

(Durabhisambhava) Upāli Sutta

The Discourse to Upāli (on What is Difficult to Master)
Theme: Upāli is advised not to live the solitary forest life
A 10.99/5:201-209

Translated by Piya Tan ©2007, rev 2010

1 Which Upāli?

There are at least five prominent people names Upāli in the Pali canon, namely:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| (1) Upāli Thera (Kapilavatthu) | The Vinaya expert; Shakya; arhat | (V 2:182, 1:325-328 etc; A 4:143 ; DhA 1:116 f; B 1:61; BA 44): see CPD sv. ¹ |
| (2) Upāli Thera (Kapilavatthu) | Nephew (<i>bhāgineyya</i>) of Upāli (1); Shakya; arhat | (Ap 1.9 f) ² |
| (3) Upāli Sāmaṇera (the novice) | Nāgita's nephew; Licchavī | (D 6/1:151 f) |
| (4) Upāli the boy of Rājagaha | Becomes a monk for the sake of ease and comfort | (V 1:77 f ≠ 4:128-130) |
| (5) Upāli Gaha,pati (Nālandā) | The Nālandā householder, erstwhile Jain; streamwinner | (M 56/1:371 f; S 35.126/4:110) |

The Upāli Thera, gāthā (Tha 252-254) has the following three verses:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 249 | <i>Saddhāya abhinikkhamma
nava, pabbajito navo,
mitte bhajeyya kalyāṇe
suddh'ājīve atandite.</i> | Having renounced the world in faith,
a novice, newly gone forth
should associate with good [spiritual] friends
who live a pure livelihood, not lax. |
| 250 | <i>Saddhāya abhinikkhamma
Nava, pabbajito navo,
saṅghasmim viharaṃ bhikkhu
sikkhetha vinayaṃ budho.</i> | Having renounced the world in faith,
a novice, newly gone forth,
living monk living in the community,
wise, should learn the Vinaya. |
| 251 | <i>Saddhāya abhinikkhamma
nava, pabbajito navo,
kappākappesu kusalo
careyya apurakkhato 'ti.</i> | Having renounced the world in faith,
a novice, newly gone forth
skilled in what is allowable and what is not,
would wander forth carefree. |

It is likely that these verses belong to Upāli (2), (3) or (4), as they were young monastics when they were newly ordained. Or, perhaps, each of the verses belongs to one of the three Upālis. Another reason why these verses could not have been those of Upāli the Vinaya expert³ is because he becomes a monk, not so much out of faith, as it is historically a circumstantial event.

According to Vinaya and the Commentaries, Upāli is the barber of the Sakya nobles of Kapila.vatthu. When Bhaddiya, Anuruddha, Ānanda, Bhagu and Kimbila (all cousins), and Devadatta, decide to join the

¹ <http://pali.hum.ku.dk/cpd/search.html>.

² *Bhāgineyya Upāli*: ApA 367,32, where his story is told, but the Apadāna (Ap 91,19-93,16); said to be his in ApA, is a second Ap of Upāli 1. (CPD: Upāli 4): <http://pali.hum.ku.dk/cpd/search.html>.

³ A 1:24; V 4:142.

order at the Anupiyā Grove, they instruct Upāli to bring their rich clothing back to their homes. Upāli, fearing that his action could be misconstrued by the Sakyas at Kapilavatthu that he has killed the young Sakyas, and so might be killed himself by the fierce Sakyas. As such, he announces that he too wants to join the order. The youths then request that Upāli be ordained first. This way, they would subdue their pride by having to show respect to Upāli as their monastic senior.⁴ Their preceptor is Kappitaka.⁵

And the Thera, gāthā Commentary gives the following account of Upāli, after his ordination:

Having gone forth and ordained, he went before the Teacher and requested for a meditation subject and permission to be a forest dweller. The Teacher replied that dwelling in the forest, he could cultivate only one duty (that of meditation), but living in the Teacher's presence, he could cultivate both the duties of meditation (*vipassanā, dhura*) and of study (*gantha, dhura*). The elder listened to the Teacher, and practising meditation, in no long time attained arhathood.⁶

(ThaA 2:100; cf ApA 278; AA 1:311) [3]

It is likely the Thera, gāthā Commentary account of Upāli is a collection of stories of two or more Upālis. The verse probably are those of the newly ordained youths, and much of the prose story is about Upāli the Vinaya expert. This Upāli is also listed as one of the 80 great elders (ThaA 3:205). Understandably, Upāli was chosen as the central character of this story because he was declared foremost of those monks who mastered the Vinaya, and as such was vital to the monastic system.

2 Summary of the Sutta and comments

2.1 UPĀLI IS DISCOURAGED FROM DWELLING IN THE FOREST. The (Durabhisambhava) Upāli Sutta is problematic in a number of ways. Firstly, this is the only discourse where the Buddha is represented as *discouraging* a monk (or anyone) from becoming a forest recluse. We have no other references to such a statement by the Buddha anywhere in the early canon. One possibility, however, may be that the Upāli of this Sutta is not ready for the solitary forest life, as he is a new monk, who is still under tutelage.⁷

In fact, the Buddha does say that it is difficult for one who is not able to attain mental concentration to live the solitary life [S2]. The parable of the bull elephant in a deep pool [S3a] is about how an animal with a huge body has no problem going into deep water. A good meditator has no problem living singly in the depths of a remote place. The parable of the hare or the cat [S3b] gives the opposite message, that without proper meditation skills, one would have a lot of difficulties, even dangers, living the solitary forest life. So far, we can say that all this is *not* a summary statement that a community life is better than a solitary forest life. It implies that we must have good meditation experience to do so.

2.2 THE FRUITS OF RECLUSHIP. A new trend develops with the parable of the maturing child [S4], which is apparently saying that personal tastes change as a person develops. Our desires for pleasure become more sophisticated as we mature. This gradual development is punctuated by the refrain, "What do you think, Upāli? Does not this ... come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?" In fact, we are being prepared for the "fruit of recluship" (*sāmañña, phala*) sequence.

The young man who is engrossed in the pleasures of the aggregates [S4b] responds positively to the Buddha's teaching and renounces [S5], and soon learns not to be attached to the sense faculties by prac-

⁴ Cv 7.1-4 = V 2:182 f; DhA 1.12/1:133-138; B 1.61/5; cf BA 50 f. Tib sources (Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, 1884: 55 f) have a slightly different story with miraculous elements. Mahāvastu says that Upāli is the Buddha's barber (Mvst 3:179).

⁵ V 4:308; cf PvA 230.

⁶ *So pabbajitvā upasampanno satthu santike kammaṭṭhānam gahetvā "mayham, bhante, araññavāsam anu-ānāthā"ti āha. Bhikkhu tava araññe vasantassa ekameva dhuram vaḍḍhissati, amhākam pana santike vasantassa ganthadhurañca vipassanādhurañca paripūressatī. Thero satthu vacanam sampaticchitvā vipassanāya kammam karonto nacirasseva arahattam pāpuṇi.* (ThaA 2:100)

⁷ The monastic tutelage (*nissaya*) is a minimum of 5 years that a new monk must spend under training with a suitable teacher, but if he has difficulty in this, his tutelage may be extended indefinitely (Mv 1.53+73 = V 1:79 f, 91).

tising sense-restraint [S6]. As a result, it is easier for him to cultivate mindfulness [S7a], which in turn helps him in overcoming the five mental hindrances [S7b].

With that is able to attain the four form dhyanas [S8], and then the four formless attainments [S12-13], and finally is awakened as an arhat so that he enjoys the cessation of feeling and perception [S14]. At the end of this limited sequence of the fruits of recluship, the Buddha declares:

“In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal]. Come on, Upāli, dwell with the community. You will be at ease dwelling with the community.” [S14b]

Interestingly, the section of “wisdom” (*paññā*) and psychic powers (*iddhi*) are omitted. This is significant, reflecting that by the time this Sutta was compiled, the monks did not place much emphasis on meditation. Without the attainment of dhyana, it is impossible to speak of psychic powers.

2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUTTA. The (Durabhisambhava) Upāli Sutta was probably compiled by the reciters rather later, evidently after the Buddha’s passing, at a time when the monasteries were more urbanized and placed less emphasis on meditation. Apparently, the Commentary (ThaA 2:200) [1] or at least its story must have been compiled at a time when the monastic system had become large urbanized corporations with specialized monastic duties, with growing emphasis on academic study, which later blossomed into the famous Buddhist universities in India.

The dichotomy of the two burdens or duties (*dhura*) was a post-Buddha development. There was no such division in the Buddha’s time (there is no such evidence at all in the Suttas). When Buddhism reached Sri Lanka, the inclination towards the “burden of scripture study” (*gantha, dhura*) was given greater emphasis than the “burden of meditation” (*vipassanā, dhura*)

The earliest mention of a division between scripture study and meditation is found in the Commentaries, which are compiled around the 6th century CE. IN the very first story of the Dhammapada Commentary, the story of the elder Cakkhu, pāla (*Cakkhu, pāla-t, there Vatthu*), Cakkhu, pāla reportedly says, “I have entered the order in old age. I am not able to fulfill the duty of scripture study. So I will keep to the duty of meditation.” (DhA 1:4).

The mention of scripture study in Sinhalese Buddhism was made as early as in the first century CE. The Mahāvamsa, a hagiographical history of Sri Lanka, reports this as occurring in the time of king Bhātikābhaya (38-66 CE) (Mahv 34.59, 66).. In fact, this trend became so successful that Sinhalese Buddhism effectively weakened in its meditation tradition to this day. The modern Sinhalese monks are better known for their scriptural knowledge, but this has been significantly overtaken by academic scholars, mostly laymen, who specialize in Buddhist studies. Ironically, today meditation is given more emphasis by western and westernized Buddhists than by eastern and ethnic or traditional Buddhists.

— — —

The Discourse to Upāli (on What is Difficult to Master)

A 10.99/5:201-209

Upāli wishes to live the solitary forest life

1 Then the venerable Upāli approached the Blessed Lord. Having approached the Blessed One, he saluted him and sat down at one side. [202]

Seated thus at one side, the venerable Upāli said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, I wish to resort to the remote dwellings of the forests and woods.”⁸

2 “Difficult to master,⁹ Upāli, is resorting to the remote dwellings of the forests and woods.

Difficult is solitude; difficult to delight in.

The forests, I think, destroy the mind of the solitary monk who has not attained samadhi [one-pointedness of mind].

Upāli, whoever says this:

‘Without having attained samadhi, I will resort to the remote dwellings of the forests and woods,’ it can be expected that he would sink or he would float.¹⁰

Parable of the elephant, the hare and the cat

3a THE GREAT ELEPHANT. Suppose, Upāli, there were a great pool of water.

And a bull elephant seven or eight cubits¹¹ high were to come. It occurs to him:

‘What now if I were to plunge into this great pool of water and play, washing my ears, washing my back. And when I have washed my ears, washed my back, bathed and drunk to my heart’s content, I would come out and go where I wish.’

And so the bull elephant plunges into the great pool of water and plays, washing his ears, washing his back. And when he has washed his ears, washed his back, bathed and drunk to his heart’s content, he came out and goes where he wishes.

What is the reason for this?

A big body, Upāli, finds a footing in the depths.¹²

3b THE HARE OR THE CAT. But, Upāli, suppose a hare or a cat were to come and think thus:

‘What is there between me and the bull elephant?’¹³

What now if I were to plunge into this great pool of water and play, [203] washing my ears, washing my back. And when I have washed my ears, washed my back, bathes and drunk to my heart’s content, I would come out and go where I wish.’

⁸ *Icchām’aham, bhante, arañña, vana, patthāni pantāni senāsanāni paṭisevitun ti.*

⁹ *Durabhisambhava*; cf S 5:454; Sn 429, 701. Comy: Not attainable by those who cannot withstand hardship (AA 5:67); such a one would not be able to attain a peaceful death (*santika, maraṇena tādisenāpi pāpuṇitum asakkuṇeyyayyato durabhisambhavo*, SnA 287)

¹⁰ “He would sink, or he would float,” *saṃsīdissati vā uplavissati vā’ti*. Comy: Lustful thoughts would make him “sink,” while thoughts of ill will would make his “float” (AA 5:67). In other words, he would be distracted by the 5 mental hindrances: sensual lust, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt.

¹¹ A *cubit (ratana)* here, according to Comy, that of a medium-sized man (UA 245), ie, twice the distance between the tips of the thumb and of the index finger with the fingers outstretched (VbhA 343), which would be about 16 ins or 41 cm. As such, 7 cubits would be about 9 ft 2 ins or 2.85 m. The elephant mentioned here would be about 9-10 ft tall. For a similar imagery, see *Juṇha S* (U 4.4.6/40) = SD 24.9. See UA:M 608 f, esp 692-694 (n491) on such ancient measurements.

¹² *Mahā, upāli, attabhāvo gambhīre gādham vīdati*. Here *atta, bhāva* usu simply means “body” (eg S 56.36/-:442), or has the modern sense of “personality, existence. It has a neg sense of “existence of a self” at S 4:54,7, qu at KhpA 179.15. It is prob a late word, uncommon in the early canon, but often found in Comys..

¹³ *Ko cāham, ko ca hatthi, nāgo*, lit “What am I? And what is the bull elephant?”

So he hastily jumps into the great pool of water without a thought.

This would be expected of him: he would sink or he would float.

What is the reason for this?

A small body, Upāli, finds no footing in the depths.¹⁴

3c Even so, Upāli, whoever says this:

‘Without having attained samadhi, I will resort to the remote dwellings of the forests and woods,’ it can be expected that he would sink or he would float.

Parable of the maturing child

4a THE INFANT. Suppose, Upāli, there were an infant boy, feeble, lying on its back, playing with its own soil.

What do you think,¹⁵ Upāli? Isn’t this a totally and perfectly childish sport?”¹⁶

“It is, bhante.”

“Now, Upāli, on another occasion, when this very boy grows up, comes to the maturing of his faculties,¹⁷ plays such games¹⁸ as these: toy ploughs, tipcat [stick-game], turning somersaults [acrobatics], playing with toy windmills, toy measures, toy chariots, toy bows.

What do you think, Upāli? Does not this game come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?”

“It does, bhante.”

4b THE GROWING BOY. “Now, Upāli, on another occasion, this very boy growing further, comes to be possessed by the five cords of sense-pleasures, becomes endowed with them, entertains

(1) forms cognizable by the eye that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust;

(2) sounds cognizable by the ear that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust;

(3) smells cognizable by the nose that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust;

(4) tastes cognizable by the tongue that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sense-desire, arousing lust; [204]

(5) touches cognizable by the body that are wished for, desirable, agreeable and pleasing, connected with sensual desire, arousing lust.

What do you think, Upāli? Does not this game come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?”

“It does, bhante.”

MORAL VIRTUE

Moral development¹⁹

5a “Now,²⁰ Upāli, there arises in the world the Tathagata [thus come]. an arhat, fully self-awakened one, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, well-gone [Sugata], knower of worlds, unexcelled trainer of tamable people, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.

¹⁴ *Paritto, upāli, attabhāvo gambhīre gādhāṃ vindati.* See above n on *mahā...attabhāvo*.

¹⁵ *Nanyāyaṃ = nanu ayaṃ*

¹⁶ *Nanvāyaṃ kevalā paripūrā bāla, khiddā’ti.*

¹⁷ As in **Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38.28/1:266) = SD 7.10. See also D 2:305; M 1:49; S 2:42 ff. Here the maturing is in regards of the development from infancy to childhood.

¹⁸ Games listed are: *vaṅkakaṃ ghaṭikaṃ mokkhacikaṃ ciṅgulakaṃ pattālhakaṃ rathakaṃ dhanukaṃ.* See V 3:180, D 1:6 for these and other games. See also A:W 5:141 nn & V:H 1:316 f.

¹⁹ §§5abc almost identical as at **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.40-41/1:62 f) = SD 8.10. From §§5-11, almost identical as at **Attantapa S** (A 4.198.6-14/2:208-211) = SD 56.7, ie up to the 4th dhyana, but the sutta here continues with the realization of the 4 noble truths; also as at **Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38.31-39/1:267-270) = SD 7.10.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge, this world with its gods, its Maras [evil tempters] and its Brahmas [high gods], this generation, with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers²¹ and people, he makes it known to others.

He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, endowed with meaning and phrasing. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

5b A householder or a householder's son, hearing the Dharma, gains faith in the Tathagata and reflects, thus:

'The household life is stifling, a dusty path.²² The life of renunciation is like the open air. It is not easy living in a house to practise the holy fully, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell.

What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?'

5c Then, after some time, he abandons all his wealth and relatives, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

5d Having thus gone forth and possessing the monk's training and way of life.

5e THE SHORT SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

[The moralities §43-62²³ = Brahma.jāla Sutta, D 1.8-27/1:4-11]

Right bodily conduct [D 1.8/1:4]

(1) Having abandoned the destruction of life, a monk²⁴ abstains from destroying life. He dwells with rod and weapon laid down, conscientious,²⁵ merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

(2) Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a pure mind.

(3) Having abandoned incelibacy, he lives a celibate life, living apart, refraining from the sexual act,²⁶ the way of the village.²⁷

Right Speech [D 1.9]

(4) Having abandoned false speech, he abstains from false speech. He²⁸ speaks the truth, holds to the truth as his bond, trustworthy, reliable, no deceiver of the world.

(5) Having abandoned divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. [64] What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there.

Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or consolidating those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks words of concord.

²⁰ Vo, Comy takes it as particle (*nipāta, mattam*, AA 5:67).

²¹ *Deva*, here in the sense of "gods by convention" (*sammatti, deva*), ie kings or rulers. The other 2 types of *deva* are "gods by rebirth" (*upapatti, deva*) and "gods by purification" (*visuddhi, deva*), ie the Buddhas, pratyeka-buddhas and arhats. (Nc 307, KhpA 123). See §2 & n where the voc "your majesty" is *deva*.

²² *Sambādho gharavāso rajā, patho*. There is a wordplay on *sambādha*, "crowded, stifling, narrow, full of hindrances," which also refers to the sexual organ, male (V 1:216, 2:134) or female (V 4:259; Sn 609; J 1:61, 4:260).

²³ These three sections (comprising 13 items or groups) on moral virtue occur verbatim (in whole or with some omissions) in all of the first 13 suttas and may once have formed a separate "tract" (D:RD 1:3 n1). See Gethin 2001: 195 f. See Intro (3) above.

²⁴ *Bhikkhu*. in **Brahma.jāla S** (D 1.8-28/1:3-13 = SD 25.2) the reading is *samaṇo Gotamo* throughout.

²⁵ *lajjī*, "feel shame, modest," explain in the Comy on S 1:73 as "one who has moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*)."
Opp *alajjī*, shameless.

²⁶ *Brahma, cariya* is the supreme conduct or holy life, ie celibacy. DA points out that it involves refraining from other forms of erotic behaviour besides intercourse.

²⁷ *gāma, dhamma*, ie the way of the householder, vulgar (in the sense of being associated with the masses).

²⁸ PTS ed has *samaṇo Gotamo* here, which seems rather abrupt.

(6) Having abandoned abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are humane, soothing, loving, touching, urbane, and delightful and pleasant to the multitude.

(7) Having abandoned idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is true, what is in accordance with the goal [or, what is beneficial].²⁹ He speaks on the Teaching [Dharma] and the Discipline [Vinaya]. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, [D 1:5] backed by reason, measured, connected with the goal.³⁰

General [D 1.10]

(8) He abstains from damaging seeds and plant life.³¹

Sāmañera, sikkhā 6-10 [D 1:6]

(9) He eats only once a day, refraining from the evening meal and from food at improper times.³²

(10) He abstains from dancing, singing, music and from watching shows.

(11) He abstains from wearing garlands and from beautifying himself with scents and make-up.

(12) He abstains from high and luxurious beds and seats.

(13) He abstains from accepting gold and silver [money].

General

(14) He abstains from accepting uncooked grain; raw meat; women and girls; male and female slaves; goats and sheep, fowl and pigs; elephants, cattle, horses, and mares.

(15) He abstains from accepting fields and lands [property].³³

(16) He abstains from running messages [or errands].

(17) He abstains from buying and selling.

(18) He abstains from dealing with false scales, false metals, and false measures.

(19) He abstains from bribery, deception, and fraud.

(20) He abstains from wounding, executing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plunder, and violence.

Contentment

5f He is content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes he sets out only with these with him.

Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden; so too is he content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes, he takes only these with him.³⁴

Even so, a monk is content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes he sets out only with these with him.

5g Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue, he feels within himself a joy that is blameless.³⁵

Sense-restraint

6³⁶(1) When a monk sees a form with the eye, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

²⁹ *attha, vādī.*

³⁰ *attha, saṃhitā.*

³¹ Curiously, this replaces the precept against intoxicants which is omitted.

³² "Improper times" here means between noon and the following dawn (V 1:83).

³³ The Buddha however accepted land from rajahs like Bimbisāra and Pasenadi, and others like Anāthapiṇḍaka and Visākhā, which were received in the name of the Sangha. What is connoted here is accepting land on a personal basis.

³⁴ Prec 2 paras almost identical as at **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.66/1:71) = SD 8.10.

³⁵ As at **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.63/1:70) = SD 8.10.

³⁶ This whole para: *So cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuyyañjana-g, gāhī. Yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ cakkhundriyaṃ asaṅvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhiññā, domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyyuṃ, tassa saṅvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṃ, cakkhundriye saṅvaraṃ āpajjati. On Na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti*

So long he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure³⁷ might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the eye-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the eye-faculty.

(2) When he hears a sound with the ear, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that ear-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the ear-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the ear-faculty.

(3) When he smells a smell with the nose, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that nose-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the nose-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the nose-faculty.

(4) When he tastes a taste with the tongue, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that tongue-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the tongue-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the tongue-faculty.

(5) When he feels a touch with the body, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that body-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the body-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the body-faculty.

(6) When he cognizes a mind-object with the mind, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty, evil, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the mind-faculty, he commits himself to the restraint of the mind-faculty.³⁸

nānuyyañjana-g.gāhī, lit “he is not one who grasps at a sign, he is not one who grasps at a detail (feature),” see SD 19.14. Comys say that “sign” (*nimitta*) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda,rāga,-vasena*) or on account of merely one’s view (*diṭṭhi,matta,vasena*); “detail” (*anuyyañjana*) here refers to finding delight by grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhsA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74). On other meanings of *nimitta*, see SD 13 §3.1a.

³⁷ “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā,domanassaṃ*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the five hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S (D 22.13) and Satipaṭṭhāna S (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one’s meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā,domanassa*, there is an interesting related passage from Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S (A 3.101): “Bhikshus, before my enlightenment, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... ‘Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha,somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantages (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world’.” (A 3.101/1:258, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

³⁸ D 2.64/1:70, 10.2.2/1:207, 33.1.11(10)/3:225; M 27.15/1:180, 33.20/1:223, 38.35/1:269, 51.16/1:346, 53.8/-1:355, 94.18/2:162, 101.33/2:226; S 35.120/4:104, 35.239/4:176; A 3.16/1:113, 4.14/2:16, 4.37/2:39, 4.164/2:152 (×4), 4.198.11/2:210, 5.76.12/3:99 f, 5.140.11/3:163, 10.99.6/5:206, 11.18.23/5:351. For a detailed analysis, see Vism 1.53-69/20-22. For a study, see *Nimitta & anuyyañjana* = SD 19.14.

Mindfulness and clear knowledge³⁹

7a While going forward or back,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while looking forward or back,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while bending or stretching,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while eating, drinking, chewing and tasting,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while voiding or peeing,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing;
while walking, while standing, while sitting, while asleep,	
while awake, ⁴⁰ while talking, or while remaining silent,	he is clearly aware of what he is doing.

MENTAL CULTIVATION

Abandoning the mental hindrances⁴¹

7b Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue, and [207] this aggregate of noble sense-restraint, and this aggregate of noble mindfulness and full awareness,

he resorts to a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a gully [gorge], a hillside cave, a cemetery, a remote forest [jungle grove], the open air, a heap of straw.⁴²

Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, keeps his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.⁴³

7c (1) Abandoning covetousness⁴⁴ with regard to the world, he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness.

(2) Abandoning ill will and anger, he dwells with a mind devoid of ill will, compassionate in the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will and anger.

(3) Abandoning sloth and torpor, he dwells with a mind devoid of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light. He cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor.

(4) Abandoning restlessness and remorse, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and remorse.

³⁹ *Sati, sampajañña* = *sati*, “mindfulness,” *sampajañña*, “clear knowledge.” In *Satipaṭṭhāna Ss*, however, this section is “clear knowledge” (*sampajañña*); “mindfulness” (*sati*). See SD 13 Intro (3.6abc).

⁴⁰ “When asleep, when awake” *sutte jāgarite*. Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, “lying down, sleeping.” See SD 13 Intro (3.6c).

⁴¹ As at *Sāmañña, phala S* (D 2.67-68/1:71) = SD 8.10.

⁴² *So iminā ca ariyena sīla-k, khandhena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena indriya, saṁvarena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena sati, sampajaññaena samannāgato imāya ca ariyāya santuṭṭhitāya samannāgato vivittaṁ senāsanaṁ bhajati, araññaṁ rukkha, mūlaṁ pabbataṁ kandaraṁ giri, guhaṁ susānaṁ vana, patthaṁ abbhokāsaṁ palāla, puñjaṁ*. This stock phrase of 9 places conducive to meditation are found at D 1:72, 207, 2:242, 3:49; M 1:181, 269, 274, 346, 440, 441, 2:162, 226, 3:3, 35, 115-117; A 2:210, 3:92, 100, 4:436, 5:207; Nm 1:26, 140, 2:341; Miln 369. A shorter list, probably later, is mentioned in *Anāpāna, sati S* (M 118): “Here, monks, a monk who has gone to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to an empty house, sits down, and having crossed his legs and keeping his body upright, establishes mindfulness before him.” (M 118.17/3:82).

⁴³ Comy. He applies mindfulness towards his meditation subject; or he sets it up in the region of the mouth. As such, it is said in the *Vibhaṅga*: “This mindfulness is set up, set up well, at the tip of the nose or at the sign of the mouth” (Vbh ¶537/252). NT: The “sign of the mouth” (*mukha, nimitta*) is the middle region of the upper lip, against which the air strikes when it comes out of the nose.

⁴⁴ *Abhijjhā*, here is synonymous with “sense-desire” (*kāma-c, chanda*), which is the usual term in the set of 5 mental hindrances. *Kāma-c, chanda* is almost identical with “a lustful mind” (*sa, rāgaṁ cittaṁ*) (M 10.12(1a)). Both refer to sensual desire in general, and arises from wrong reflection on a sensually attractive sense-object. The exercise in §12 is simply that of noting the presence of such a state of mind. Here, one goes on to investigate how it arises, how it can be removed, etc (through right effort). See eg *Satipaṭṭhāna S* (M 10.36(1)/1:60) = SD 13.3 Intro (5D.2).

(5) Abandoning persistent doubt, he dwells having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity with regard to wholesome mental states. He cleanses his mind of doubt.

The four dhyanas

8a (1) Having abandoned the five mental hindrances, impurities of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states, he enters and remains in the first absorption, accompanied by applied thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*), accompanied by zest (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*) born of seclusion.⁴⁵

8b What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?"

"It does, bhante."

"In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].⁴⁶

9a (2) And, furthermore, Upāli, a monk, with the stilling of applied thought and sustained thought, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, attains and dwells in the second dhyana, free from applied thought and sustained thought, with zest and happiness born of concentration. He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the zest and happiness born of concentration.⁴⁷

9b What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?"

"It does, bhante."

"In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, [208] resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].

10a (3) And furthermore, maharajah, with the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in the third dhyana, of which the noble ones declare, 'Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.' He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the happiness free from zest.⁴⁸

10b What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?"

"It does, bhante."

"In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].

11a (4) And furthermore, maharajah, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of happiness and displeasure—he attains and dwells in the fourth dhyana, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity. He sits, pervading the body with a pure, bright mind,⁴⁹ so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by a pure, bright mind.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ This is stock: see eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.77/1:73) = SD 8.10 & **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 38.39/-1:170) = SD 7.10, where see nn.

⁴⁶ *Imam pi kho, upāli, mama sāvaka attani dhammam sampassamānā arañña, vana, patthāni pantāni senāsānāni paṭisevanti, no ca kho tāva anuppatta, sadatthā viharanti.* This is a difficult sentence, which I have rendered on conjecture and context. *Sad-attha* can also tr "the true goal," cf Tha 112, Sn 627.

⁴⁷ This is stock: see eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.79/1:74) = SD 8.10 & **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 38.39/-1:170) = SD 7.10, where see nn.

⁴⁸ This is stock: see eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.81/1:75) = SD 8.10 & **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 38.39/-1:170) = SD 7.10, where see nn.

⁴⁹ See Accharā Vagga (A 1.6.1-2): "Monks, this mind is radiant (*pabhassara*), but it is defiled by defilements from outside. The ignorant ordinary person does not understand this as it really is. As such, for him there is no personal development." (A 1:10). On reaching the 4th dhyana, the practitioner becomes directly aware of the truly and naturally pure nature of the mind. See also A:ÑB 1999 §4.

⁵⁰ This is stock: see eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.83/1:75) = SD 8.10 & **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 38.39/-1:170) = SD 7.10, where see nn.

11b What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?"

"It does, bhante."

"In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].

The four formless attainments

12a (1) "Furthermore, Upāli, by completely transcending the perceptions of form, with the disappearance the perceptions of sense-reaction,⁵¹ with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that 'Space is infinite,' he enters upon and abides in the sphere of infinite space.⁵²

12b What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?"

"It does, bhante."

"In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].

13a (2) "Furthermore, Poṭṭhapāda, by completely transcending the sphere of infinite space, aware that 'Consciousness is infinite,' he enters upon and abides in the sphere of infinite consciousness.⁵³

13b What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?"

"It does, bhante."

"In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].

13c (3) "Furthermore, Poṭṭhapāda, by completely transcending the sphere of infinite consciousness, aware that 'There is nothing,' he enters upon and abides in the sphere of nothingness.⁵⁴

13d What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?"

"It does, bhante."

"In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].

13e Having completely transcended the sphere of nothingness, contemplating, "This is peaceful; this is sublime," [209] attains to the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception.⁵⁵

13f What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?"

"It does, bhante."

"In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].

LIBERATION

The cessation of feeling and perception

14a Furthermore, Upāli, by completely transcending the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, a monk enters upon and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling.⁵⁶ And his cankers are destroyed by his seeing and wisdom.⁵⁷

⁵¹ "Perceptions of sense-reaction," *paṭigha,saññā*, also "sensory impact" (M:ÑB 267), "resistance-perception, reflex-perception" (BDict), said to be absent in the formless dhyanas. This is one of those terms that are only used contextually. See Vibh 245, §262; Vism 10.12-16.

⁵² This is stock: see eg **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.14/1:183) = SD 7.14.

⁵³ This is stock: see eg **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.15/1:184) = SD 7.14.

⁵⁴ This is stock: see eg **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.16/1:184) = SD 7.14.

⁵⁵ This is stock: see eg **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1.91/1:35) = SD 25.2.

14b What do you think, Upāli? Does not this abiding come to be more pleasing and more refined than the former?”

“It does, bhante.”

“In this, too, Upāli, my disciples, observing mental states in themselves, resort to remote forest and woods, but they do not dwell as those who have reached their own goal [the true goal].

Come on, Upāli, dwell with the community. You will be at ease dwelling with the community.”⁵⁸

070523; 091025; 091027; 100402

⁵⁶ “The cessation of perception and feeling,” *saññā,vedayita nirodha*, ie, the attainment of cessation (*nirodha, -samāpatti*, S 14.11/2:151). The absolute necessary preconditions to this attainment are said to be the perfect mastery of all the 8 dhyanas as well as the previous attainment of non-return or arhathood. Comys say that this state may last for 7 days or even longer (MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163). Immediately at the arising of the state, however, there arises in the non-returner, the fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi,phala*), and in the arhat, the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta,phala*) (PmA 1:41, 321). Only an arhat or a non-returner can experience this cessation (A 5.166/3:193 f; Vism 23.18/702, 23.49/708). On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainments (Vism 708). Cf Intro (4.1); Sappurisa S (M 113) = SD 23.7 Intro (2); also **Animitta Ceto,samādhi** Pañha S (S 40.9/4:268 f) = SD 24.19.

⁵⁷ This is stock: see eg **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 26.42/1:175) = SD 1.11. Cf **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.17/1:184) = SD 7.14.

⁵⁸ *Īṅha tvam, upāli, saṅghe viharāhi. Saṅghe te viharato phāsu bhavissatī ti.*