

60.4

Go,datta Sutta

The Discourse to Go,datta | S 41.7

Theme: Citta the houselord's teachings on the liberations of mind

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2009, 2016, 2023

1 Introduction

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

The **Go,datta Sutta** (S 41.7) is a conversation between the monk Go,datta and the lay disciple Citta Gaha,pati (the houselord) at the latter's wild mango grove outside Macchikāsanda. Go,datta asks Citta about 4 different kinds of liberations of the mind (*ceto,vimutti*):

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|---|-------------------------------|
| (1) the immeasurable liberation of mind | <i>appamānā ceto,vimutti,</i> |
| (2) the liberation of mind by nothingness | <i>ākiñcaññā cetovimutti,</i> |
| (3) the liberation of mind by voidness | <i>suññatā ceto,vimutti,</i> |
| (4) the signless liberation of mind | <i>animittā ceto,vimutti.</i> |

Citta explains that, depending on their application (*pariyāya*), they can be seen as being diverse both in spirit and in the letter; or as being the same in spirit, only diverse in the letter. Broadly, this teaching reminds us to keep an open mind when teaching Dharma and not to be held back by the text or theory. Our deep experience and clear understanding of them will show their context and import.

1.2 SUTTA NOTES

1.2.1 *Pariyāya* and context

1.2.1.1 This Sutta conversation recorded below is reprised in **the Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43), with Sāriputta and Mahā Koṭṭhita as the speakers.¹ This overlapping of passages is valuable information, hinting to us how the Dharma is transmitted amongst the sangha members and lay disciples. It shows that the Dharma is openly taught to both renunciants and laity, in so far as they are willing and able to receive it. It's also the same Dharma to the awakened and those on the path: the awakened have attained it, the path saints see it ever clearer as they progress up the path.

1.2.1.2 In terms of teaching and practice, the keyword of the Go,datta Sutta is ***pariyāya***, “way, method, reason” [§3]; elsewhere, it can also mean “presentation, interpretation; metaphor, figure of speech.” As an adverb, *pariyāyena* has the sense of “relatively, figuratively, contextually.” In other words, it is richly polysemic and its proper usage should be teased out from the context. *Pariyāyena* thus overlaps in some ways with “skillful means” (*upāya*). Both *pariyāya* and *upāya* share the sense of using or practising the Dharma in a manner that suits and helps our personality and difficulties.

1.2.1.3 The first half of the Sutta [§§3-9] explains the meaning of ***pariyāya***, which is vital in helping us see how the “spirit” (***attha***) and the “letter” (***vyañjana***) [§3 *passim*] are related. In simple terms, “**the letter**” is what preserves the teaching in a manner so that “**the spirit**,” that is, the meaning, can be realized through our practice. The unawakened tends to see merely “the letter,” that is, the texts or teachings, as *fixed and external*, even as dead artefacts applying only to the past and to a special group of peo-

¹ M 43,30-37/1:297,9-298,27 (SD 30.2).

ple, the way some academics see Buddhism. The wise and the awakened, especially the arhats, see the letter (the texts and teachings) as tools and signs pointing to our experience of the true reality, and taste the joy of its freedom (liberation).

When we lack wisdom, we see the teachings and methods as “different in meaning, different in phrasing” (*nān’atthā c’eva nānā,vyañjanā ca*). In a positive sense, it means that when we look carefully, even by trial and error, we will learn which method helps us to progress in our understanding of the teaching. As a rule, we need to start with the letter (the text and teaching)—like reading the instructions and signs—in order to get the method and practice right. We may even have to adjust ourselves to the method or even adjust the method, or use more than one method. This is the meaning of the Buddha’s admonition: “There’s more to be done here” (*atthi c’ev’ettha uttariṃ karaṇīyam*)² by the unawakened.

1.2.1.4 In the closing half of the Sutta [§§10-16], it explains how, upon awakening, we see that the different liberations are the same, though the methods *differ*. We are then told what causes the differences in us (our minds). The Sutta speaks of 3 kinds of “differentiators”:

The 1st kind of differentiator is the **measuring** (*pamāṇa*) created or projected by the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala mūla*)—greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) [§11]. Greed measures by way of “have” and “have not”: we tend to want or lust for things we think we do *not* have. The most powerful force in this lusting is self-view: “I must have; I want my own; this is mine” Hatred measures by way of “same” and “different” in terms of *equal, inferior and superior*. We tend to feel safe with those we see (measure) as “equals”; we want the attention and approval of those we see as “superior”; and we tend to reject and hate those we see as “inferior.” Delusion has the wrong view that when something is measurable, we can control and have it: it is “something” (*kiñcana*). In these ways, the roots are the “**makers of measures.**” [§13]

Thus, the 2nd kind of differentiator is the notion that there is “**something**” (*kiñcana*). According to the Sutta, “lust creates *something*, hatred creates *something*, delusion creates *something*.” [§13]. When we are lustful, we want *something*; when we are hateful, we reject *something*; when we are deluded, we imagine *something*. Here “something” is our own mental projection *rooted* in lust, hatred or delusion.

1.2.1.5 We can also say that “something” is any or the sum of formations (*saṅkhārā*) that is the virtual reality that is our world; or that “something” is any of, or the sum of, our karmic formations (*abhi-saṅkhārā*): bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions. We have made “something” of all these that are of the nature *to change, become other, to cease*, and are *without any essence*. More simply, we have made *something* out of nothing, and failed to see **the not-thing** (*akiñcana*).³

The more familiar term for this is the well known, **not-thatness** (*atammayatā*): basically, it means not making something out of nothing (as ironically in theistic dogma!). When we do not identify with anything, then we have mastered “everything.” Paul Williams, a professional Mahāyāna specialist of 30 years, gave up Mahāyāna and returned to Christianity. He actually started off with Anglicanism; then studied Mahāyāna, took refuge with the Tibetans, claimed to give up “Buddhism,” and then turned to

² (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,1.31 + passim), SD 40a.13; **Assa,pura S** (M 39,3.5/1:271), SD 10.13; (**Gaha,pati**) **Potaliya S** (M 54,14), SD 43.8; **Sevitabbāsevitabba S** (M 114); SD 39.8 (1.1.1.8); SD 51.17 (3.4.2.5).

³ Paul Williams, a professional Mahāyāna specialist of 30 years, gave up Mahāyāna and returned to Christianity. He actually started off with Anglicanism; then studied Mahāyāna, took refuge with the Tibetans, claimed to give up “Buddhism,” and then turned to Catholicism. In his book, *The Unexpected Way: on converting from Buddhism to Catholicism* (T & T Clark, 2002), Williams argues ontologically for his God-belief asking: *why is there something rather than nothing?* (27-40). You have actually made “something” of Mahāyāna, but have not tasted the “not-thing” (*akiñcana*) of early Buddhism, the “not-thatness,” **atam,mayatā**: SD 19.13. How can you ever give up something that you have not?

Catholicism. In his book, *The Unexpected Way: on converting from Buddhism to Catholicism* (T & T Clark, 2002), Williams argues ontologically for his God-belief asking: *why is there something rather than nothing?* (27-40). One suspects that he tried to make “something” of Mahāyāna but could not. The next best option must surely be The Great Bug Something, a childhood companion, now grown more formidable with age. Not having seen or tasted the “not-thing” (*akiñcana*) of early Buddhism, the “not-thatness,” *atam,mayatā* (SD 19.13), we must thus fall back on that *Something* we were raised on yet unweaned. How then can we ever give up something that we have not?

1.2.1.5 The 3rd kind of differentiator is the idea of **signs** (*nimitta*). Again, lust creates *a sign*, hatred creates *a sign*, delusion creates *a sign* [§15]. Here a “sign” refers to *something* that we have made out of nothing. In fact, wherever our mind rests, that spot is *a sign*: the mind does not really “rest” there (it is not still). It is really an anchor for lust, hatred or delusion. Hence, in meditation, we must ensure that its sign is not an anchor for any of these roots. In fact, when the mind is truly and fully still, concentrated (as in dhyana), it is without any sign.

Now **voidness** (*suññatā*) is a broad term for the absence of measures, something and signs; hence, it is not taken separately. It is found in all the 3 liberations—the immeasurable, the “thingless,” and the signless: it is empty of lust, hatred and delusion. This is a way of talking about the liberated mind, when the mind is fully awakened or when it is merely having a taste of that awakening.

1.2.2 The 4 immeasurables (brahma,vihara)

1.2.2.1 The whole of §4, on the immeasurable liberation of mind (*appamāṇa ceto,vimutti*), is a stock passage on the 4 divine abodes. It is a pericope found in, for example, the following suttas:

- **Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda Sutta** (D 26,31/3:78), SD 36.10, says that it is “the wealth for a monk (*bhikkhuno bhogasmiṃ*).”
- **Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33,1.11(6)/3:223) calls it “the immeasurables” (*appamañña*).
- **Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43,31/1:297), SD 35.1, (**Ceto,vimutti**) **Anuruddha Sutta** (M 127,4-7/3:146 f), SD 54.10 & **Go,datta Sutta** (S 41.7,5/4:296), SD 60.4, call it “the immeasurable freedom of mind” (*appamāṇa ceto,vimutti*).
- **Aṭṭhaka,nāgara Sutta** (M 52,8-11/1:351 f) = **Dasama Gaha,pati Sutta** (A 11.17/5:344), SD 41.2, state that when one stabilizes these states, reflecting on its impermanence, etc, one attains arhathood; if not, one attains non-returning.
- (**Majjhima**) **Jīvaka Sutta** (M 55,6/1:369), SD 43.4, presents the Buddha as Brahmā, who exemplifies the 4 immeasurables: lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity.
- **Dhānañjāni Sutta** (M 97,32-33/2:195), SD 4.9, and (**Brahma,vihāra**) **Subha Sutta** (M 99,24-27/2:207 f), SD 38.6, call it the path to companionship with Brahmā (“communion with God”). This teaching neither affirms the supreme God-idea nor supports any theistic God-belief but serves as a “bridging Dharma” for erstwhile God-believers to work with to attain mental calm and clarity, and use that to gain insight (*vipassanā*) into true reality (as taught in §4).
- (**Saṅgha**) **Uposatha Sutta** (A 4.190,4/2:184), SD 15.10b, concerns one “attained to Godliness,” *brahma-p,patṭa*. This is the bridging Dharma that Mahā Kaccāna uses to inspire the brahmin Lohicca to go for refuge in the 3 jewels: (**Mahā Kaccāna**) **Lohicca Sutta** (S 35.132,4.6), SD 60.5.
- **The Abhidhamma**—in **the Paṭisambhidā,magga** and **the Vibhaṅga**—call it the “freedom focused on only the beautiful,” *subhan t’eva adhimutto hotī ti* vimokkho: **Pm** 5.20/2:39; **Vbh** 13/272-276 (*sutta,-niddesa*), 276-282 (*abhidhamma,niddesa*), 282-284 (comy).

For a table of references, see SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

2 People and places

2.1 THE LAY DISCIPLE CITTA GAHA,PATI

Citta Gaha,pati (“the houselord”),⁴ a seth⁵ of the town of Macchikā,saṇḍa⁶—hence, also called Macchikā,saṇḍika—is declared by the Buddha as the foremost of Dharma speakers amongst the laymen disciples (A 1:26). It is said that on the day he was born, the whole city was filled knee-deep with flowers of various hues; hence, his name, Citta (Skt *citra*, “variegated”).⁷

His pre-eminence as a lay disciple is attested to by the presence of a whole section on teachings connected with him—the **Citta Saṃyutta**—in the Saṃyutta Nikāya.⁸ He is also said to be a layman non-returner (SA 3:100).⁹

2.2 THE ELDER GO,DATTA

2.2.1 The arhat Go,datta

The monk Go,datta is the only arhat in the suttas by that name. He belonged to a family of caravan-leaders and, on the death of his father, himself travelled about with 500 carts, engaged in trade. One day, one of his oxen fell on the road, and seeing that his men could not get it up, Godatta went up to it and smote it. The ox, it is said, angered by the cruelty, spoke in a human voice, chiding him for his base ingratitude, and cursed him. The shocked Godatta decided to renounce all his property and join the sangha. In due course, he became an arhat (ThaA 1:555 f).

2.2.2 Go,datta Thera,gāthā

659 *yathā’pi bhaddo ājañño
dhure yutto dhurāsaho*¹⁰

Just as a noble thoroughbred,
yoked with a load, enduring the load,

⁴ For a biography, see Nyanaponika & Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, Somerville, MA, 1007:365-372.

⁵ “Seth,” *seṭṭhi* (Skt *śreṣṭhin*) (V 1:15 f, 271 f, 2: 110 f, 157; S 1:89; J 1:122, 3:367). A *seṭṭhi* was, in today’s terminology, “a financier, banker or entrepreneur.” I have rendered it by the common modern Indian word, “**seth**” (or “sett”) (which the Webster’s 3rd New International Dictionary defines as “a rich merchant”). According to **I Fiser**, “the *seṭṭhi* lent money, and ... lent considerable sums ... to people living by trade; the *seṭṭhi* was a man who had (considerable) wealth and therefore was a valuable connection for all those people who wished to make their living by trade and who needed some initial capital, or maybe had a run into debt and sought a way out by changing their way of living” (“The problem of the *Seṭṭhi* in Buddhist Jātakas,” *Archiv Orientalni* 24, 1954: 263). See also **U Chakravarti**, *The Social Dimension of Early Buddhism*, 1987:76-79). **Chettiar** (Newari of Kathmandu, *shresta*; Gujarati & Khatri (Khetri of Punjab), *seth*; Malayālam, *cheṭṭi*; Tamil *sheṭṭi*; Kannada & Tulu, *shetty*, *shettar*, *shettigar*; Telugu, *seṭṭi*; Sinhala, *seḍḍi*, *heddi*) is a title, commonly used by people of South Indian origin in India and abroad, probably comes from Skt *śreṣṭha* or *śreṣṭhī*. They are a subset of the Vaishya class. *Chitty* is an ancient family name found today in my home-town of Melaka [Malacca], Malaysia, where “Chettiar” is often synonymous with “money lender.” For refs, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chettiar>.

⁶ Macchika,saṇḍa, lit “fishers’ clump,” a grove belonging to Citta, and a town in Kāsī, 30 yojanas [338 km = 210 mi] from Sāvathī (DhA 2:79), the home of Citta the houselord. Located nearby is **Ambāṭaka,vana**, presented by Citta as a monastery to the monks headed by Mahānāma.

⁷ Citta, vl *citra* (P & Skt), variegated, manifold, beautiful. Its other meaning is “mind consciousness,” since they are also variegated and manifold. See PED: *citta*¹ & *citta*².

⁸ S 41.1-10/4:281-304.

⁹ **Citta Gaha,pati**: SD 8.6 (8.3); SD 16.16 (1); his accomplishments SD 40a.7 (1); Acela Kassapa, SD 8.5 (8.1); “not by faith” in the Buddha, SD 40a.8 (5.6.3); his humour, **Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta S** (S 41.8), SD 40a.7; death, **Gilāna Dassana S** (S 41.10), SD 16.16.

¹⁰ Ce *dhurassaho*. This prob should be read as *dhuraṃ saha* (Tha:N xlix (§40)).

	<i>mathito atibhārena saṃ yugam¹¹ nātivattati</i>	oppressed by the massive burden, forsakes not his yoke,
660	<i>evaṃ paññāya ye tittā¹² samuddo vārinā yathā na pare atimaññanti ariya,dhammo’va pāṇinaṃ [68]</i>	even so those satiated with wisdom, just like the ocean with water, despise not others— this is the noble truth towards the living.
661	<i>kāle kāla,vasaṃ pattā bhavābhava,vasaṃ gatā,¹³ narā dukkhaṃ nigacchanti te’dha socanti mānavā</i>	Caught in time, we’re under time’s power, fallen under the yoke of being and non-being, people come to grief, here (even) the young sorrow, too.
662	<i>unnatā sukha,dhammena dukkha,dhammena c’onatā¹⁴ dvayena bālā haññanti yathā,bhūtaṃ adassino</i>	Elated by states of joy, and depressed by states of pain, fools are smitten by both, not seeing things as they really are.
663	<i>ye ca dukkhe sukhasmiṃ ca majjhe sibbanim accagū¹⁵ ṭhitā te inda,khīlo’va¹⁸ na te unnata,onatā</i>	Those, when in the midst of suffering and happiness, having crossed over the seamstress, ¹⁶ stay in the middle: ¹⁷ they stand like the city pillar; they are neither elated nor depressed.

¹¹ Comy reads “one’s yoke” with a reflexive pronominal adj thus: *saṃ yugan ti attano khandhe ṭhitam yugam*, “one remains yoked to one’s own aggregates” (ThaA 2:277,30 f); cf *saṃ cittam paṭiladdhāna* (Thī 136), explained as *attano pakati,cittam* (ThaA 126); *sehi kammehi tappati* (Dh 136); *himsati atta,sambhūtā taca,sāraṇa saṃ phalaṃ* (S 1:70, 98), explained as *attano phalaṃ* (SA 1:137); *saṃ nirankitvā* (J 3:402), as *sakaṃ porānaṃ ajjhattikaṃ janam nīharitvā* (JA 3:402,20 f). See Tha:N 220 n659, 289 n1211.

¹² “Filled (with),” *tittā* (Skt *trptā*) (past part of *tappati*,”is satiated, is satisfied, filled”); *tittā, dhātā paripuṇṇā* (ThaA 2:277,35 f).

¹³ Comy: *bhavābhava,vasaṃ gatā ti, bhavassa abhavassa ca vasaṃ upagatā vuḍḍhi,hāniyo anuvattantā* (ThaA 2:278,8 f); thus *bhavābhava* is *bhava + abhava*, as tr. At **671**, however, Comy glosses: *bhavābhava, khuddake c’eva mahantake ca bhava*, ie, as *bhava + bhava*, existences small and large (ThaA 2:280,18 f).

¹⁴ Be so; Ee ThaA *v’onatā. Uṇnata,onatā (663d)* dictates that we either read *c’onatā* or *v’onatā* (with emphatic *va*). Tha:N: in either case *vonata* should be deleted from PED since there is no such word.

¹⁵ Ee *sibbanim ajjhagu*. Comy: *accagu, atikkamimsu* (crossed over) (ThaA 2:278,29). Cf *so’dha sibbanim accagā* (A 3:401; Sn 1040 1042). On the confusion of *acc-* and *ajjh-*, cf *jāti,marañam ajjhagā* (It 69).

¹⁶ “The seamstress” refers to craving (*sibbanim taṇham*, ThaA 2:278,28), explained at DhsA 363 (on Dhs 189): *ghaṭan’atṭhena sibbanī, ayam hi pilotikāya pilotikaṃ, tasmā ghaṭan’atṭhena sibbanī ti vuttā* (just as a seamstress stitches together pieces of rags). Cf *taṇhā hi nam sibbati tassa tass’eva bhavassa abhinibbattiyā* (A 3:400).

¹⁷ *Majjha* refers to being equanimous in the face of suffering and happiness; this firm equanimity is like the deeply sunk city pillar. Comy is not wrong as thought by Tha:N 221 n663.

¹⁸ **Inda,khīla** (BHSD *indra,kīla*), “Indra’s pillar, bolt or wedge,” a wooden post securing a city gate (exact shape and function uncertain). CPD: Most prob, orig, a pointed wooden post (syn *esikā, thambha*) rammed deep into the ground and projecting out about a cubit (Skt *aratnir indra,kīlah*), against which the wings of the city-gate were closed (KhpA 1:185,21 ad Khp 6.8 = Sn 229; Tha 663). See D 20/2:254,17* = S 1.37/1:27,4*; **Pāsādika S**, D 29/3:133,6 ≈ **Inda,khīla S**, S 56.39/5:444,17. Metaphorically, a symbol of firmness, unshakability, immobility; also of an obstacle, a hindrance. See PED; CPD; BHSD: *indrakīla*; J J Meyer, *Arthaśāstra des Kauṭilya*, Leipzig, 1926:689 f; D Schlingloff, WZKSOA 11 1962: 71; A Ray, *Villages, Towns and Secular Buildings in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1964:87 f.

- 664** *na h'eva lābhe nālābhe
ayase¹⁹ na ca kittiyā
na nindāyaṃ pasaṃsāya
na te dukkhe sukhamhi ca* Neither to profit nor to loss,
neither to obscurity nor to fame,
neither to praise nor to blame,
neither to suffering nor to happiness—
- 665** *sabbattha te na lippanti
uda,bindūva pokkhare
sabbattha sukhitā dhīrā
sabbattha aparājitā* he clings to them not at all
like a water-drop on a lotus.
The wise are happy everywhere,
everywhere invincible.
- 666** *dhammena ca alābho yo
yo ca lābho adhammiko
alābho dhammiko seyye
yaṃ ve lābho adhammiko* There is no profit with the righteous,
nor is there gain with the unrighteous.
Non-profit that is righteous is better
than profit that is unrighteous.
- 667** *yaso ca appabuddhīnaṃ
viññūnaṃ ayaso ca yo
qyaso'va seyyo viññūnaṃ
na yaso appabuddhīnaṃ* There is fame without wisdom [with little wisdom],
and there is obscurity with wisdom:
better is obscurity with wisdom—
there is no fame for those without wisdom.
- 668** *dummedhehi pasaṃsā ca
viññūhi garahā ca yā
garahā'va seyyo viññūhi
yaṃ ce bāla,pasaṃsanā.* There is the praise by fools,
and there is the blame by the wise:
better is blame by the wise
Than the praise of the foolish.
- 669** *sukhaṃ ca kāma,mayikaṃ
dukkhaṃ ca pavivekiyaṃ
paviveka²⁰ dukkhaṃ seyyo
yaṃ ce kāma,mayaṃ sukhaṃ* There is happiness arising from sensual pleasures,
and there is pain from solitude:
the pain of solitude is better
than sense-made happiness.
- 670** *jīvitaṃ ca adhammena
dhammena maraṇaṃ ca yaṃ,
maraṇaṃ dhammikaṃ seyyo
yaṃ ce jīve adhammikaṃ* There is a life that is unrighteous,
and there is death that is righteous:
the death that is righteous is better
than to live unrighteously.
- 671** *kāma,kopa-p,pahīnā
ye santa,cittā bhavābhava²¹
caranti loke asitā n'atthi
tesaṃ piyāppiyaṃ* For those who have abandoned pleasures and anger,
whose mind is stilled in terms of existences:²²
they move unattached in the world;
nothing is pleasant or unpleasant to them.
- 672** *bhāvayitvāna bojjaṅge
indriyāni balāni ca* Having cultivated the awakening-factors,
the faculties and the powers,

¹⁹ Be *nayase*.

²⁰ Se *pavivekiyaṃ*.

²¹ Comy glosses as *bhavābhava* as *bhava + bhava*, ie existences small and great [§661b n].

²² The arhat is no more caught up in rebirth (*bhavābhava*). Norman, “whose minds are calm in various existences” (Tha:N 671) suggest those beings are still undergoing rebirth; hence, they are not arhats.

*pappuyya paramam̐ santiṃ
parinibbanti anāsavā ti.*²³

having attained the highest peace,
they are quenched, influx-free.

2.3 AMBĀṬAKA,VANA

2.3.1 Citta and the monks

2.3.1.1 The wild mango grove (*ambāṭaka,vana* or *ambāla,vana*) was a grove at Macchikā,saṅḍa²⁴ belonging to Citta Gaha,pati. Pleased with the elder **Mahānāma**—one of the first 5 monks (J 1:82)—Citta invited him to a meal, and after listening to his teaching, he became a **streamwinner** (*sotāpatti*). (DhA 5.14/2:74)

Citta then donated the grove to the sangha. At the dedication of the gift, as Citta uttered, “The Buddha’s teaching has been established!” it is said that the earth trembled (AA 1:387,1-11). Later, Citta built a splendid monastery there, **the Ambāṭak’ārāma**, for the use of monks of the 4 quarters (DhA 5.15-/2:74).

Behind Ambāṭaka was Miga,pathaka, which was Citta’s tributary village. (SA 3:91,9 f)

2.3.1.2 On another occasion, the 2 chief disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, hearing of the virtues of Citta, decided to pay him a visit. Upon arriving, Citta invited Sāriputta to give a teaching. Sāriputta, explaining that he was tired from the journey, said that he would give just a short discourse. Yet, merely listening to it, Citta became a **once-returner** (*sakadāgāmi*). Bowing to the chief disciples, Citta then invited the monks for a meal-offering at his house the next morning. (DhA 5.15/2:74 f)

2.3.1.3 On another occasion, Sāriputta and Moggallāna again visited Citta. Seeing that Citta was ready for deeper Dharma, Sāriputta taught him “a classification of the 6 sense-bases” (*sa/āyatana vibhatti*). After listening to this teaching, Citta became a **non-returner**.²⁵

2.3.2 Monks connected with the Ambāṭak’ārāma

The Ambāṭak’ārāma became the residence of a large number of monks, and discussions often took place there between Citta Gaha,pati and the resident monks (S 4:281-297). Among eminent elders who resided at or visited this monastery were:

- **Isidatta** of Avantī, who answered Citta’s questions regarding the reason for the existence of various views in the world (S 4:283-288)
- **Mahaka**, who, by his psychic powers, produced rain and thunderstorms, and later showed a special miracle to Citta, as recorded in **the Mahaka Sutta** (S 4:288-291),
- **Kāmabhū** who discoursed to Citta on various topics (S 4:291-295), and
- **Go,datta** who asks Citta about the 4 types of liberations (S 41.7/4:295-297).
- **Lakunṭaka Bhaddiya** also lived there in solitude, wrapt in meditation (Tha 466).
- **Sudhamma**, an indisciplined monk who had to seek Citta’s forgiveness. (V 2:18), SD 59.15 (1.1.4)

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²³ Ee *parinibbanti anāsavā ti*.

²⁴ <http://www.aimwell.org/DPPN/macchikasanda.html>. Accessed 16 Oct 2023.

²⁵ AA 1:387,10 f; DhA 2:80. See SD 8.6 (8.3).

Go,datta Sutta

THE DISCOURSE TO GO,DATTA

S 41.7

1 At one time, the venerable Go,datta was staying in a wild mango grove.²⁶ [296]
Then Citta the houselord approached the venerable Go,datta, saluted him and sat down at one side.

Go,datta's questions and Citta's answers

2 Then to Citta the houselord sitting on one side, the venerable Go,datta said this:
“Houselord,

the immeasurable liberation of mind,	<i>appamāṇā ceto,vimutti</i>
the liberation of mind by nothingness,	<i>ākiñcaññā ceto,vimutti</i>
the liberation of mind by voidness,	<i>suññatā ceto,vimutti</i>
the signless liberation of mind,	<i>animittā ceto,vimutti</i>

are these states different in meaning, and different in phrasing, or are they the same in meaning, but different only in phrasing?”

3 “Bhante, there is a reason [a way]²⁷ by which these states are *different in meaning and different in phrasing*, and there is way by which these states are *the same in meaning but different only in phrasing*.”

Different in meaning, different in phrasing

4 And what, bhante, is the reason that these states are **different in meaning and different in phrasing** (*nān’atthā c’eva nānā,vyañjanā ca*)?

THE 4 IMMEASURABLES.²⁸

5 “Here, bhante, a monk,²⁹

(1) with a heart of **lovingkindness**, dwells suffusing one quarter;
so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth;
thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone,

²⁶ “A wild mango grove,” *ambāṭaka,vane*. *Ambāṭaka* (Skt *amrtāka, ām-*), the hog-plum, wild mango, *Spondias mangifera*; a tree or its fruit.

²⁷ “Reason,” *pariyāyo*, “basis, ground; interpretation, metaphor; way, method”; Comys gloss as *kāraṇa*, “cause, reason, ground, motive” (VA 132,5, 133,16; DA 3:809,12; SA 3:169,20; AA 3:293,18, 4:78,4; JA 3:211,22). See **Pariyāya nippariyāya**, SD 68.2 (Forthcoming).

²⁸ On the 4 immeasurables or divine abodes, see **Brahma,vihāra**, SD 38.5; **Tevijja S** (D 13,76-79), SD 1.8; SD 51.14 (3.2.2.3).

²⁹ Comys: “Monk” (*bhikkhu*) here may refer to either an ordained monastic or anyone who is meditating (DA 3:756; MĀ 1:241; VbhA 216 f; cf SnA 251). Even a lay person, properly meditating, attains the state of monkhood (*bhikkhu,bhāva*): **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) +n, SD 13.3; SD 13.1 (3.1.1.5); SD 16.7 (1.1.1.2). For similes, see **Te,vijja S** (D 13,76-79/1:251), SD 1.8; see also: **D 2**:185, 250, **3**:49, 78, 223; **M 1**:38, 283, 297, 335×2, 351, 369, **2**:76, 77, 78, 81, 195, 207, **3**:146; **S 4**:296, 322, 351, 352×2, **5**:115, 116, 117, 118; **A 1**:183, 192, **2**:172, 175, 184, **3**:225, **4**:390, **5**:299, 343, 344.

he dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness
that is vast, grown great [exalted],³⁰ immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.³¹

- (2) With a heart of **compassion**, he dwells suffusing one quarter,
so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth;
thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone,
he dwells suffusing all the world with compassion
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.
- (3) With a heart of **gladness**, he dwells suffusing one quarter,
so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth;
thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone,
he dwells suffusing all the world with gladness
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.
- (4) With a heart of **equanimity**, he dwells suffusing one quarter,
so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth;
thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone,
he dwells suffusing all the world with equanimity
that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.

This, bhante, is called **the immeasurable liberation of mind**.³²

6 And what, bhante, is **the liberation of mind by nothingness**?

Here, bhante, by completely transcending the base of boundless consciousness,
aware that ‘there is nothing,’ a monk enters and dwells in the base of nothingness.

This, bhante, is called **the liberation of mind by nothingness**.³³

7 And what, bhante, is **the liberation of mind by voidness [emptiness]**?

Here, bhante, a monk, going to a forest or going to the foot of a tree or to an empty hut,
reflects thus: “Empty is this of self [297] or of what belongs to the self.”

This, bhante, is called **the liberation of mind by voidness**.³⁴

³⁰ The mind “grown great” (*maha-g,gatā*) or exalted perception refers to the mind in dhyana, ie in the form sphere (*rūpāvacara*). See **Catuttha Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.4), SD 24.14 (4).

³¹ The recurrence of these last two phrases—“without hate, without ill will”—attests to the fact that lovingkindness is the basis for all the other three abodes, ie, they are actually a refinement of lovingkindness applied on deeper and broader levels.

³² Comy: There are 12 kinds of measureless liberation of mind (*appamāṇa ceto,vimutti*): the 4 divine abodes, the 4 paths and the 4 fruits. The divine abodes are called “immeasurable” because of their measureless radiation (towards all beings), the paths and fruits are “immeasurable” because they remove the defilements, the causes of measuring (conceit). Nirvana is said to be “immeasurable.” (SA 3:98,25-30)

³³ Comy: There are 9 kinds of liberation of mind by nothingness (*akiñcañña ceto,vimutti*): the base of nothingness, and the 4 paths and the 4 fruits. The first is called “nothingness” because it does not have any “something” (*kiñcana*) [n below], ie, an impediment as object; the paths and fruits are so called because of the non-existence of painful and obstructive defilements in them. (SA 3:99,6-10)

³⁴ Comys does not gloss this, but identifies “liberation of mind by voidness” (*suññata ceto,vimutti*) with insight into the nonself of persons and things, and also the supramundane paths and fruits. (MA 2:353,32-34; SA 3:98,11)

8 And what, bhante, is **the signless liberation of mind**?

Here, bhante, a monk, by way of not attending to all mental signs, enters and dwells in the signless concentration of mind.

This, bhante, is called **the signless liberation of mind**.³⁵

9 This, bhante, is the reason by which these states are **different in meaning and also different in phrasing**.³⁶

Same in meaning, different in phrasing

10 And what, bhante, is the reason that these states are **the same in meaning, but different only in phrasing**?

THE UNWHOLESOME ROOTS ARE MAKERS OF MEASURES

11 Lust, bhante, is **a maker of measures**. Hatred is *a maker of measures*. Delusion is *a maker of measures*.³⁷

For a monk whose influxes have been destroyed, abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, they are no more subject to future arising,

12 to that extent there is **immeasurable liberation of mind**: the unshakeable liberation of mind is declared the foremost of them.³⁸

12.2 Now that *unshakeable liberation of mind* is **empty of lust**, empty of hatred, empty of delusion.

THE UNWHOLESOME ROOTS ARE "SOMETHING"

13 Lust, bhante, is **something**. Hatred is *something*. Delusion is *something*.³⁹

For a monk whose influxes have been destroyed, abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump so that they are no more subject to future arising,

14 to that extent there is **liberation of mind by nothingness**: the unshakeable liberation of mind is declared the foremost of them.

14.2 Now that *unshakeable liberation of mind* is **empty of lust**, empty of hatred, empty of delusion.

³⁵ Comys: There are 13 kinds of signless liberation of mind (*animitta ceto, vimutti*): insight (*vipassanā*)—because it removes the “signs” of permanence, pleasure, and self; the 4 formless attainments—because the sign of form is absent in them; and the 4 paths and fruits—because the defilements, “makers of signs,” are absent from them. The “signless element” is nirvana, in which there are no signs of conditionality (MA 2:355,6-15; SA 3:99,6-11).

³⁶ On this interpretation, the immeasurable liberation of mind is the 4 divine abodes; the liberation of mind by nothingness, the 3rd formless attainment; and the liberation of mind by voidness, concentration based on insight into the *selfless* nature of phenomena. (SA 3:99,22-30)

³⁷ *Rāgo kho bhante pamāṇa, karaṇo doso pamāṇa, karaṇo moho pamāṇa, karaṇo.*

³⁸ *Akuppā ceto, vimutti* is the liberation of mind that is the fruition of arhathood. This is the foremost liberation. (MA 2:354,17 f; SA 3:98,30)

³⁹ *Rāgo kho bhante kiñcanaṃ doso kiñcanaṃ moho kiñcanaṃ.* Comy explains *kiñcana* as if it were derived from a verb *kiñcati* glossed with *maddati palibundhati*, “crushes, impedes,” thus as meaning “obstruction or impediment.” (MA 2:354,34-39; SA 3:99,2). *Kiñcana* is properly der from *kiṃ* + *cana*, meaning simply “something”; see SED sv (2) *ka, kas, ka, kim*. Here, the Pali word is used idiomatically to mean having something that becomes an impediment; see **Aneñja, sappāya S** (M 106,8/2:263,34-264,1 (SD 95.13); **Brāhmaṇa Sacca S** (A 4.185/2:177); (**Tad-ah’**) **Uposatha S** (A 3.70,3.2/1:206), SD 4.18. *Kiñcana* is here a didactic construction used as a skillful means. See PED (*kiñcana*) for refs that help clarify its meaning.

THE UNWHOLESOME ROOTS ARE MAKERS OF SIGNS

15 Lust, bhante, is a **maker of signs**. Hatred is a *maker of signs*. Delusion is a *maker of signs*.⁴⁰

For a monk *whose influxes have been destroyed, have been abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump so that they are no more subject to future arising,*

16 to that extent there is **signless liberation of mind**:

the unshakeable liberation of mind is declared the foremost of them.

16.2 Now that *unshakeable liberation of mind* is **empty**⁴¹ of lust, empty of hatred, empty of delusion.

17 This, bhante, is the reason by which these states are **the same in meaning but different only in phrasing.**"

18 "It is a gain for you, houselord, it is well gained by you, houselord, in that you have the wisdom eye that ranges over the profound Buddha Word."⁴²

— evaṃ —

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⁴⁰ *Rāgo kho bhante nimitta, karaṇo doso nimitta, karaṇo moho nimitta, karaṇo*. Comy explains that lust, etc, are called "sign-makers" (*nimitta, karaṇa*) because they mark a person as being lustful, hating, or deluded. The meaning is that lust projects the "sign of beauty" (*subha, nimitta*) onto the mind, hatred the "sign of the repulsive" (*patigha, nimitta*), and delusion the signs of permanence, pleasure and self. (MA 2:354,30-355,5; SA 3:99,19-21)

⁴¹ Comy: Though the emptiness liberation of mind is not mentioned separately, it is incl throughout by the phrase "empty of lust," etc [§§12.2, 14.2, 16.2]. (MA 2:355,13-15; SA 3:99,28-30)

⁴² Be Ce Se *Lābhā te gahapati suladdhaṃ te gahapati, yassa te gambhīre buddhavacane paññā, cakkhu kamatī ti*. Missing from Ee.