

Khajjanīya Sutta¹

The Discourse on the Devoured

[Understanding the aggregates leads to liberation]

(Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.79/3:86-91)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006

1 Sutta summary

The Khajjanīya Sutta is a good example of a “practice sutta,” that is, one that serves as a reflection for spiritual insight. The sutta has a systematic framework and natural flow of ideas, and is basically a set of variations on the theme of the five aggregates. The sutta opens with the Buddha stating that all that one can know of ourselves (eg through retrocognition) are the five aggregates or one of them [§§3-4].

In the second section [§§5-9], the aggregates are defined. The Sutta explains why each aggregate is so called,

and it is revealing that these explanations are phrased in terms of functions rather than fixed essences. This treatment of the aggregates as dynamic functions rather than substantial entities already pulls the ground away from the urge to grasp upon them as containing a permanent essence that can be considered the ultimate ground of being. (Bodhi, S:B 841)

In other words, the definitions are not exactly technical etymologies but what one might regard as meditative definitions that help to understand the nature of the aggregates better for the sake of insight into true reality.

The following third section (“Devoured by the aggregates”) [§§10-15] gives the sutta its title, and is obviously the key section or what makes this sutta stand out amongst the rest. The key verb here is *khajjati* (he is eaten by), which is the passive present (3rd person singular) form of *khādati* (he eats).² This underlies the ongoing action of the aggregates: they eat us away without our knowing, bringing on suffering or laying the bases for constant and growing pain.

The basis of spiritual practice for overcoming suffering is that of “disowning the aggregates,” that is, to reflect on their impermanent nature, which brings on suffering, and as such is without an enduring entity. Or, more simply, to not use the pronouns, “I,” “me,” and “mine,” that is, to not own the suffering, to just let go of it. This forms the fourth section [§§16-20].

The fifth section deals with the famous totality formula, which reminds us that all possible forms of aggregates should be disowned: “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.” The fruit of this constant and correct practice is that one finds the path to awakening. One becomes a learner (*sekha*), that is, one truly begins to directly imbibe the force of insight giving an increasingly clearer and more liberating vision of true reality.

Even if one were to “stop” here, awakening is guaranteed by way of stream-winning, that is, one clears away one’s sufferings within seven lives at most.³ If one refines one’s practice to the point of being able to totally see through the aggregates, so that one is revulsed by them, that is, one is no more deluded by them by live happily, seeing true reality, then one has become an arhat. The import of this sixth section is that the arhat is an adept (*asekha*), he has learnt all that needs learning.

The sutta closes with a devotional stanza attributed to three well known Vedic high gods, who appear in **the Sandha Sutta** (A 11.10), where it appears thrice and clearly fits the context better than here.⁴ The mention of these Vedic gods is for the benefit of those who in the Buddha’s time believe in them, but showing them to be still unliberated and less knowing than an arhat.

¹ *Khajjanīya*, “to be eaten, connected with being eaten,” future passive participle of *khādati* (he eats). PTS ed titles it wrongly as “Sīha” (S 3:86); the *uddāna* has *khajjani* (a mnemonic). See S:W 3:72 n3.

² It is possible to render *khajjati* as “being devoured (by),” but the proper Pali for this is *khajjamāna*.

³ On stream-winning, see **Entering the Stream** = SD 3.3.

⁴ A 11.10/5:324-326.

2 The verbs of the teaching

2.0 Verbs are action words: they inform us about actions or what to do. There are four pairs of verbs in the Khajjanīya Sutta [§§26-37], namely:

- (1) dismantles (*apacināti*) & does not pile up (*no ācināti*);
- (2) abandons (*pajahati*) & does not cling (*na upādiyati*);
- (3) is dissociated from (*visineti*) & does not associate with (*no ussineti*);
- (4) extinguishes (*vidhūpeti*) & does not kindle (*na sandhūpeti*).

2.1 Both ***apacināti*** (he dismantles, diminishes) and ***ācināti*** (he piles up) [§§27, 33] come from the same stem, *cināti* (Skt *cinoti*, *cayati*) from √CI, “to heap up,” hence also the senses, “to collect, to accumulate,” and from which we get the word *ceṭiya*, “tumulus, relic mound,” originally referring to a pile of earth over which bodily remains are interred. The prefix *apa-* has the senses of “without, outside, away from, off,” so that *apacināti* means “he does away with.” An example is found here:

evam apacinato dukkham santike nibbānam vuccati.

Thus doing away with suffering, he is said to be close to nirvana.

(S 4:74-76 = Tha 807-817) = SD 5.9

In fact, this is a refrain in **the Māluṅkya,putta’s Thera,gāthā**, also found in **the Māluṅkya,putta Sutta** (S 35.95),⁵ where he reflects on his non-delighting in the six sense-objects, which might be taken as a sort of internal commentary of *apacināti*, thus:

Not delighting in <**sounds...mind-objects**>, having seen a <form...a mind-object>,
he is truly mindful,

With a detached mind, he feels⁶ it, but does not go on clinging to it.

Even as he <sees a form...cognizes a mind-object> and sensing a feeling,

It dies away, not heaped up: thus mindful he conducts himself.

Thus doing away with suffering, he’s said to be close to nirvana. [S 4:74-76 = Tha 806-817]

The prefix *ā-* has a wide range of meanings, such as “presence, limit, embracing, grasping, nearness,” so that ***ācināti*** means “he heaps up, accumulates (karma),” as in

pūراتi bālo pāpassa thoka,thokam pi ācinam

The foolish fills up with evil, accumulating it little by little. (Dh 121)

2.2 The verbs ***pajahati*** (he abandons) & ***upādiyati*** (he clings to) [§§28, 34] are clearly opposites. ***Pajahati*** derives from *pa* + *jahati*, *jahāti* (he abandons, forsakes, renounces, literally & figuratively), from √HĀ, “to give up.” The most common form of this root is the gerund *hitvā* (having abandoned).⁷ The prefix *pa-* gives a directional sense, often translated as “up, out or about,” as in “he gives up (literally & figuratively).” One of the most common forms of the verb *pajahati* is *pahāya*, for example, in the following stanza by Vaṅṅisa, from **the Pesalā Atimaññanā Sutta** (S 8.3):

*Tasmā akhilo’ dha padhānavā
nīvaraṇāni pahāya visuddho
mānañ ca pahāya asesam
vijjā-y-antakaro samitāvī ti*

Therefore be not mentally barren here, be assertive;
With the abandoning of the hindrances, one is pure;
And with the utter abandoning of conceit,
One is an end-maker⁸ through wisdom, at peace.

⁵ S 35.95/4:72-75 = SD 5.9.

⁶ *Vedeti*, this is the simplest word for “he experiences, feels, knows” a sensation. Cf *paṭisamvedeti* (he experiences), caus of √VID, “to know,” very common in **Ānāpānasati S** (M 118.18-25). This latter word connotes a more conscious and willful action.

⁷ D 2:241 f, 286, 3:81; M 1:474 f, 2:196; S 1:9 f, 15; A 3:354, 5:232 f, 253; Sn 284, 328 407; Dh 29, 88.

⁸ That is, one makes an end of suffering (M 1:47; Sn 337; It 16).

Line a of the stanza exhorts one to cultivate mindfulness so that with the abandoning of the mental hindrances⁹ (line b), mental focus or dhyana is attained, which is helpful in working towards liberating insight.¹⁰ The abandoning of conceit (*māna*)—the destruction of the complexes of superiority, of inferiority, and of equality¹¹—refers to the attaining of arhathood.

The verb *upādiyati* (he clings to) derives from *upa-* (expressing “nearness,” meaning “close up to,” and intensifying the verb or noun it prefixes) and *ādiyati*¹² (he takes up, grasps at). It can here be taken as identical with “clinging”: *upādiyati ti upādānam*.¹³ Two forms of clinging are usually mentioned: clinging to sensual pleasures and to views. In brief, clinging to sensual pleasures (*kām’upādāna*) is synonymous with sensual desire, sensual lust, sensual delight, sensual craving, etc. Clinging to views (*diṭṭh’upādāna*) is the taking up of any wrong view.¹⁴ On a very simple level, both these clinging are temporarily overcome when the five hindrances are overcome, as in this statement from **the Nandiya Sutta** (A 11.14): *pāpake akusale dhamme na upādiyati* (he does not cling to evil unwholesome states).¹⁵

2.3 The verbs *visineti* (he dissociates from, discards) and *ussineti*¹⁶ (he associates with, is involved with) [§§29, 35] are opposites and are closely related. *Visineti* is sometimes read as *viseneti*. Like Bodhi,¹⁷ I here follow KR Norman’s suggestion: “The verb *viseneti* (S 3:89,31) is explained (SA 2:296,22): *viseneti no usseneti ti vikirati na sampiṇḍeti* (‘*Viseneti* means “not associating (with),” that is, not mixing (with), not combining (with).’)”¹⁸

Ussineti means “he associates with, mixes with, is involved with, is attached to,” and has another opposite, *paṭisseneti* (he rejects), as in this line from **the Pema Sutta** (A 4.200), spoken in connection with the five aggregates, that is,

Bhikkhu n’ev’usseneti na-p.paṭisseneti The monk is neither attracted to nor rejects...
(A 4.200.8-12/2:214 f)

Evidently, *visineti* (or *viseneti*) and *paṭiseneti*¹⁹ are synonyms, and that *ussineti/usseneti* and *paṭiseneti* are antonyms. The commentary to **the Pema Sutta** (A 4.200) glosses *na usseneti* as *diṭṭhi, vasena na ukkhipati* (he is not agitated on account of views) (AA 3:209). On a simple practical level, all this means that the practitioner should maintain a calm, even equanimous, mind in the face of the eight winds—of gain and loss, of fame and ill fame, of happiness and sorrow, of praise and blame²⁰—as they arise on account of the aggregates.

2.4 The last pair of verbs are “he extinguishes” (*vidhūpeti*) and its opposite “he kindles” (*sandhūpeti*) [§§30, 36]. Let us first look at the dictionary meanings of these words. *Vidhūpeti* derives from *vi-* (here, has the sense of “asunder, apart”) + *dhūpayati* (causative of *dhūpa*), to fumigate, make fragrant (with incense). As such, we have two senses here: the literal, meaning “to fumigate, perfume, diffuse”,²¹ and the

⁹ The 5 mental hindrances (*pañca, nīvaraṇa*) are: sensual desire (*kāma-c, chanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhacca, kukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*): see **Bhāvanā** = SD 15.1(8).

¹⁰ On how to apply insight to dhyana, see **Bhāvanā** = SD 15.1(10.3).

¹¹ See esp SD 14.9(3), also (1); and also SD 14.13(2).

¹² From *ā* (here has a limiting sense) + √DĀ, “to give.”

¹³ UA 42,5 = Vism 527,24. On *upādāna*, see (**Paṭicca, samuppāda**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2.6/2:3) = SD 5.15.

¹⁴ M 1:67, 330*, 498. For def of the 4 types of clinging (*upādāna*), see Dhs §§1214-17.

¹⁵ A 11.14.8/5:337,5.

¹⁶ CPD lists *usseneti* as the main headword, saying that *ussineti* is its “frequent byform” (ie v1). See BHSD sv *viśrenī-katvā* & also SD 12.4(6.8).

¹⁷ S:B 435 n382.

¹⁸ Sn:N 307 f n793. Bodhi however here renders *visineti* and *ussineti* as “scatters” and “amasses” respectively without any explanation.

¹⁹ VII *paṭisseneti* (A 2:214, 215); *paṭiseniyati* (Sn 390).

²⁰ A 8.5/4:157.

²¹ This usage is rare in the Canon; Miln 252.

figurative, “to scatter, destroy.”²² Curiously, *sandhūpeti* (*sam-*, in the sense of “together, one” + *dhūpeti* = *dhūpayati*) has almost the same sense as *vidhūpeti*. *Sandhūpeti* means “he fumigates,”²³ but the form *sandhūpāyati* is more common.²⁴

However, if we go by the prefixes, we could take *vi-dhūpeti* to mean “to scatter the smoke,” and *sandhūpeti*, as the antonym, “to smoke up (the place).” Perhaps, this is what the Saṃyutta Commentary tries to do in this gloss: *vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti ti nibbāpeti na jālāpeti*, “*vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti* means ‘he extinguishes, he does not kindle’” (SA 2:296), which finds support in the Sutta Nipāta Commentary, where the participle *vidhāpitā* is glossed as *daddhā*, “burnt, consumed (by fire),”²⁵ hence “extinguished” (*nibbāpeti*). The imagery here is clearly in reference to attaining nirvana, where the fire of suffering is out for good.

3 Sutta practice

This is an excellent and efficacious sutta for insight cultivation or spiritual reflection: it should either be reflectively read aloud for the meditation of the congregation, or recorded and replayed for personal reflection. Communal reading of such suttas will have a similar beneficial effect. Each sutta verse or section could be read by an individual or by a section of the gathering in turn for variety.

The sutta’s efficacy lies in one’s meditating on it in all its fullness. While listening to such a sutta, one should not analyze it in any way, but simply let it sink in (like listening to good music). Let the sutta speak for itself, as it were.

In due course, its import of wisdom would fruit, perhaps gradually, perhaps in a burst of insight. In fact, constant reflection on such a sutta in this manner serves better spiritually than a traditional puja, especially when one is ignorant or uncertain of the import of the puja passages. An abridged version of such suttas, however, may be helpful only in giving an academic or intellectual appreciation of it, or simply as an introductory summary.

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²² V 1:2 (*vidhūpayam Māra, senam*); S 1:14, 3:90 = A 5:325; S 4:210.

²³ S 3:89; Pm 2:107.

²⁴ V 1:225; Sn p15 (= *samantā dhūpāyati*, SnA 154).

²⁵ SnA 2:409 ad Sn 472. See **Sundarika Bhāra, dvāja S** (Sn 3.4, v472) = SD 22.2.

Table. Summary of the Khajjanīya Sutta teachings

	Form (<i>rūpa</i>)	Feeling (<i>vedanā</i>)	Perception (<i>saññā</i>)	Formations (<i>saṅkhāra</i>)	Consciousness (<i>viññāṇa</i>)
1 Definition [§§5-9]	“It is transformed” (<i>rūpatī ti</i>) by cold, hunger, etc ²⁶	“It feels” (<i>vedayantī ti</i>) pleasure, pain, neutral feeling	“It perceives” (<i>sañjānātī ti</i>) colours, etc	“It constructs” (<i>abhisankhā- rontī ti</i>) the conditioned	“It cognizes” (<i>viñānātī ti</i>) tastes, etc
2 Devoured [§§10-15]	I <u>am</u> devoured by the aggregates. In the past, too, I <u>was</u> devoured in the same way. If I were to seek delight in the future, I <u>will be</u> devoured again just the same. Let me practise letting go leading to revulsion.				
3 Disowning [§§16-20]	The aggregates are <u>impermanent, suffering, not self</u> . As such, they should not be regarded as “This is mine; this I am; this is my self.”				
4 Totality formula [§§21-25]	Whatever kind of aggregate there is, whether <i>past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near</i> , all feeling should be seen as it really is with right wisdom thus: “ <u>This is not mine; this I am not this is not my self.</u> ” [For meanings of terms, see nn in text.]				
5 Learners [§§26-30]	The learner (a saint of the path) <u>dismantles</u> the aggregates; he does not cling to them.				
6 Adept [§§31-37]	The adept (the arhat-become) feels <u>revulsion</u> towards the aggregates; he neither dismantles nor clings to them.				

²⁶ Cf **Vibhaṅga Comy**: “it makes visible, hence it is form” (*rūpayatī ti rūpaṃ*) (VbhA §211/45).

The Discourse on the Devoured

(S 22.79/3:86-91)

1-2 At Sāvattihī.

What is recalled?

3 “Bhikshus, those recluses and brahmins who recall many past lives, all recall the five aggregates of clinging, or a certain one amongst them.²⁷

What are the five?

4 When recalling thus, bhikshus: ‘I had such form in the past,’ it is just form that one recalls.

When recalling thus: ‘I had such feeling in the past,’ it is just feeling that one recalls.

When recalling thus: ‘I had such perception in the past,’ it is just perception that one recalls.

When recalling thus: ‘I had such formations in the past,’ it is just formations that one recalls.

When recalling thus: ‘I had such consciousness in the past,’ it is just consciousness that one recalls.

Definitions of the aggregates

5 And what, bhikshus, is called **form** (*rūpa*)?²⁸

It is transformed [molested] (*ruppati*), bhikshus, therefore it is called form.²⁹

Transformed [molested] by what?

Transformed [molested] by cold, transformed by heat, transformed by hunger, transformed by thirst, transformed by the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and serpents.

It is transformed, bhikshus, therefore it is called form.

6 And what, bhikshus, is called **feeling** (*vedanā*)?

It feels (*vedayati*), bhikshus, therefore it is called feeling.³⁰

And what does it feel?

It feels pleasure, it feels pain, [87] it feels neither-pain-nor-pleasure.

It feels, bhikshus, therefore it is called feeling.

²⁷ Comy says that this does not refer to the recollection of lives by direct knowledge (*abhiññā*), but to the recollection of one’s past lives by way of insight (*vipassanā*) (SA 2:289). **Bodhi**: “[Comy] seems to understand the purport of the Buddha’s statement to be that they *deliberately* recollect the past in terms of the aggregates. I take the point differently, ie, that though these ascetics imagine they are recalling the past experience of a permanent self, they are only recollecting past configurations of the five aggregates. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the next paragraph, which reduces first-person memories (*evam, rūpo ahoṣim*) to experiences framed solely in terms of the aggregates (*rūpaṃ yeva*). It can also draw support from the parallel paragraph opening [of **Samanupassanā** S, S 22.47/3:46].” (S:B 1069 n108). Comy entitles this passage “the emptiness section” (*suññatā pabba*) (SA 2:289). **VbhA 3-6** gives more elaborate parallel comy.

²⁸ *Kiñ ca bhikkhave rūpaṃ vādetha*. Comy says that although emptiness (*suññatā*) is discussed here, it is not fully defined because the characteristic of emptiness (*suññatā, lakkhaṇa*) has not been discussed. It merely introduces the characteristic of emptiness. Using the simile of a cow, Comy says that the cow is like emptiness, and the cow’s characteristics are like the characteristic of emptiness: one discerns the cow by its characteristics; even so one will be able to discern emptiness by noticing its characteristics (SA 2:289 f). On form, see SD 17.2a.

²⁹ *Ruppātī ti kho bhikkhave tasmā rupan ti vuccati*. Although the vb *ruppati* and the n *rūpa* look related, their roots are not related. **Ruppātī** is a passive vb derived from √RUP = Skt LUP, to break, injure, spoil. SED: *rup* has *rupyate*, “to suffer violent or racking pain.” PED defines *ruppati* as “to be vexed, oppressed, hurt, molested,” & refs to S 3:86 & Sn 1121. Comy: *Ruppātī ti kuppati ghaṭṭiyati pīḷiyati, bhijjati ti attho* (It is transformed means it is disturbed, stricken, oppressed, broken) (SA 2:290). Comys gives examples of how some existences (eg the cold hells, hot hells, intergalactic “black holes,” etc) “deform” those being there (SA 2:290 f; VbhA 3-5). SA adds that being “deformed” is the specific characteristic (*paccatta, lakkhaṇa*) of form, which distinguishes it from feeling and the other aggregates, but they share the general characteristics (*sāmañña, lakkhaṇa*), namely, impermanence, suffering, and not self (SA 2:292). See S:B 1070 n110 (where Bodhi also points out Woodward’s misunderstanding of comy).

³⁰ *Vediyantī ti kho bhikkhave tasmā vedanā ti vuccati*. Comy: It is the feeling itself that feels, not another, that is, not a being or a person (SA 2:292). In other words, there is only feeling, no feeler, ie no entity that feels.

7 And what, bhikshus, is called **perception** (*saññā*)?

It perceives (*sañjānāti*), bhikshus, therefore it is called perception.³¹

And what does it perceive?

It perceives blue, it perceives yellow, it perceives red, it perceives white.

It perceives, bhikshus, therefore it is called perception.

8 And what, bhikshus, is called **formations** (*saṅkhāra*)?

They construct the conditioned (*saṅkhatam abhisankharonti*), bhikshus, therefore they are called formations.³²

And what is the conditioned that they construct?

They construct conditioned form as form.³³

They construct conditioned feeling as feeling.

They construct conditioned perception as perception.

They construct conditioned formations as formations.³⁴

They construct conditioned consciousness as consciousness.³⁵

They construct the conditioned, bhikshus therefore they are called formations.

9 And what, bhikshus, is called **consciousness** (*viññāna*)?

It cognizes (*vijānāti*), bhikshus, therefore it is called consciousness.³⁶

And what does it cognize?

It cognizes sour, it cognizes bitter, it cognizes spicy hot, it cognizes sweet, it cognizes sharp, it cognizes mild [not sharp], it cognizes salty, it cognizes bland [unsalted].³⁷

It cognizes, bhikshus, therefore it is called consciousness.

Devoured by the aggregates

10 Therein, bhikshus, the instructed noble disciple reflects thus:

11 ‘I am right now being devoured by form.³⁸

³¹ *Sañjānāti ti kho bhikkhave tasmā saññā ti vuccati*. On *saññā*, see SD 17.5. Sue Hamilton, in *Identity and Experience*, points out that although the def of *viññāna* here encroaches on that of *saññā*, we should understand that *saññā* does the actual discrimination of the five sensory objects, identifying say, a taste, more precisely, while *viññāna* “is the awareness by which we experience every stage of the cognitive process, including the process of discriminating” (1996a:92). See S:B 1072 n114; also *Viññāna* = SD 17.8a.1.

³² *Saṅkhatam abhisankharoti ti kho bhikkhave tasmā saṅkhāra ti vuccanti*, lit “Bhikshus, they construct the constructed, therefore they are called constructions.” The English language is not rich enough to show the connection between the object *saṅkhata*, the vb *abhisankharoti*, and the subject *saṅkhāra*, all of which come from the same root and stem. See Bodhi’s n (S:B 1071 n112) and his discussion on *saṅkhāra* (S:B 44-47), & also (Pacetana) Ratha-kāra S (A 3.15/1:110-113) = SD 17.7 Introd. “This passage shows the active role of *cetanā*, volition, in constructing experienced reality. Not only does volition influence the objective content of the experience, but it also shapes the psychophysical organism within which it has arisen and, via its role as kamma, shapes the future configurations of the five aggregates to be produced by kamma. In this connection, see [(Nava Purāṇa) Kamma S (S 35.146) = SD 4.12] on the six sense bases as ‘old kamma.’” (S:B 1071 n112)

³³ All eds read: *rūpam rūpattāya saṅkhatam abhisankharonti*, and so, mutatis mutandis, for the other aggregates, except for *viññāna*, where PTS prob has wr *viññānatthāy*: see S:B 1071 n113.

³⁴ All eds read: *saṅkhāre saṅkhāratthāya saṅkhatam abhisankharonti*. Comy: The special characteristic of formations is intention (SA 2:292).

³⁵ All eds read: *viññānam voññānatthāya saṅkhatam abhisankharonti*, except PTS: *viññānatthāy* (prob wr): see S:B 1071 n113.

³⁶ *Vijānāti ti kho bhikkhave tasmā viññānan ti vuccanti*. On consciousness, see *Viññāna* = SD 17.8a.

³⁷ The 8 kinds of taste are, respectively, *ambila*, *tittika*, *kaṭuka*, *madhuka*, *khārika*, *akhārika*, *loṇaka*, *aloṇaka*. See also *Sūda S* (S 47.8/5:149-152) = SD 28.15, qu at Vism 4.122/150 f.

³⁸ *Aham kho etarahi rūpena khajjāmi*. Comy: The first two sections—the emptiness section (*suññatā pabba*) and that on the characteristic on not-self (*anattā pabba*)—have discussed the characteristic of not-self. Now the characteristic of suffering is discussed. Now, form does not devour one like a dog devouring a piece of meat by

In the past, too, I was devoured by form in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present form.

If I were to seek delight in the future form, then in the future, too, I will be devoured by form in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present form.’

Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to a past form. He does not delight in a future form. He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present form, for its fading away, for its cessation.³⁹

12 ‘I am devoured by feeling.

In the past, too, I was devoured by feeling in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present feeling.

If I were to seek delight in the future feeling, then in the future, too, I will be devoured by feeling in just the same way [88] that I am now being devoured by the present feeling.’

Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to a past feeling. He does not delight in a future feeling. He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present feeling, for its fading away, for its cessation.

13 ‘I am devoured by perception.

In the past, too, I was devoured by perception in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present perception.

If I were to seek delight in the future perception, then in the future, too, I will be devoured by perception in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present perception.’

Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to a past perception. He does not delight in a future perception. He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present perception, for its fading away, for its cessation.

14 ‘I am devoured by formations.

In the past, too, I was devoured by formations in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present formations.

If I were to seek delight in the future formations, then in the future, too, I will be devoured by formations in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present formations.’

Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to a past formations. He does not delight in future formations. He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present formations, for their fading away, for their cessation.

15 ‘I am devoured by consciousness.

In the past, too, I was devoured by consciousness in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present consciousness.

If I were to seek delight in the future consciousness, then in the future, too, I will be devoured by consciousness in just the same way that I am now being devoured by the present consciousness.’

Having reflected thus, he is indifferent to a past consciousness. He does not delight in a future consciousness. He practises for sake of revulsion towards the present consciousness, for its fading away, for its cessation.

Disowning the aggregates

16 What do you think, bhikshus? Is form permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“That which is impermanent, bhikshus, is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

“That which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus, ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self?’⁴⁰

tearing it apart, but rather in a way that a soiled garment might cause discomfort, as when one says, “This dress is killing me” (*khādati maṃ vatthan ti*) (SA 2:271 f).

³⁹ This concluding reflection, appearing for each of the aggregates here [§§11-15], is almost identical to those **Atītānāgata, paccupanna 1-3** (S 22.911/3:19 f).

⁴⁰ These are the threefold graspings (*ti, vidha gāha*), or threefold ownings: “This is mine” (*etam mama*) arises through craving (*taṇhā, gāha*); “This I am” (*eso ’ham asmi*) arises through conceit (*māna, gāha*); “This is my self”

“No, bhante.”

17 What do you think, bhikshus? Is feeling permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“That which is impermanent, bhikshus, is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

“That which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus, ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self?’

“No, bhante.”

18 What do you think, bhikshus? Is perception permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“That which is impermanent, bhikshus, is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

“That which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus, ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self?’

“No, bhante.”

19 What do you think, bhikshus? Are formations permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“That which are impermanent, bhikshus, are they suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

“That which are impermanent, suffering, subject to change, are they fit to be regarded thus, ‘These are mine; these I am; these are my self?’

“No, bhante.” [89]

20 What do you think, bhikshus? Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“That which is impermanent, bhikshus, is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

“That which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change, is it fit to be regarded thus, ‘This is mine; this I am; this is my self?’

“No, bhante.”

The totality formula

21 Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of form there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near,⁴¹ all forms should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:

‘This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.’

(*eso me attā*) arises through wrong view (*diṭṭhi, gāha*). See also **Khemaka S** (S 22.89) = SD 14.13(4); **Anattā, -lakkhaṇa S** (S 3:68 = SD 1.3); also SA 2:269.

⁴¹ This “totality formula” classification of the aggregates is explained in detail in **Vibhaṅga** and briefly in **Visuddhi, magga**: “internal” (*ajjhata*) = physical sense-organs; “external” (*bahiddhā*) = physical sense-objects; “gross” (*oḷārika*) = that which impinges (physical internal and external senses, with touch = earth, wind, fire); “subtle” (*sukhuma*) = that which does not impinge (mind, mind-objects, mind-consciousness, and water); “inferior” (*hīna*) = desirable physical sense-objects (form, sound, smell, taste, and touch); “superior” (*paṇīta*) = desirable physical sense-objects (form etc); “far” (*dūre*) = subtle objects (“difficult to penetrate”); “near” (*santike*) = gross objects (“easy to penetrate”) (Vbh 1-13; Vism 14.73/450 f; Abhs 6.7). **Gethin**: “Whether or not the details of the Vibhaṅga exposition are accepted as valid for the *nikāyas*, it seems clear that this formula is intended to indicate how each *khandha* is to be seen as a class of states, manifold in nature and displaying a considerable variety and also a certain hierarchy” (1986:41). See Gethin 1986:40 f; Karunadasa 1967:38f; Boisvert 1995:43-48. As regards the terms “internal” (*ajjhata*) and “external” (*bahiddhā*), it should be noted that they have two applications: (1) the aggregates (*khandhā*) composing a particular “person” are “internal” to them and anything else is “external”; (2) the sense-organs are “internal” and their objects—which may include aspects of the person’s own body or mind, which are “internal” in the first sense—are “external.” Boisvert (1995: 43, 47), however overlooks these applications.

22 Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of feeling there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all feelings should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:

‘This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.’

23 Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of perception there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all perceptions should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:

‘This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.’

24 Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of formations there are, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all formations should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:

‘They are not mine; these I am not; these are not my self.’

25 Therefore, bhikshus, whatever kind of consciousness there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all consciousnesses should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom, thus:

‘This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.’

The learners

26 Bhikshus, this is called a noble disciple who dismantles [diminishes] and does not pile up,⁴² he abandons and does not cling; he dissociates from and does not associate with; he extinguishes and does not kindle.⁴³

27 And what is it that he dismantles and does not pile up?

He dismantles <u>form</u> ,	he does not pile it up.
He dismantles <u>feeling</u> ,	he does not pile it up.
He dismantles <u>perception</u> ,	he does not pile it up.
He dismantles <u>formations</u> ,	he does not pile them up.
He dismantles <u>consciousness</u> ,	he does not pile it up.

28 And what is it that he abandons and does not cling to?

He abandons <u>form</u> ,	he does not cling to it.
He abandons <u>feeling</u> ,	he does not cling to it.
He abandons <u>perception</u> ,	he does not cling to it.
He abandons <u>formations</u> ,	he does not cling to them.
He abandons <u>consciousness</u> ,	he does not cling to it.

29 And what is it that he dissociates from, that he does not associate with?

He dissociates from <u>form</u> ,	he does not associate with it.
He dissociates from <u>feeling</u> ,	he does not associate with it.
He dissociates from <u>perception</u> ,	he does not associate with it.
He dissociates from <u>formations</u> ,	he does not associate with them.
He dissociates from <u>consciousness</u> ,	he does not associate with it. [90]

30 And what is it that he extinguishes and does not kindle?

He extinguishes <u>form</u> ,	he does not kindle it.
He extinguishes <u>feeling</u> ,	he does not kindle it.
He extinguishes <u>perception</u> ,	he does not kindle it.
He extinguishes <u>formations</u> ,	he does not kindle them.
He extinguishes <u>consciousness</u> ,	he does not kindle it.

⁴² That is, a saint of the path, short of the arhat-become (one who has attained the fruition of arhathood).

⁴³ *Ayam vuccati bhikkhave ariya, sāvako apacināti no ācināti, pajahati na upādiyati, visineti no ussineti, vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti.* Here I follow Be, Ce, Se & Comy. Comy glosses the last two pairs of terms thus: *Visineti na ussineti ti vikirati na sampiṇḍeti; vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti ti nibbāpeti na jālāpeti* (SA 2:296). PTS has *viseneti, usseneti* (on which, see SD 12.4 Introd 6.8). Cf **Pema S** (A 4.200/2:214-216). See S:B 1073 n117.

The adept

- 31 Seeing thus, bhikshus, the noble disciple
feels revulsion towards form,
and towards feeling,
and towards perception,
and towards formations,
and towards consciousness.

Through feeling revulsion, he becomes dispassionate.

Through being dispassionate, (his mind) is liberated.

When it is liberated, there arises the knowledge: ‘Freed am I!’

He understands:

‘Destroyed is birth. The holy life has been lived. What needs to be done has been done. There is no more of this state of being.’

32 Bhikshus, this is called a noble disciple who neither dismantles nor piles up. He dwells, having dismantled: he neither abandons nor clings. He dwells, having abandoned: he neither dissociates from nor associates with. He dwells, having dissociated from: he neither extinguishes nor kindles.⁴⁴

33 And what is it, bhikshus, that he neither dismantles nor piles up, but having extinguished it, he dwells?

Having dismantled it, he dwells: he neither dismantles form nor piles it up.⁴⁵

Having dismantled it, he dwells: he neither dismantles feelings nor piles it up.

Having dismantled it, he dwells: he neither dismantles perception nor piles it up.

Having dismantled it, he dwells: he neither dismantles formations nor piles them up.

Having dismantled it, he dwells: he neither dismantles consciousness nor piles it up.

34 And having dismantled it, he dwells—what is it, bhikshus, that he neither abandons nor clings to?

Having abandoned it, he dwells: he neither abandons form nor clings to it.

Having abandoned it, he dwells: he neither abandons feelings nor clings to it.

Having abandoned it, he dwells: he neither abandons perception nor clings to it.

Having abandoned it, he dwells: he neither abandons formations nor clings to them.

Having abandoned it, he dwells: he neither abandons consciousness nor clings to it.

35 And having abandoned it, he dwells—what is it, bhikshus, that he neither dissociates from nor associates with?

Having dissociated from it, he dwells: he neither dissociates from form nor associates with it.

Having dissociated from it, he dwells: he neither dissociates from feelings nor associates with it.

Having dissociated from it, he dwells: he neither dissociates from perception nor associates with it.

Having dissociated from it, he dwells: he neither dissociates from formations nor associates with them.

Having dissociated from it, he dwells: he neither dissociates from consciousness nor associates with it.

36 And having dissociated from it, he dwells—what is it, bhikshus, that he neither extinguishes nor kindles?

Having extinguished it, he neither extinguishes form nor kindles it.

Having extinguished it, he neither extinguishes feelings nor kindles it.

Having extinguished it, he neither extinguishes perception nor kindles it.

Having extinguished it, he neither extinguishes formations nor kindles them.

Having extinguished it, he neither extinguishes consciousness nor kindles it.

37 Having extinguished it, he dwells thus liberated in mind—this monk, bhikshus, the devas together with Indra,⁴⁶ the devas together with Brahmā, the devas together with Prajāpati, worship from afar. [91]

⁴⁴ *Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu nev’ācināti na apacināti, apacinitvā ṭhito n’eva pajahati na upādiyati, pajahitvā ṭhito n’eva visineti na ussineti, visinetvā ṭhito n’eva vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti.* This refers to the arhat (SA 2:296). The object—the aggregates—is omitted in this Pali construction, but is implicit. This construction is deliberate with the aim of reflecting the fact that the arhat has given up all the aggregates of clinging, and also showing that there are only deeds, no doer.

⁴⁵ *Vidhūpetvā ṭhito kiñca n’ev’ācināti na apacināti.*

Homage to you, O thoroughbred of men!⁴⁷
 Homage to you, O highest of men!
 We ourselves do not directly know
 Relying on what that you meditate.

— evaṃ —

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⁴⁶ See Intro (1) above. On Indra (Shakra) and Prajāpati, see **Dhajagga S** (S 11.3/1”218-220) = SD 15.5 Introd 3. On Brahmā, see **Āyācana S** (S 6.1/1:136-138) = SD 12.2 Introd. See also **Sigāl’ovāda S** (D 31) = SD 4.1 Introd 2. **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22) mentions how these 3 Vedic high gods, when they seek the consciousness of one liberated, are unable to find it (M 22.36/1:140) = SD 3.13.

⁴⁷ This stanza is found in **Sandha S** (A 11.10), where it is appears thrice and clearly fits the context better than here (A 11.10/5:324-326). The mention of these Vedic gods is for the benefit of those who in the Buddha’s time believe in them, but showing them to be still unliberated and less knowing than an arhat.