā*. The Pali reads: *Kāmā bhikkhave veditabbā*. On the difficulty of tr *kāma* here, see (2).

²⁷ *Cakkhu, viññeyyā rūpā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piya, rūpā kāmūpasamhitā rajaniyā*. The usual tr we see have the disjunctive “that are” before “desirable” throughout, implying that only “desirable, etc” sense-objects are meant. However, when the adjs *iṭṭhā*, etc, follow the noun rather than precede it in all the 6 sentences, they function as a nexus (connector), ie, they qualify the respective nouns, and emphasizing them: see A K Warder, *Introduction to Pali*, 2nd ed, 1974:61. This tr also refutes the wrong view that in dhyana (said to be “detached from sensual pleasures,” *vivicc’eva kāmehi*, D 22,21/2:313 f, M 141,31/3:252), “neutral feelings” still remain. This view is curious because it is clear that in the 1st dhyana, there are “zest and joy” (*pīti, sukha*), which make it impossible for any neutral feeling to be felt at that time: see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15), which says that only one feeling (pleasant, painful, or neutral) is experienced at a time (D 15,28/2:66), SD 5.17. (I thank Sylvester LAM Cheng Poh of Singapore for drawing my attention to this interesting point.)

²⁸ *Api ca kho bhikkhave n’ete kāmā, kāma, guṇā nam’ete ariyassa vinaye vuccanti*. This is an enigmatic statement whose meaning is clarified in the verse that follows; see foll n. The apparent confusion in terminology is only apparent when we understand the nature of polysemy of Pali terms [2.1.2]: SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2). On the “cords of sensual desire” (*kāma, guṇa*), see **Kāma, guṇa S** (S 35.117), SD 88.6, & **Kāma-c, chanda**, SD 32.2 (2.3).

3.4²⁹

*Saṅkappa,rāgo purisassa kāmo
n'ete kāmā yāni citrāni loke
saṅkappa,rāgo purisassa kāmo
tiṭṭhanti citrāni tath'eva loke
ath'ettha dhīrā vinayanti chandan'ti*

The thought of lust³⁰ is a person's desire:³¹
there are no sensual pleasures in the wondrous³² in this world.
The thought of lust is a person's desire.
The wondrous³³ in the world remain just as they are.
So here³⁴ the wise remove desire (for them).³⁵ [2.2.2]

The cycle of sensual desires

4 And what, bhikshus, is **the source for the arising of sensual desires** (*kāmānaṃ nidāna,sambhavo*)?
Contact (*phassa*),³⁶ bhikshus, is the source for the arising of sensual desires.

4.2 And what, bhikshus, is **the diversity of sensual desires** (*kāmānaṃ vemattatā*)?

One desires for visual forms;
another desires for sounds;
another desires for smells;
another desires for tastes;
another desires for touches.

—This, bhikshus, is called the diversity of sensual desires.

4.3 And what, bhikshus, is **the result of sensual desires** (*kāmānaṃ vipāko*)?

Bhikshus, one having sensual desires is reborn as an individual into this or that existence depending on what constitutes merit or on what constitutes demerit.³⁷

—This, bhikshus, is called the result of sensual desires.

4.4 And what, bhikshus, is **the cessation of sensual desires** (*kāma,nirodho*)?

The cessation of contact (*phassa,nirodha*), bhikshus, is the cessation of sensual desires. It is this noble eightfold path that is the way to the cessation of sensual desires, that is to say:

right view,
right thought,
right speech,
right **[412]** action,

²⁹ This verse recurs as S 104 in **Na Santi S** (S 1.34,6/1:22), SD 42.6, except for line a which is omitted and which reads *na te* for *n'ete*). The **A 6.63** verse is qu at Kvu 370; NmA 1:12. Comys however qu the verse **S 104**: SA 1:63×2, which attr it to comy on **Pasūra S**, Sn 830 (or one of its verses): SnA 2:539; AA 2:41. Cf Tha 674.

³⁰ On *saṅkappa,rāga*, “thought of lust” or “lustful intention,” see (2.2.2.4).

³¹ *Saṅkappa,rāgo purisassa kāmo*. Be Ce Ee Se all give the same 5-line stanza. It recurs in **Na Santi S** (S 1.34), SD 42.6 without line a. Here [§3.4] the stress is in our own thinking or intention, while in S 1.34, it is on the nature of the world. Note how line a flows into b, and line c into d. Line e points to what should be done.

³² “Diversely beautiful,” *citra* [2.2.2.3].

³³ Note that “the diversely beautiful” (*citrāni*) is plural.

³⁴ “So here the wise” (*ath'ettha dhīrā'ti atha etesu ārammaṇesu paṇḍitā chanda,rāgaṃ vinayanti*, “here then the wise removes lust and desire in the sense-objects,” SA 1:63). In other words, “here” refers to our minds.

³⁵ On the verse's significance, see (2.2.2.1(2)).

³⁶ “Contact,” *phassa*. Comy: “Contact arisen simultaneously” (*sahajāta,phassa*) (AA 3:406), ie, the coming together of consciousness and the sense-object through the sense-faculty: the “triangle of experience” or “perceptual triad.”

³⁷ *Yaṃ kho bhikkhave kāmayamāno* [vl *kamaṃ vediyamāno*] *tajjaṃ tajjaṃ attabhāvaṃ abhinibbatteti puñña,-bhāgiyaṃ vā apuñña,bhāgiyaṃ vā*.

right livelihood,
right effort,
right concentration,
right mindfulness.

4.5 Bhikshus, when the noble disciple knows sensual desires thus,
when he knows the source for the arising of sensual desires thus,
when he knows the diversity of sensual desires thus,
when he knows the result of sensual desires thus,
when he knows the cessation of sensual desires thus,
when he knows the way to the cessation of sensual desires thus,
that noble disciple knows this holy life of penetrating insight³⁸ as the cessation of sensual desires.³⁹

4.6 *Sensual desires, bhikshus, should be known;*
The source for the arising of sensual desires should be known;
The diversity of sensual desires should be known;
The result of sensual desires should be known;
The cessation of sensual desires should be known;
The way to the cessation of sensual desires should be known.

—So it is said: it is in this connection that this is said.

Feelings

5 (2) **Feelings** (*vedanā*), bhikshus, should be known;
The source for the arising of *feelings* should be known.
The diversity of *feelings* should be known.
The result of *feelings* should be known.
The cessation of *feelings* should be known.
The way to the cessation of *feelings* should be known.

—So it is said, but in what connection is this said?

5.2 Bhikshus, there are these 3 kinds of feeling:

Pleasant feelings;
Unpleasant feelings;
Neutral feelings.⁴⁰

6 And what, bhikshus, is **the source for the arising of feelings**?

Contact, bhikshus, is the source for the arising of feelings.

6.2 And what, bhikshus, is **the diversity of feelings**?⁴¹

Bhikshus,

³⁸ “Holy life of penetrating insight,” *nibbedhikharṃ brahmacāriyārṃ*. Comy: The holy life here is the supramundane path (streamwinning, etc).

³⁹ “Cessation of sensual desires,” *kāma,nirodha*.

⁴⁰ “Neutral feelings,” ie, feelings that are neither painful or pleasurable. “Feeling” (*vedanā*) here has the sense of “experience,” as when we say “I feel good” or “I feel nothing.” As such it makes sense here to say “neutral feeling.” On how ignorance arises from neutral feelings, see **Sall’atthēna S** (S 36.6,8.5), SD 5.5.

⁴¹ Cf the feelings as defined in **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,32/1:59), SD 13.3.

there is	pleasant	sensual [carnal]	feeling; ⁴²
There is	pleasant	non-sensual [spiritual]	feeling; ⁴³
There is	painful	sensual	feeling;
There is	painful	non-sensual	feeling.
There is	neutral	sensual	feeling;
There is	neutral	non-sensual	feeling.

—This, bhikshus, is called the diversity of feelings.

6.3 And what, bhikshus, is **the result of feelings**.

Bhikshus, one who feels is reborn as an individual into this or that existence depending on one's merit or on one's demerit

—This, bhikshus, is called the result of feelings.

6.4 And what, bhikshus, is **the cessation of feelings**.

The cessation of contact, bhikshus, is the cessation of feelings. It is this noble eightfold path that is the way to the cessation of feelings, that is to say:

right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness.

6.5 Bhikshus, when the noble disciple knows feelings thus,
 when he knows the source for the arising of feelings thus,
 when he knows **[413]** the diversity of feelings thus,
 when he knows the result of feelings thus,
 when he knows the cessation of feelings thus,
 when he knows the way to the cessation of feelings thus,
 that noble disciple knows this holy life of penetrating insight as the cessation of feelings.

6.6 <i>Feelings, bhikshus,</i>	<i>should be known.</i>
<i>The source for the arising of feelings</i>	<i>should be known.</i>
<i>The diversity of feelings</i>	<i>should be known.</i>
<i>The result of feelings</i>	<i>should be known.</i>
<i>The cessation of feelings</i>	<i>should be known.</i>
<i>The way to the cessation of feelings</i>	<i>should be known.</i>

—So it is said: it is in this connection that this is said.

Perception

7 (3) **Perception (saññā)**, bhikshus, should be known;

The source for the arising of *perceptions* should be known;

The diversity of *perceptions* should be known;

⁴² *S'āmisaṃ sukhaṃ vedanaṃ. S'āmisa = sa-āmisa, "sensual," lit "with flesh" thus connoting some sense of the carnal, ie, connected to the pleasures of the 5 senses (kāma,guṇā) (S 4:235, 236).*

⁴³ *Nirāmisaṃ sukhaṃ vedanaṃ. Here nirāmisa means "non-sensual," "non-carnal" or "spiritual," which according to Comy refers to the 6 joyful feelings connected with the sense-doors, but not dependent on sense-desire (MA 1:279). In **Saḷ'āyatana, vibhaṅga S** (M 137), *s'āmisa* and *nirāmisa* refer to the household life and to the renounced life respectively. Elsewhere, as in **Suddhika Nirāmisa S** (S 36.29), *nirāmisa pīti*, *nirāmisa sukha* and *nirāmisa upek-khā* are experienced in the dhyanas (S 36.29,8-15/4:236 f). See D 2:298; M 1:59; S 4:235, 236 (x2); A 1:81, 3:412; Pm 2:233. See also Sue Hamilton, *Identity and Experience*, 1996:43 f.*

The result of *perceptions* should be known;
 The cessation of *perceptions* should be known;
 The way to the cessation of *perceptions* should be known.

—So it is said, but in what connection is this said?

7.2 Bhikshus, there are these 6 kinds of perception:

The perception of form;
 The perception of sound;
 The perception of smell;
 The perception of taste;
 The perception of touch;
 The perception of thought.

8 And what, bhikshus, is **the source for the arising of perceptions**?

Contact, bhikshus, is the source for the arising of perceptions.

8.2 And what, bhikshus, is **the diversity of perceptions**?

One perceives visual forms;
 another perceives sounds;
 another perceives smells;
 another perceives tastes;
 another perceives touches.

—This, bhikshus, is called the diversity of perceptions.

8.3 And what, bhikshus, is **the result of perceptions**?

Perceptions, bhikshus, result in conventional speech (*vohāra*), I say!

What one perceives, one expresses in conventional terms (*viharati*), saying, ‘I perceived it so!’

—This, bhikshus, is the result of perceptions.

8.4 And what, bhikshus, is **the cessation of perceptions**?

The cessation of contact, bhikshus, is the cessation of perceptions. It is this noble eightfold path that is the way to the cessation of perceptions, that is to say:

right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness.

8.5 Bhikshus, when the noble disciple knows perceptions	thus,
when he knows the source for the arising of perceptions	thus,
when he knows [414] the diversity of perceptions	thus,
when he knows the result of perceptions	thus,
when he knows the cessation of perceptions	thus,
when he knows the way to the cessation of perceptions	thus,

that noble disciple knows this **holy life of penetrating insight** as the cessation of perceptions.

8.6 <i>Perceptions, bhikshus,</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The source for the arising of perceptions</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The diversity of perceptions</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The result of perceptions</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The cessation of perceptions</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The way to the cessation of perceptions</i>	<i>should be known.</i>

—So it is said: it is in this connection that this is said.

Mental influxes

9 (4) **The mental influxes** (*āsava*), bhikshus, should be known;

The source for the arising of *mental influxes* should be known;

The diversity of *mental influxes* should be known;

The result of *mental influxes* should be known;

The cessation of *mental influxes* should be known;

The way to the cessation of *mental influxes* should be known.

—So it is said, but in what connection is this said?

9.2 Bhikshus, there are these 3 kinds of mental influxes:⁴⁴

The mental influxes of sensuality.

kām'āsava

The mental influxes of existence.

bhav'āsava

The mental influxes of ignorance.

avijj'āsava

10 And what, bhikshus, is **the source for the arising of mental influxes**?

Ignorance, bhikshus, is the source for the arising of mental influxes.⁴⁵

10.2 And what, bhikshus, is **the diversity of mental influxes**?⁴⁶

There are mental influxes that lead one on to the hells.

niraya

There are mental influxes that lead one on to the animal kingdom.

tiracchāna, yoni

There are mental influxes that lead one on to the ghost realm.

*pitti, visaya*⁴⁷

There are mental influxes that lead one on to the human world.

manussa, loka

There are mental influxes that lead one on to the heavenly world.

deva, loka

—This, bhikshus, is called the diversity of mental influxes.

10.3 And what, bhikshus, is **the result of mental influxes**?

Bhikshus, one guided by ignorance (*avijjā*) is reborn as an individual into this or that existence depending on one's merit or on one's demerit.

—This, bhikshus, is called the result of mental influxes.

10.4 And what, bhikshus, is **the cessation of mental influxes**?

The cessation of ignorance, bhikshus, is the cessation of mental influxes. It is this noble eightfold path that is the way to the cessation of mental influxes, that is to say:

⁴⁴ "Three kinds of mental influxes" (D 33/3:216; M 2/1:55, 9/3:41; S 4:256=5:56=189; A 3.59/3:414, 67, 6.63; Vbh 347). A later formula adds a fourth mental influx, that of "view" (*diṭṭh'āsava*) as the 3rd influx (V 3:5; D 2:81 = 84; A 1:241; Vbh 373). The 4 mental influxes are also known as "floods" (*ogha*, D 3:230; UA 362) and as "yokes" (*yoga*, D 3:230, 276; A 2:10).

⁴⁵ **Sammā, diṭṭhi S** (M 9) says that mental influxes (incl ignorance) are the cause of ignorance (M 9,67/ 1:54), and ignorance is the cause of mental influxes (M 9.70/1:55). Comy explains that this conditioning of ignorance by ignorance should be understood to mean that the ignorance in any existence is conditioned by the existence in the preceding existence. "Having shown this, (it follows that) no point of ignorance can be discovered, and as such this cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*) has no discernible beginning." (MA 1:224). See Ñāṇamoli (tr) 1991:22, 67.

⁴⁶ U Comy gives this as an example of influxes in terms of the 5 realms, summarized thus: (1) karmic defilement (*kamma, kilesa*) (**Pāsādika S**, D 29,22; **Pāda Doṇa S**, A 4.36,4); (2) defilements present and of future states (V 3:21,-19); (3) sense-desires, existence and ignorance (**Ti Āsava S**, S 38.8); (4) Abhidhamma: these 2 + views [below]; (5) conducive to the 5 realms (**Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) S**, A 6.63,10.2); (6) to be abandoned through the 6 sense-restraints (**Chakka Āsava S**, A 6.58); (7) abandoned in 7 ways (**Sabb'āsava S**, M 2,4). (UA 176 f).

⁴⁷ *Pitti, visāya*, also tr as "realm of the departed. See **Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 10.177), SD 2.6

right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness.

10.5 Bhikshus, when the noble disciple knows mental influxes thus,
 when he knows the source for the arising of mental influxes thus,
 when he knows the diversity of mental influxes thus,
 when he knows the result of mental influxes thus,
 when he knows the cessation of mental influxes thus,
 when he knows the way to the cessation of mental influxes thus,
 that noble disciple knows this holy life of penetrating insight as the cessation of mental influxes. [415]

10.6 *Mental influxes, bhikshus, should be known;*
The source for the arising of mental influxes should be known;
The diversity of mental influxes should be known;
The result of mental influxes should be known;
The cessation of mental influxes should be known;
The way to the cessation of mental influxes should be known.
 —So it is said: it is in this connection that this is said.

Karma

11 (5) **Karma** (*kamma*), bhikshus, should be known;
 The source for the arising of *karma* should be known;
 The diversity of *karma* should be known;
 The result of *karma* should be known;
 The cessation of *karma* should be known;
 The way to the cessation of *karma* should be known.

—So it is said, but in what connection is this said?

11.2 Bhikshus, intention is karma, I say! Having intended, one creates karma through the body, through speech, and through the mind.⁴⁸

12 And what, bhikshus, is **the source for the arising of karma?**

Contact, bhikshus, is the source for the arising of karma.

12.2 And what, bhikshus, is **the diversity of karma?**

There are karma⁴⁹ that would be experienced⁵⁰ in the hells.
 There are karma that would be experienced in the animal kingdom.

⁴⁸ As at Kvu 392. This famous statement is often misunderstood. “The Buddha’s utterance does not establish a mathematical equivalence between *cetanā* and *kamma*, such that every instance of volition must be considered *kamma*. As the second part of his statement shows, his words mean that *cetanā* is the decisive factor in action, that which motivates action and confers upon action the ethical significance intrinsic to the idea of *kamma*. This implies that the ethical evaluation of a deed is to be based on the *cetanā* from which it springs, so that a deed has no kammic efficacy apart from the *cetanā* to which it gives expression. The statement does not imply that *cetanā* (in the non-arahant) is always and invariably *kamma*.” (Bodhi 1998:§23/p25 digital ed). Cf **Cetanā Ss 1-3** (S 12.38/-2:65-67), SD 7.6abc.

⁴⁹ I’ve taken “karma” as an uncountable noun here. Alt tr: “karmic acts.”

⁵⁰ “That would be experienced,” *vedanīyaṃ*, participle of fut passive of *vidati* or *vindati*, “he knows” (DPL), but better, foll PED, as *vediyati*, “he feels, experiences” (S 4:114; A 1:249, 4:382).

There are karma that would be experienced in	the ghost realms.
There are karma that would be experienced in	the human world.
There are karma that would be experienced in	the heavenly world.

—This, bhikshus, is called the diversity of karma.

12.3 And what, bhikshus, is **the result of karma**?

There are, bhikshus, these 3 kinds of karmic results,⁵¹ I say!

Those that arise [ripen] here and now, or in the next life, or in a subsequent life.

—This, bhikshus, is called the result of karma.

12.4 And what, bhikshus, is **the cessation of karma**?

The cessation of contact, bhikshus, is the cessation of karma. It is this noble eightfold path that is the way to the cessation of karma, that is to say:

right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness.

12.5 Bhikshus, when the noble disciple knows karma	thus,
when he knows the source for the arising of karma	thus,
when he knows the diversity of karma	thus,
when he knows the result of karma	thus,
when he knows the cessation of karma	thus,
when he knows the way to the cessation of karma	thus,

that noble disciple knows this holy life of penetrating insight as the cessation of karma.

12.6 <i>Karma, bhikshus,</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The source for the arising of karma</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The diversity of karma</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The result of karma</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The cessation of karma</i>	<i>should be known; [416]</i>
<i>The way to the cessation of karma</i>	<i>should be known.</i>

—So it is said: it is in this connection that this is said.

Suffering

13 (6) Suffering (<i>dukkha</i>), bhikshus,	should be known;
The source for the arising of <i>suffering</i>	should be known;
The diversity of <i>suffering</i>	should be known;
The result of <i>suffering</i>	should be known;
The cessation of <i>suffering</i>	should be known;
The way to the cessation of <i>suffering</i>	should be known.

⁵¹ “3 kinds of karmic results,” see **(Kamma) Nidāna S** (A 3.33/1:134-136) on causes and kinds of karma. See **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136.17-21) tr in Sutta Discovery series 2004. See also **Visuddhi, magga** where these 3 types of karma are respectively named as *diṭṭha, dhamma vedanīya kamma, upapajja, vedanīya kamma* and *apara, pariya-ya vedanīya kamma*—and a fourth, *ahosi kamma*, lapsed or ineffectual karma (Vism 19.14/601). The first two kinds of karma may be without karmic result if the circumstances required for their ripening are missing, or because of the presence of a stronger counteractive karma; as such, they are called *ahosi, kamma*: cf **Loṇa, phala S** (A 3.99/-1:249-253), SD 3.5. See Vism:Ñ 19.14/696 n2.

13.2 —So it is said, but in what connection is this said?

Birth is suffering,
 decay⁵² is suffering,
 disease is suffering,⁵³
 death is suffering;
 grief, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair are suffering;
 to be with the unpleasant is suffering;
 to be without the pleasant is suffering;
 not to get what one desires is suffering;
 —in short, the 5 aggregates of clinging⁵⁴ are suffering.

13.3 And what, bhikshus, is **the source for the arising of suffering**?
Craving (taṇhā), bhikshus is the source for the arising of suffering.

13.4 And what, bhikshus, is **the diversity of suffering**?

There is suffering that is	excessive.	<i>adhimatta</i>
There is suffering that is	small [of no account].	<i>paritta</i>
There is suffering that	fades away slowly.	<i>dandha, virāgi</i> ⁵⁵
There is suffering that	fades away quickly.	<i>hippa, virāgi</i> ⁵⁶

—This, bhikshus, is called the diversity of suffering.

13.5 And what, bhikshus, is **the result of suffering**?

Here, bhikshus, there is one who is overwhelmed by suffering, his mind overcome by suffering: he grieves, moans, laments, beats his breast, weeps, becomes confused.

Or, there is one who although overwhelmed by suffering, his mind overcome by suffering, but is one who searches outside, asking, ‘Who knows a way or two to end this suffering?’⁵⁷

The result of suffering, bhikshus, is either confusion or search, I say!

—This, bhikshus, is called the result of suffering.

13.6 And what, bhikshus, is **the cessation of suffering**?

The cessation of craving, bhikshus, is the cessation of suffering. It is this noble eightfold path that is the way to the cessation of suffering, that is to say:

right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness.

13.7 Bhikshus, when the noble disciple knows suffering thus,

when he knows	the source for the arising of suffering	thus,
when he knows	the diversity of suffering	thus,
when he knows	the result of suffering	thus,
when he knows	the cessation of suffering	thus,

⁵² *jarā*, old age, aging.

⁵³ Only here & in the Vinaya version; not mentioned in Comys.

⁵⁴ *pañc’upadāna-k, khandha*, namely, form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness (S 3:47; Vbh 1).

⁵⁵ Cf Comy which notes that “the eternalist view” (*sassata dassana*) is of little fault but slow to fade away (*appa,-sāvajjaṃ dandha, virāgaṃ*) (MA 3:206).

⁵⁶ Cf Comy which notes that “the annihilationist view” (*uccheda dassana*) is of great fault but quick to fade away (*mahā, sāvajjaṃ hippa, virāgaṃ*) (MA 3:206).

⁵⁷ This is clearly an allusion to Kisā Gotamī and her dead child: SD 43.2d.

when he knows the way to the cessation of suffering thus,
that noble disciple knows this holy life of penetrating insight as the cessation of suffering.

13.8 <i>Suffering, bhikshus,</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The source for the arising of suffering</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The diversity of suffering</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The result of suffering</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The cessation of suffering</i>	<i>should be known;</i>
<i>The way to the cessation of suffering</i>	<i>should be known.</i>

—So it is said: it is in this connection that this is said.

This, indeed, bhikshus, is the Dharma exposition on penetrating insight.”

— evaṃ —

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