

## Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta

### The Greater Discourse to Māluṅkyā,putta

[The 5 mental fetters and the latent tendencies]

(Majjhima Nikāya 64/1:432-437)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2007

#### Introduction

**1 TITLE.** The **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** is also called “Mahā Māluṅkyā Sutta.” However, if we are to accept that his mother’s name is Māluṅkyā, then the more correct reading would be “Māluṅkyā,putta,” that is, “the son of Māluṅkyā.” However, in compounds, the long terminal vowel may be shortened, as in “Metta,sutta.”<sup>1</sup> The Siamese Tipiṭaka has the title as “Mahā Māluṅky’ovāda Sutta,” “the discourse on the advice to Māluṅkyā.” The sutta has a parallel in the Madhyama Āgama (MĀ 205 = T1.778c-780b), entitled “the five lower fetters” (五下分結).<sup>2</sup>

**2 MĀLUṅKYĀ,PUTTA** was a typical man of the world, possessive, pleasure-loving and intellectually-inclined, but religious by nature.<sup>3</sup> The following discourses are given on account of Māluṅkyā,putta:

- |                                 |                 |   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| • Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta     | M 63/1:426-432  | The 10 undeclared questions.                  |
| • Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta     | M 64/1:432-437  | The 5 mental fetters & the latent tendencies. |
| • Māluṅkyā,brāhmiṇī,putta Sutta | A 4.254/2:248 f | Four ways how craving arises.                 |
| • Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta          | S 35.95/4:72-76 | Māluṅkyā,putta goes into solitary retreat.    |
| • Thera,gāthā                   | Tha 794-817     | Satipatthana = S 35.95.                       |
| • Thera,gāthā                   | Tha 399-404     | As an arhat, he visits his relatives.         |

In the **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** (M 64), Māluṅkyā,putta’s response to the Buddha’s question on the five lower aggregates becomes the occasion for the Buddha’s teaching on the five lower fetters [§2]<sup>4</sup> and the latent tendencies (*anusaya*).<sup>5</sup>

The Commentaries distinguish the mental fetters as occurring on three levels:

- (1) the latent tendency (*anusaya*), where they remain *dormant* until the right conditions arise [§3];
- (2) the obsessive level (*pariyuṭṭhāna*), where they arise and *habitually* seize the mind [§5];
- (3) the transgressive level (*vītikāma*), where they *motivate* unwholesome bodily action and speech.<sup>6</sup>

The point of the Buddha’s rebuke is that the fetters, even when not active, lie dormant as latent tendencies (*anusaya*), as long as they have not been destroyed by supramundane path.<sup>7</sup>

The significance of this Sutta highlights the difference between theoretical understanding of Buddhist teachings (the five mental fetters) and a direct personal experience of liberation from them (through the dhyanas and mindfulness). While Māluṅkyā,putta has a good grasp of the five mental fetters as *theory*, he has yet to experience the *liberation* from them as practice.

<sup>1</sup> Sn 1.8/25 f = Kh 9/8 f.

<sup>2</sup> See Thich Minh Chau 1991:64, 103 f & Analayo 2005 under M 1:432.

<sup>3</sup> For details on Māluṅkyā,putta, see **Māluṅkyā,putta S** (S 35.95) = SD 5.9 Intro (1).

<sup>4</sup> There are **the 10 fetters**, namely: self-identity view (*sakkāya,dīṭṭhi*), persistent doubt (*vicikicchā*), attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*), sensual lust (*kāma,rāga*), repulsion (*paṭigha*), greed for form existence (*rūpa,rāga*), greed for formless existence (*arūpa,rāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 5:13, Vbh 377). In some places, no. 5 (*kāma,rāga*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya*). The lower fetters are so called because they lead to birth in the sense-spheres.

<sup>5</sup> The latent tendencies (*anusaya*) are so called because they always lie dormant in the mental continuum (*bhavaṅga*), and arise whenever the conditions are right. On the latent tendencies, see **Sallatthana S** (S 36.6) = SD 5.5 Intro (3 kinds); **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18.8) = SD 6.14 (7 kinds); & **Anusaya** = SD 31.3.

<sup>6</sup> See eg **Mūla S** (A 3.69/1:201-205) = SD 18.2.

<sup>7</sup> See **Sīla Samādhi Paññā** = SD 21.6(5).

It is also interesting that while the Buddha's admonitions begins with his questioning of Māluṅkyā,putta, the closing is actually addressed to Ānanda (and to us today). Nothing is lost to Māluṅkyā,putta, however, as **the Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** (S 39.95) records that, in due course, he goes into solitary retreat and becomes an arhat.<sup>8</sup>

**3 THE LOWER MENTAL FETTERS.** The sutta opens with the Buddha asking the assembled monks if they remember his teachings on the five lower fetters, that is, breaking which we attain non-return.<sup>9</sup> Māluṅkyā,putta replies that he remembers and lists them correctly [§2]. The Buddha, however, chides him for merely saying so: for, if his answer were correct, even an infant lying on his back would not have the five fetters, but yet even an infant have them as latent tendencies [§3].

This is an interesting occasion when the Buddha gives an appropriate teaching after reading the listener's mind. The Commentary explains that the Buddha corrects Māluṅkyā,putta because he has assumed that bondage occurs only when the fetters are actually present in the mind (MA 3:144).

**4 SEVEN WAYS OF LIBERATION.** Ānanda then at once invites the Buddha to give teachings on the five lower fetters and the latent tendencies [§4]. The Buddha begins by distinguishing the ignorant worldling from the wise disciple [§§5-6], illustrating it with two parables [§§7-8]. The main teaching is quite straightforward: the practitioner may attain liberation by reflecting on the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self characteristics of the dhyanas [§§9-12], or of the first three attainments [§§13-15].

The Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta thus gives seven ways of attaining liberation, by the attainment of calm (*samatha*), leading to the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*), or "insight preceded by calm" (*samatha,pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*), that is, on emerging from dhyana, one contemplates on it as an object of insight, reflecting it as having arisen through conditions, especially volition.<sup>10</sup>

The Buddha declares that in doing so—that is, applying insight to our experience of the dhyanas or the attainments—we will attain liberation in one of two ways: either as an arhat, if all his influxes<sup>11</sup> are destroyed, or as a non-returner, by the destruction of the five lower fetters, "if he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas"<sup>12</sup> [§9 etc].

**5 FORMLESS DHYANAS.** Interestingly, the last attainment—the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*n'eva,saññā,nāsaññ'āyatana*)—is not mentioned. **The Anupada Sutta** (M 111) repeats all the stages of **the Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** [§§9-15], but adds the last attainment, "neither-perception-nor-non-perception."<sup>13</sup> A similar method of liberation by applying insight to a dhyana or attainment as here (§§9-15) is found in **the Aṭṭhaka,nagara Sutta** (M 52), but where "deliverance of mind" through the four divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*)<sup>14</sup> replaces the usual form-dhyanas, followed by the three formless attainments.<sup>15</sup>

**6 LIBERATION OF MIND AND LIBERATION BY WISDOM.** The Commentary says that the Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta is an example of a discourse on "calm and insight" (*samatha,vipassanā*) (MA

<sup>8</sup> S 35.95/4:72-76.

<sup>9</sup> On the non-returner (*anāgāmi*), see **Sa,upadisesa S** (A 9.12/4:378-382) = SD 3.3(3)..

<sup>10</sup> See **Aṭṭhaka,nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350) = SD 41.2, where Comy says that this is *samatha,pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*; see **(Yuganaddha) Paṭipadā S** (A 4.170/2:157) = SD 41.5.

<sup>11</sup> "Mental influxes," *āsava*. The term *āsava* (lit "inflow, outflow") comes from *ā-savati* "flows towards" (ie either "into" or "out" towards the observer). It has been variously translated as influxes, taints ("deadly taints", RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists four *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām'āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav'āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh'āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These four are also known as "floods" (*ogha*) and "yokes" (*yoga*). The list of three influxes (omitting the influx of views) [43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhatness. See BDict: *āsava*.

<sup>12</sup> See §9n for explanation.

<sup>13</sup> M 111.5-20/3:25-29.

<sup>14</sup> M 52.4-11/1:350-352.

<sup>15</sup> M 52.12-14/1:352.

3:146). The sutta closes with the Buddha, in answer Ānanda's question, explaining that the arhat liberated of mind and the arhat liberated by wisdom differ only by way of their faculties [§16].<sup>16</sup>

At the close of the Sutta, Ānanda asks the Buddha about the difference between the “liberation of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*) and liberation by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*). The former is liberation by mental concentration, that is, liberation through destruction of the mental hindrances, while the former is liberation through insight (A 1:60). One who is “liberated by wisdom” “may not have reached the eight liberations (*vimokkha*) in his own body, but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed” (M 70.16/1:478). All arhats are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into two types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain the eight liberations (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*),<sup>17</sup> which include the four formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called “liberated both ways,” that is, liberated from the physical body by means of the formless dhyanas, and from all defilements by the path of arhathood.

The Commentary adds that amongst those practitioners who follow the way of calm (*samatha*), the one who emphasizes on mental unification is said to gain “liberation of mind” (*ceto, vimutti*), and the one who emphasizes on wisdom, “liberation by wisdom” (*paññā, vimutti*). The two chief disciples won arhathood by emphasizing on both calm and insight, that is, they are “liberated both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*), but Sāriputta is one liberated by wisdom, and Mahā Moggallāna, one liberated of mind. Thus the reason for the difference is in their faculties (*indriya*), that is, between the predominance of the concentration faculty and the wisdom faculty. (MA 3:147 f)

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<sup>16</sup> The differences between the two types of liberation are given in **Mahā, nidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kūṭāgiri S** (M 1:477 f).

<sup>17</sup> For full list of the 8 deliverances, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15.35/ 2:70 f) = SD 5.17.35. See also D 3:262, 228; **Vimokkha S**, A 8.66/4:306; also M 120.37/3:103 = SD 3.4.37.

## The Greater Discourse to Māluṅkyā,putta

(M 64/1:432-437)

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's Park in Jeta's Grove near Sāvathī. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:

“Bhikshus!”

“Venerable sir!” the monks answered to the Blessed One in assent.

### The five lower fetters

2 The Blessed One said this:

“Do you, bhikshus, remember the five lower fetters<sup>18</sup> as taught by me?”

When this was said, the venerable Māluṅkyā,putta said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, I do remember the five lower fetters as taught by the Blessed One.”

“And how, Māluṅkyā,putta, do you remember the five lower fetters as taught by me?”

“(1) Self-identity view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*), bhante, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One.

(2) Doubt (*vicikicchā*), bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One.

(3) Attachment of rules and rituals (*sīla-b.bata,parāmāsa*), bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One.

(4) Sense-desire, bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One.

(5) Ill will (*vyāpāda*), bhante, I remember, is a lower fetter as taught by the Blessed One.

Thus, bhante, do I remember the five lower fetters as taught by the Blessed One.”

### The latent tendencies

3 “And, Māluṅkyā,putta, to whom do you remember the five lower fetters as having been taught thus by me.<sup>19</sup>

Would not the wanderers of other sects prove you, Māluṅkyā,putta, false with the simile of the infant?<sup>20</sup>

(1) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘self-identity’ (*sakkāya*),<sup>21</sup> [433] for, how could the self-identity view arise for him? Yet, there lies the latent tendency<sup>22</sup> of self-identity view in him.

(2) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘dharma’ (*dhamma*); for, how could doubt regarding dharmas arise for him? Yet, there lies the latent tendency of doubt in him.

(3) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘virtue’ (*sīla*); for, how could attachment to rules and rituals with regards to moral virtue arise for him? Yet, there lies the latent tendency of attachment to rules and rituals in him.

(4) For, Māluṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘sense-desire’ (*kāma*); for, how could sense-desire in sense-pleasure arise for him? Yet, there lies the latent tendency of sense-desire in him.

<sup>18</sup> The five “lower fetters” (*oram,bhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni*) are so called because they hold us back to be reborn in the sense-sphere. There are totally destroyed only by non-return.

<sup>19</sup> Comy explains that the Buddha corrects Māluṅkyā,putta because he holds the view a person is fettered by the defilements only when they assail him, but at other times he is not fettered so. (MA 3:144)

<sup>20</sup> This is a popular parable is applied differently here: **Abhaya Rāja,kumāra** (M 58.7/1:394 f), **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 64.3/1:432 f), **Cātumā S** (“the young calf,” M 67.10/1:459), **Samāṇa,maṇḍika S** (M 78.8/2:24 f).

<sup>21</sup> Cf **Samāṇa,maṇḍika S** (M 78.8/2:24), “body” (*kāya*) is used, and where Comy says that the baby does not know the difference between its own body and those of others (MA 3:267).

<sup>22</sup> On latent tendencies, see Intro (2).

(5) For, Mālūṅkyā,putta, even a young tender infant, lying on its back, does not have the notion of ‘being’ (*satta*); for, how could ill will towards beings arise for him? Yet, there lies the latent tendency of ill will in him.<sup>23</sup>

Would not the wanderers of other sects prove you, Mālūṅkyā,putta, false with the simile of the infant?”

### The uninstructed worldling

4 When this was spoken, the venerable Ānanda said this:

“This is the time, Blessed One, this is the time, Sugata [well-gone one], for the Blessed One to teach the five lower fetters. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the monks will remember it!”

“Then, listen Ānanda, pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied to the Blessed One in assent.

The Blessed One said this:

5 OBSESSIVE LEVEL OF DEFILEMENTS.<sup>24</sup> “Here, Ānanda, an uninstructed worldling [ignorant ordinary] person, who has no regard for the noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma, who has no regard for the true individuals and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma,

(1) dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by self-identity view, and he does not understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen self-identity view.

This self-identity view of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

(2) He dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by doubt, and he does not understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen doubt.

This doubt of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

(3) He dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by attachment to rules and rituals, and he does not understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen attachment to rules and rituals.

This attachment to rules and rituals of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

(4) He dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by sense-desire, and he does not understand, according to reality, [434] the escape from the arisen sense-desire.

This sense-desire of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

(5) He dwells with a mind obsessed and overcome by ill will, and he does not understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen ill will.

This ill will of his, grown in strength, undisputed, is a lower fetter.

### The instructed noble disciple

6 But, Ānanda, an instructed noble disciple, who has regard for the noble ones and is skilled and well disciplined in their Dharma, who has regard for the true individuals and is skilled and well disciplined in their Dharma,

(1) does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by self-identity view, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen self-identity view.

This self-identity view of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.<sup>25</sup>

(2) He does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by doubt, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen doubt.

This doubt of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.

(3) He does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by attachment to rules and rituals, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen attachment to rules and rituals.

This attachment to rules and rituals of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.

(4) He does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by sense-desire, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen sense-desire.

<sup>23</sup> On these latent tendencies (*anusaya*), see *Anusaya* = SD 31.3 (1.2).

<sup>24</sup> See Intro (2).

<sup>25</sup> Comy: The fetter and the latent tendency are not really distinct, but it is the same defilement that is called a “fetter” in the sense of binding, and an “underlying tendency” in the sense of being unabandoned. (MA 3:144)

This sense-desire of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.

(5) He does *not* dwell with a mind obsessed or overcome by ill will, and he *does* understand, according to reality, the escape from the arisen ill will.

This ill will of his is abandoned along with its latent tendency.

### There is the path to abandoning the fetters

**7a** THE PARABLE OF THE HEARTWOOD. Ānanda, there is a path, a way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

It is impossible that anyone shall know or see or abandon the five lower fetters without relying on that path, that way.

Ānanda, just as it is impossible for a man to cut out the heartwood of a great tree, standing, possessed of heartwood, without having first cut off the bark and sapwood,<sup>26</sup> even so, Ānanda, it is impossible that anyone shall know or see or abandon the five lower fetters without relying on that path, that way.

**7b** Ānanda, there is a path, a way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters. [435]

But it is possible that one shall know or see or abandon the five lower fetters by relying on that path, that way.

Ānanda, just as it is possible for a man to cut out the heartwood of a great tree, standing, possessed of heartwood, by having first cut off the bark and sapwood, even so, Ānanda, it is possible that one shall know or see or abandon the five lower fetters by relying on that path, that way.

**8a** THE PARABLE OF CROSSING THE GANGES. Suppose, Ānanda, the river Ganges were brimful of water so that even a crow could drink from it, and then a weak man were to come, thinking, ‘Using my arms, I will safely swim from this bank of the river Ganges across to the other side.’ Yet, he would not be able to safely swim from this bank of the river Ganges across to the other side.

Even so, Ānanda, when the Dharma is being taught to someone for the ending of self-identity, if his mind does not enter into it, shows no faith in it, is not steady, is not liberated<sup>27</sup>—he should be regarded just like the weak man.

**8b** Suppose, Ānanda, the river Ganges were brimful of water so that even a crow could drink from it, and then a strong man were to come, thinking, ‘Using my arms, I will safely swim from this bank of the river Ganges across to the other side.’ He would be able to safely swim from this bank of the river Ganges across to the other side.

Even so, Ānanda, when the Dharma is being taught to someone for the ending of self-identity, if his mind enters into it, shows faith in it, is steady, is liberated—he should be regarded just like the strong man.

### Abandoning the fetters via dhyana<sup>28</sup>

**9** (1) THE 1ST DHYANA. And what, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters?

<sup>26</sup> Comy: Cutting off the bark is like the attainment (*samāpatti*); cutting out the sapwood is like insight (*vipassanā*); and cutting out the pith is like the path (*magga*) (MA 3:145).

<sup>27</sup> “Does not enter into it...is not liberated,” *na pakkhandati na-p,pasīdati na santiṭṭhati na vimuccati*. IB Horner notes that at M 28.8/1:186 the clause is *na pakkhandati na-p,pasīdati na santiṭṭhati na adhimuccati* (“not resolute”), the last is also applicable here. In fact, Trenckner say (M 1:566) suggests as the preferred reading. Horner disagrees: “But I think *na vimuccati* (and *vimuccati* a little lower) are certainly right here, for to cross is to be freed. Moreover at M 1:186 *adhimuccati* is part of the sequence of verbs all referring to the same subject, whereas above *na vimuccati* is not. Thus the compilers were right to vary the last of the four verbs in these two contexts however much the first three are identical.” (M:H 2:105 n1)

<sup>28</sup> A similar method of liberation by applying insight to a dhyana or attainment as here (§§9-15) is found in **Aṭṭhaka,nagara S** (M 52), but where “deliverance of mind” through the 4 divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*) (M 52.4-11/1:350-352) replaces the usual form dhyanas, followed by the 3 formless attainments (M 52.12-14/1:352). **The Anupada S** (M 111) repeats all the stages of **Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 64.9-15), but adds the last attainment, “neither-perception-nor-non-perception” (*n’eva,saññā,nāsaññāyatana*) (M 111.5-20/3:25-29).

Here, Ānanda, a monk, secluded from acquisitions,<sup>29</sup> having abandoned the unwholesome states, with total stilling [tranquillization] of bodily inertia, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, a monk enters and dwells in the **first dhyana**,<sup>30</sup> accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of mental seclusion.

Whatever that is therein that consists of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness, he regards those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an illness, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self.<sup>31</sup> He turns his mind away from these states.<sup>32</sup>

Having turned his mind away from these states,<sup>33</sup> he directs his mind to the deathfree element, [436] thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime,<sup>34</sup> that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”<sup>35</sup>

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas,<sup>36</sup> then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (*opapātika*) (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.<sup>37</sup>

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

**10 (2) THE 2ND DHYANA.** Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner stillness and oneness of mind, enters and remains in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.<sup>38</sup>

Whatever that is therein that consists of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness, he regards those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a cala-

<sup>29</sup> “Secluded from acquisitions” (*upadhi, viveka*), ie secluded from the five cords of sense-pleasure (*pañca, -kāma.guṇa, viveka*), MA 3:145). Of the 5 clause of this statement, the first 3 seem to express the same ideas as the 2 more usual clauses that follow, but MAṬ indicates that the 3 express the condition (*hetu*) for becoming “quite secluded from unwholesome mental states” (MAṬ:VRI 2:66).

<sup>30</sup> For a more detailed description of the dhyanas (*jhāna*) with similes, see **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 2.75-82/1:73-76 = SD 8.10).

<sup>31</sup> “Impermanent...not self,” *aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato*: as at M 1:500; A 4:422 f; cf A 2:128. Comy says that the marks of suffering are sixfold (*dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato*), the impermanent twofold (*aniccato palokato*), the not self threefold (*parato suññato anattato*) (MA 3:146). This refrain (and the rest) shows the attainment of calm (*samatha*), leading to the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*), or “insight preceded by calm” (*samatha, pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*), ie, on emerging from dhyana, one contemplates on it as an object of insight, reflecting it as having arisen through conditions, esp volition: see **Aṭṭhaka, nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350) = SD 41.2, where Comy says that this is *samatha, pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*; see **(Yuganaddha) Paṭipadā S** (A 4.170/2:157) = SD 41.5.

<sup>32</sup> Comy: “He turns his mind away” (*cittam paṭivāpeti*) from the 5 aggregates included in the dhyana, which he has seen to be marked with the 3 characteristics (of impermanence, suffering, not-self) (MA 3:146). He goes on to regard the dhyana or attainment, thus: “This is peaceful...nirvana” (see below).

<sup>33</sup> Comy: That is, from the five aggregates, all of which are marked by the 3 characteristics. (MA 3:146)

<sup>34</sup> *Pañītam*, as at M 2:235, 263; A 4:423, 5:8, 110, 320, 322, 354 ff.

<sup>35</sup> *Etam santam etam pañītam yad idam sabba, saṅkhāra, samatho sabbūpadhi, paṭinissaggo taṅha-k, khayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan ti*, as at M 1:136.

<sup>36</sup> “Desire...delight in dharmas” (*dhmma, rāga dhmma, nandī*), as at **Aṭṭhaka, nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350), where Comy explains that these 2 terms refer to the desire and lust (*chanda-rāga*), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). *Dhamma* here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

<sup>37</sup> On the non-returner, see Intro (3).

<sup>38</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> *jhāna* is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*): see prec n.

mity, as an illness, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self. He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the deathfree element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

**11** (3) THE 3RD DHYANA. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, with the fading away of zest, dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body, he enters and dwells in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

Whatever that is therein that consists of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness, he regards those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an illness, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self. He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the deathfree element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

**12** (4) THE 4TH DHYANA. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of joy and grief—enters and dwells in **the fourth dhyana**, that is neither pleasant nor painful, with a mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.<sup>39</sup>

Whatever that is therein that consists of form, of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness, he regards those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an illness, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self. He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the deathfree element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

### Abandoning the fetters via attainment

**13** (5) THE BASE OF INFINITE SPACE. Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, having completely transcended perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, through non-attention to perceptions of diversity, contemplating, “Infinite space,” attains to the sphere of infinite space.<sup>40</sup>

Whatever that is therein that consists of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,<sup>41</sup> he regards those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an

<sup>39</sup> Vbh 245, Vism 4.183/165.

<sup>40</sup> *Ākāsaṇṇic’āyatana*. This is one of the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*): see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.33/2:111 f) = SD 9 & nn.

<sup>41</sup> Note that the “form” aggregate is omitted from this list, as this is a formless attainment (like the foll two).

illness, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self. He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the deathfree element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

**14 (6) THE BASE OF INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS.** Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, having completely transcended the sphere of infinite space, contemplating, “Infinite consciousness,” attains to the sphere of infinite consciousness.<sup>42</sup>

Whatever that is therein that consists of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,<sup>43</sup> he regards those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an illness, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self. He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the deathfree element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

**15 (7) THE BASE OF NOTHINGNESS.** Furthermore, Ānanda, the monk, having completely transcended the sphere of infinite consciousness, contemplating, “There is nothing,” attains to the sphere of nothingness.<sup>44</sup>

Whatever that is therein that consists of feeling, of perception, of formations, of consciousness,<sup>45</sup> he regards those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an illness, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as not self. He turns his mind away from these states.

Having turned his mind away from these states, he directs his mind to the deathfree element, thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nirvana.”

If he is steady therein, he attains the destruction of the mental influxes.

If he does not attain the destruction of the mental influxes because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one with spontaneous birth (in the Pure Abodes), and there attains final nirvana, not subject to returning from that world.

This, Ānanda, is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.”

**16** “Bhante, if this is the path, the way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters, then how is it that some monks here are regarded as ‘liberated of mind’ (*ceto,vimuttino*) and as ‘liberated by wisdom’ (*paññā,vimuttino*)?”

“Here, Ānanda, their difference is in their faculties, I say.”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Viññāṇaṅc’āyatana*. This is one of the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*): see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.33/2:111 f) = SD 9 & nn.

<sup>43</sup> Note that the “form” aggregate is omitted from this list, as this is a formless attainment (like the other two).

<sup>44</sup> *Ākiñcaṇṇ’āyatana*. This is one of the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*): see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.33/2:111 f) = SD 9 & nn.

<sup>45</sup> Note that the “form” aggregate is omitted from this list, as this is a formless attainment (like the other two).

<sup>46</sup> See Intro (6).

The Blessed One said this. The venerable Ānanda joyfully approved of the Blessed One's word.

— evaṃ —

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