

Santatara Sutta

The Discourse on the More Peaceful

[Cessation of feeling and perception is more peaceful than the formless states]

(It 3.3.4/61 f)

1 This was indeed spoken by the Blessed One, spoken by the Arhat [worthy one], [62] thus have I heard.¹

2 “Bhikshus, the formless states are more peaceful than the form states; cessation² is more peaceful than the formless states.

3 This matter [meaning] was spoken by the Blessed One. Then this was spoken:³

*Ye ca rūpūpagā sattā⁴
ye ca arūpa-t,thāyino
nirodham appajānantā
āgantāro punabbhavam*

Those beings who reach the form states,⁵
and those who remain in the formless states,⁶
not knowing cessation⁷ well,
they return to be reborn.

*Ye ca rūpe pariññāya⁸
arūpesu asaṅghitā
nirodhe ye vimuccanti
te janā maccu,hāyino*

Those who fully understand forms,
those who do not remain in the formless states,
they are liberated into cessation—
these people leave death behind.

*Kāyena amataṃ dhātum
phassayitvā nirūpadhim
upadhi-p,paṭinissaggam
sacchikatvā anāsavo
deseti sammā,sambuddho
asokam virajam padan ti*

Who, with his body,⁹ having touched
the death-free element,¹⁰ free from acquisition,
having realized the abandoning of
acquisition that is influx-free,¹¹
the fully self-awakened one teaches
a state that is sorrow-free, stainless.

This matter [meaning] too was spoken by the Blessed One. Thus I have heard.¹²

— evaṃ —

080930; 081003; 091202

¹ *Vuttam h'etaṃ bhagavatā. Vuttam arahatā' ti me sutam.* This is said to be spoken by the laywoman **Khujj'uttarā**: see SD 16.14 Intro (1).

² See Brahmavamso, *Mindfulness, Bliss and Beyond*, 2006: 217 f.

³ *Etam attham bhagavā avoca, tath'etaṃ iti vuccati.*

⁴ These 2 lines also at **Vijaya S** (S 531ab/5.4/1:131), but of the sentiment there. The first 2 stanzas here are also in **Dvayatānupassanā S** (Sn 754 f/147).

⁵ Form states (*rūpa*), ie, the form dhyanas: see **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1/4:262 f) = SD 24.11 Intro (4).

⁶ Formless states (*arūpa*), ie, the formless attainments: see **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1/4:262 f) = SD 24.11 Intro (5).

⁷ Cessation (*nirodha*) here refers to “cessation of feeling and perception” (*saññā,vedayita nirodha*) or “attainment of cessation” (*nirodha samāpatti*). Comy however says it refers to “nirvana” (ItA 2:42). See **Animitta Ceto,-samādhi Pañha S** (S 40.8/4:268 f) = SD 24.19.

⁸ These two lines are found almost verbatim as **Ti,dhātu S** (It 3.1.2).

⁹ “With the body” (*kāyena*): since all physical experiences have shut down in the dhyanas, “body” here should be understood as the “mental body” (*nāma,kāya*), ie, the group of mental factors associated with consciousness.

¹⁰ “The death-free element” (*amata dhātu*), ie nirvana, where there is neither birth nor death.

¹¹ “Influx-free” (*anāsava*), ie, free of the influxes (*āsava*), ie, the floods (*ogha*) of sense-desires, views, existence and ignorance. The influxes are the roots and fruits of samsara, bringing on continued sufferings and rebirths.

¹² *Ayam pi attho vutto bhagavatā. Iti me sutan ti.*