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Meghiya Sutta

The Discourse to Meghiya | A 9.3/4:354-358 ≈ U 4.1/34-37¹

Theme: Spiritual friendship is conducive to mental development

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003; 2006; 2007

1 Meghiya

1.1 ROLE MODEL. The Meghiya Sutta, a heart-warming and instructive sutta, is a *classic case study on spiritual friendship*.² It is found in the Aṅguttara (A 9.3) and the Udāna (U 4.1). The two only differ in syntax, while the Udāna closes with a verse passage not found in A 9.3. A number of English translations of the sutta are available [Biblio]. The role of spiritual friendship in facilitating spiritual development is clear, especially its connection with wise attention (*yoniso, manasikāra*).³ In fact, **the Yoniso Sutta** (S 45.55) states that wise attention is the *internal* condition for the noble eightfold path, while spiritual friendship is the path's *external* condition.⁴ [2.1.3]

As long as we have neither hit the road to nirvana, nor found the turning to streamwinning, it is vital to have a good spiritual role model. The reason is clear enough: we are often haunted by our past, that is, our past karma, most of which go very far back, even many previous lives. Understandably, the power of such negative energy accumulated over such long periods tends to be *recursive*: our karma tends to repeatedly assert itself, reproducing itself in an infinite series. We are thus rendered spiritually powerless, at least while it lasts. We can however be pulled out of such a vicious cycle by someone *spiritually mature*, one who has freed himself from it, someone like the Buddha or a true disciple of his.

There are at least two stories in the Nikāyas where the Buddha advises a monk not to live the solitary forest life. The best known of these is that of Upāli, as recounted in **the (Durabhisambhava) Upāli Sutta** (A 10.99), where the Buddha clearly states that the solitary forest dwelling is not for one who has not mastered his mind.⁵ The second story is, of course, that of Meghiya, who however insists on going into solitary retreat despite the Buddha's advice, and meets with insurmountable mental distractions.⁶

1.2 MEGHIYA. Meghiya was a Sākyā of Kapilavatthu, and who, after joining the order, was for some time the Buddha's personal attendant.⁷ During the thirteenth year of the Buddha's ministry (BA 3), when the Buddha is staying with him at Cālikā,⁸ Meghiya goes into Jantu, gāma for alms [§1-2]. On his return, he is drawn to a mango grove on the banks of the river Kimi, kālā.⁹ In his over-enthusiasm to go on a solitary meditation retreat, he persists in seeking the Buddha's permission to dwell there. Seeing his enthusiasm, the Buddha obliges [§§3-5].

¹ The symbol ≈ means "almost equal or identical to."

² For an Intro, see **Spiritual friendship: stories of kindness** = SD 8.1.

³ See **Virtue ethics** = SD 18.11(6.4).

⁴ S 45.55/5:31 = SD 34.12.

⁵ A 10.99/5:201-209 = SD 30.9.

⁶ See Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization*, 2003:273 f, esp n14.

⁷ Comys say that when the Buddha was "newly awoken" (ie during the first 20 years of the ministry), he did not have any regular personal attendant (*upaṭṭhāka*). Amongst those who were his attendant were Nāgasamāla, Nāgita, Upavāna, Sunakkhatta, the novice Cunda, Sāgata, Rādha and Meghiya (UA 217). Not all of them were satisfactory. It was only after that, when the Buddha was 55, that Ānanda became his dedicated and mindful personal attendant for the remaining 20 years of the Buddha's life (SA 1:258 f; J 4:95 f; ThaA 3:112 ad Tha 1018; UA 217). Apparently, it is after the events of the Meghiya S, that the Buddha decides to have a regular personal attendant, and Ānanda is given the task (VA 1:178 f; AA 1:293-296). Cf Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, 1884:57 f, for a Tibetan version on how Ānanda becomes the Buddha's attendant. See also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004 §6.3.

⁸ Comy says that Cālikā was so called because outside the city gate, there was "quivering mud" (*cala, paṅka*) on all sides. This was probably referred to a quagmire. As such, the city to appears to be "quivering" (*calamānam*). **Mt Cālikā**, not far from the city, is so called it was completely white, and during the dark fortnight, it appeared to be "quivering" (*calamānam*). (UA 217)

⁹ *Kimi, kālā* means "black worms," which were abundant there. (US 217)

While dwelling there, however, Meghiya is consumed by evil thoughts and returns to the Buddha for advice [§§6-7a]. The Buddha teaches him “the five conditions that bring about the full maturing in the liberation of mind” (*ceto,vimuttiyā pañca paripakkāya,dhammā*), namely, spiritual friendship, moral virtue, Dharma-centred talk, zealous exertion, and insight in impermanence [§§7b-12].

The Dhammapada Commentary summarizes the Meghiya Sutta in **the Meghiya Thera Vatthu** (the Story of the Elder Meghiya) (DhA 29.1): the Buddha rebukes him for disobeying him, and then admonishes him, closing with the following **Dhammapada** verses:

<i>Phandanam capalam cittam durakkham dunnivārayam ujum karoti medhāvī usu,kāro `va tejanam.</i>	The mind is shaky and unsteady, hard to restrain, hard to control. The wise straightens it like a fletcher an arrow.	Dh 33 ¹⁰
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<i>Vārijo `va thale khitto okam-okata ubbhato pariphandati `dam cittam māra,dheyam pahātave.</i>	Like a fish cast onto dry land, thrown up from its watery home, this mind flounders about trying to shake off Māra’s hold.	Dh 34 ¹¹
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At the end of the Buddha’s teaching, Meghiya, along with “many other beings,” become streamwinners.¹² There seems to be no clear reference to Meghiya’s attainment of arhathood, except perhaps for two references. The first allusion to his arhathood is probably the inspired verse at the end of the Udāna version of his story testifies to his arhathood [§13f].¹³

The only clear reference to Meghiya’s arhathood is in his **Thera,gāthā**, which records his simple declaration of awakening, thus:

<i>Anusāsi mahā,vīro sabba,dhammāna pārāgu Tassāham dhammam sutvāna vihāsim santike sato¹⁴ Tisso vijjā anuppattā katam buddhassa sāsanaṃ.</i>	The great hero counselled me— the one who has reached the far shore of all states. Hearing his teaching, I dwelt mindful [delighted] in his presence. The three knowledges ¹⁵ have been attained, done is the Buddha’s teaching.	(Tha 66)
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In these simple words, we can feel the joyful gratitude of a great saint who has benefitted from a greater spiritual friend, learning from both his conduct (compassion) and wisdom (liberation), so that the pupil becomes just like the liberated master. The last line is very significant: it shows that the teaching is not a religion to be merely “worshipped” or “followed,” but *one to be lived for self-liberation*.

¹⁰ Cf **Patna Dh:** *phandanam capalam cittam durakkham dunnivārayam | ujjum karoti medhāvī usukāro va tejanā* || (Dh:Patna 342); **Udāna,varga:** *Spandanam.capalam.cittam.durakṣyam [dūrakṣyam].dunnivāraṇam | rjum.-karoti.medhāvī;iṣu.kāra;iva.tejasā* || (Uv 31.8).

¹¹ Cf **Patna Dh:** *vārijo va thale khitto okamokātu ubbhato | pariphandatimam cittam māradheyam prahātaye* || (Dh:Patna 343); **Udāna,varga:** *Vārijo.vā.sthale.kṣipta;okād.oghāt.samuddhṛtaḥ | parispondati.vai.cittam.māra.-dheyam.prahātavai* || (Uv 31.2).

¹² DhA 29.1/1:286-289.

¹³ UA 237 f appears to confirm this, too.

¹⁴ So Be Ce Pe *sato*; Ee Se *rato*.

¹⁵ **The “three knowledges”** (*te,vijja*) are direct knowledge (*abhiññā*) of the Buddha and some arhats: (1) the knowledge of the recollection of past lives (*pubbe,nivāsānussati,ñāṇa*), ie retrocognition; (2) the knowledge of the rise and fall of beings according to their karma (*cut`upapāta,ñāṇa*), ie the divine eye (*dibba,cakkhu*) or clairvoyance; and (3) the knowledge of the destruction of the mental cankers (*āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa*), that ends rebirth. Those arhats with these 3 knowledges are known as the threefold-knowledge arhat (*te,vijja arahata*), who, with samatha as basis, have attained four or more dhyanas. (D 3:281; M 1:34; A 1:255, 258, 3:17, 280, 4:421). For further details, see *Te,vijja S* (D 13/1:235-252) = SD 1.8 Intro (2.2).

It is said that ninety one aeons ago, when **Vipassī Buddha** passed away, there was a great earthquake. The people were terrified but Vessavana explained to them the reason for it and dispelled their fears. Meghiya was then a householder, and having thus heard the Buddha’s qualities, was filled with joy. Fourteen world-cycles ago, it is said, Meghiya was a king named Samita.¹⁶ Evidently, he is identical with Buddha,saññaka of **the Apadāna** (Ap 117/151 f).

1.3 WHY THE BUDDHA OBLIGES MEGHIYA. The Meghiya Sutta may be simply described as a story of a pupil’s frivolity and disobedience, a teacher’s compassion and wisdom, leading to the pupil’s spiritual liberation. Meghiya, fascinated by a *déjà vu* experience on seeing a mango grove, decides to spend time meditating there—even though there is no one else to attend to the Buddha [§§2-3b]. He persuades the Buddha by declaring that while the Buddha is already awakened, he (Meghiya) has yet to strive for it [§§4-5]. Meghiya’s statement is significant in that it shows that he is actually sincere and enthusiastic about doing his solitary meditation retreat.

The Buddha, knowing that the conditions are not yet right, twice says no, but then appears impressed by Meghiya’s enthusiasm (that he aims to strive for awakening), and remarks:

“You are speaking of striving, Meghiya; what can I say? Please do what you think it is now the time to do, Meghiya.” [§5]

However, a careful reading of the passage suggests that the Buddha is here only *conditionally* approving of Meghiya’s request to go on a solitary retreat. However, later, when Meghiya fails in his efforts, he thus also fails to gain the benefit of the doubt. As such, some would blame him for “disobeying” the Buddha and going his own way. However, the real situation is more complicated here.

Dhammapāla, in his Udāna Commentary, explains that the Buddha, “wishing to generate a tender heart, says thus, ‘This monk, having gone thus, would unsuspectingly return out of affection, as his work remains unaccomplished.’”¹⁷ Apparently, the Buddha has a premonition of the outcome of Meghiya’s stay at the mango grove, but he lets him go nevertheless, so that Meghiya would experience the reality of the situation for himself, and in that way gain spiritual maturation. This is an example of a heartwarming trust that a spiritual teacher has in his spiritual pupil that is a vital basis for spiritual friendship.

As the story goes, Meghiya, during his solitary practice at the mango grove, has a *déjà vu* experience. Despite his renunciation and spiritual training, *thoughts of sense-pleasure, ill will and violence* disturb his meditations.¹⁸ He is appalled by his inability to overcome these distractions and the lack of progress, and so returns to the Buddha for admonition [§7a].

Dhammapāla adds that the Buddha permits Meghiya to go on his solitary retreat even when the conditions are not right because he knows that *even had he not been permitted*, he would still have gone, leaving him behind. This would mislead Meghiya into thinking that the Buddha, in not permitting him to go, has treated as like a servant—which would be to his long-term detriment and suffering (UA 220). However, all’s well in that the Sutta ends well for Meghiya, and for us.

¹⁶ UA 218-220; ThaA 1:160.

¹⁷ *Idam pan’assa “evam ayam gantvā pi kamme anipphajjamāne nirāsaṅko hutvā pema,vasena puna āgacchissantī ti citta.maddava.janana,attham āha* (UA 218)

¹⁸ AA gives a curious explanation why these thoughts assailed Meghiya so suddenly and so strongly: In 500 successive rebirths, Meghiya had been a king. When he went out into the royal park for sport and amusement together with dancing girls of the three stages of life, he used to sit down at the very spot called “the auspicious slab” (P *maṅgala,silā,paṭṭa*). Therefore, at the very moment when Meghiya sat down at that place, he felt as if his monkhood had left him and he was a king surrounded him by beautiful dancers. And when, as a king, he was enjoying that splendour, thought of sensuality arose in him. At that very moment it happened that his great warriors brought to him two bandits whom they had arrested, and Meghiya saw them as distinctly as if they were standing in front of him. Now when (as a king) he was ordering the execution of one bandit, thought of ill-will arose in him, and when he was ordering the manacling and imprisonment of the other, thought of violence arose in him. So even now, as Meghiya, he became entangled in these unwholesome thoughts like a tree in a net of creepers or like a honey-gatherer in a swarm of honey bees. (AA 4:165 f; cf UA 219 f)

2 The five conditions for full spiritual maturation

2.0 CONTEXT OF SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP. The key teaching of the Meghiya Sutta is that of “the five conditions that bring about the full maturing in the liberation of mind” (*ceto, vimuttiyā pañca paripakāya, dhammā*),¹⁹ namely, **spiritual friendship, moral virtue, Dharma-centred talk, zealous exertion, and insight in impermanence** [§§7b-12]. Of these, moral virtue, exertion and insight are the meditator’s **internal limb** (*ajjhattika aṅga*), and spiritual friendship and Dharma-centred talk are his **external limb** (*bāhira aṅga*) (UA 234). Let us examine this in some detail, based especially on the Udāna Commentary (UA 211-235).

	Internal limb (ajjhattika aṅga)	External limb (bāhira aṅga)
1	—	spiritual friendship
2	moral virtue	—
3	—	Dharma-centred talk
4	zealous exertion	—
5	insight into impermanence	—

Fig 2. Internal and external limbs of the 5 conditions for full maturity

“Full maturity,” as such, is another term for conditions for the noble path, which, as we have seen [1.1], has *wise attention* as the path’s internal condition (that is, the “internal limb” here), and *spiritual friendship* as its external condition or external limb. **The Sambodha, pakkhika Dhamma Sutta** (A 9.1) uses the term “states conducive to self-awakening” (*sambodha, pakkhika dhamma*) for the same list of five limbs.²⁰ As such, they are synonyms.

2.1 THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP. Understandably, the very first point in the Buddha’s teaching to Meghiya is on the spiritual friend (*kalyāṇa, mitta*) [§8]. The Commentaries often describe a “spiritual friend” (*kalyāṇa, mitta*) as “a slayer of evil, a provider of good” (*aghassa ghātā hitassa vidhātā*).²¹ In the Udāna Commentary, **Dhammapāla** lists and describes **the eight “characteristics a spiritual friend”** (*kalyāṇa, mitta, lakkhaṇa*) (UA 222). This list is here collated with two other canonical lists in connection with the qualities of the noble disciple (*ariya, sāvaka*) and the true individual (*sappurisa*):²²

Table 2.1 Comparative table of the 8 characteristics

	The 8 characteristics (kalyāṇa, mitta, lakkhaṇa) (UA 222): accomplishment in:	Sublime qualities (saddham- ma) (Cūla Puṇṇama Sutta, M 3:23): the 1st set of qualities of a true individual (sappurisa)	Noble growth (ariya vaḍḍhi) (Vaḍḍhi Suttas 1-2, A 5.63- 64/3:80): a noble disciple (ariya, sāvaka) grows in:
1	<u>faith</u> (<i>saddhā, sampanna</i>)	faith	faith
2	moral virtue (<i>sīla, sampanna</i>)	moral shame; moral fear	moral virtue
3	learning (<i>suta, sampanna</i>)	learning	learning
4	charity (<i>cāga, sampanna</i>)	(gives gifts as a true individual)	charity
5	<u>effort</u> (<i>vīriya, sampanna</i>)	effort	—
6	<u>mindfulness</u> (<i>sati, sampanna</i>)	mindfulness	—
7	<u>samadhi</u> (<i>samādhi, sampanna</i>)	—	—
8	<u>wisdom</u> (<i>paññā, sampanna</i>)	wisdom	wisdom

¹⁹ More briefly, “the conditions conducing to full maturity” (*pañca dhamma paripakāya*) (UA 219).

²⁰ A 9..1.3-7/4:351- f = SD 82.1.

²¹ UA 221; ItA 1:65; ThīA 177. The epithet is used of the Buddha in connection with refuge-going: DA 229 = MA 1:130 = SA 1:171; AA 2:20 = KhpA 18 = UA 287.

²² For a discussion, see **Dūta S** (A 8.16) = SD Intro (8.2).

2.1.1 The 8 characteristics of spiritual friendship.

(1) **Faith**, briefly, refers to the wise acceptance of the Buddha as a fully self-awakened being, that is, the most spiritually evolved being of our time; the Buddha Dharma as the true teachings for spiritual development and liberation; and the Sangha of saints as those who have won self-liberation. Above all, it is the confidence that we can, through self-effort (with the help of spiritual friendship), attain liberation for ourselves, even in this life itself (that is, at least attain streamwinning).

(2) **Moral virtue** is the wise restraint of our bodily actions and speech directed to a growing awareness of self and other, unconditionally accepting personal differences so that our being, our social relationship and the environment are conducive for spiritual growth. Moral virtue is both good in itself, as well serves as a foundation and catalyst for mental cultivation. [3.6]

(3) **Learning** is the mental receptivity towards the living word of the Buddha as transmitted down the ages and our constant reflection of it, so that we grow in a more direct experience of true reality as a liberating experience. Learning is also a mutually beneficial means of social interaction so that our fellowship is bonded by wisdom that sees more common virtues than superficial differences. Learning and understanding the Dharma are the best ways of protecting and perpetuating it, so that there is always a core of the Buddha's authentic teachings in a world of shifting values and uncertainty.

(4) **Charity** is both a condition for spiritual growth and the mark of a true individual, that is, one who lives by the Buddha's teachings, exemplifying them. One gives not only because one is *able and willing* to give, but that such a gesture would help others to rise above the daily quest of material needs to the level of the spiritual quest. It is giving that is tempered both by compassion and by wisdom. Such giving can take the form of a wide range of skillful means besides material and financial gifts, such as the gift of your time, energy, or skill, the gift of fearlessness, and above all the gift of the Dharma. One gives so that the recipient would in due course be spiritually liberated.

(5) **Effort** here refers to the wise attention directed towards positive change (that is, the four right efforts) [2.4]. Briefly: first, we identify negative personal actions and habits, wisely and assertively restraining ourselves so that they are weakened. In due course, when the conditions are right, you abandon them. Then, we cultivate wholesome qualities and activities that promote self-understanding. And finally, we maintain a wholesome lifestyle so that it benefits *self, others and the environment*.²³

(6) **Mindfulness** is a more sustained and focussed attention to the nature of our *physical being* for the sake of physical and mental wellbeing, so that you see the body's conditionality and impermanence. We see *feelings* as they really are, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, not reactively, but as a part of an uncertain tone of sense-experiences. We observe how *the mind* affects and, in turn, is affected by such feelings, noting them just as they are, without further comment. Whatever *mental phenomena* arise, we see them simply for what they are, as passing mental states. In this way, we live the present, fully alive to experience as it arises.

(7) **Samadhi** is when *the present-moment awareness* is focussed to such a level that the mind transcends all physical sensing, and works purely on a wholesomely centred mental state or dhyana (*jhāna*). It is a state of progressively profound yet subtle joy and clarity. Such experiences clear and fine-tune the sense-faculties so that we are able to sense things with remarkable clarity. Such an extrasensory perception helps in seeing more directly into the true nature of things.

(8) **Wisdom** is *the direct vision of true reality itself*, especially when it is fully developed so that we are liberated. In a sense, we each become a being in our own right, a true individual, that is, one bound for awakening, or is already awakened. It is a true and healing wisdom that effectively transmits itself down through the ages, a clear wisdom of which the written word is but a pale image. It is the wisdom that liberates us from suffering.

2.1.2 The 5 spiritual faculties. A common link amongst these three sets of qualities is that (1) the eight characteristics are an extension of the five spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriya*),²⁴ while (2) the two other sets are abridged versions of the faculties [Table 2.1]. The Pali term for "spiritual faculty" is *indriya*

²³ See **Veḷu,dvāreyya S** (S 55.7) @ SD 1.5 (3) & **Sevitabbāsevitabba S** (M 114/3:45-61) = SD 39.8.

²⁴ See **Āpaṇa S** (A 48.50/5:225 f) = SD 10.4.

(ts), which comes from the word *inda* (Skt *indra*), meaning “leader.” In other words, the five spiritual faculties are the qualities of a *true spiritual leader*, that is, a spiritual friend. There is a very significant difference between “social friendship” (or friendly socializing) and spiritual friendship: social friendship is an association of bodies and appearances, while spiritual friendship is a *fellowship of hearts and minds*.

2.1.3 The totality of spiritual friendship. The Meghiya Sutta expressly states that spiritual friendship is the most important condition for “the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured” [§§13a-13d]. Here (and elsewhere) we see the Buddha repeatedly stressing the importance of spiritual friendship in the living of the holy life. **The Upaḍḍha Sutta** (S 45.2), for example, records the Buddha as declaring to Ānanda that spiritual friendship is the *whole* of the holy life.²⁵ In **the (Kalyāṇa,mittatā) Sāriputta Sutta** (S 45.3), Sāriputta himself makes this same statement.²⁶ **The Kalyāṇa,mittatā Sutta** (S 45.49) states that spiritual friendship it is the *external* condition for the noble eightfold path.²⁷ **The Yoniso Sutta** (S 45.55) states that wise attention is the *internal* condition for the noble eightfold path. Understandably, spiritual friendship is a liberating bond based on wise attention.²⁸

2.2 MORAL VIRTUE. This is the second condition for full spiritual maturation, that is to say, moral virtue: a monk is “morally virtuous (*sīlavā*), restrained in keeping with the code of discipline [Pāṭimokkha],” seeing danger in the slightest fault [§9]. A lay practitioner is guided by the five precepts, that is, he shows the fivefold respects, that is, towards (1) life, (2) the property of others, (3) his person and that of others, (4) truth, and (5) mindfulness.²⁹

2.3 DHARMA-CENTRED TALK. The third condition for full spiritual maturation is “talk concerned with austerity that conduces to the opening of the heart” (*kathā abhisallekhikā ceto,vivarāṇa,sappāyā*) [§10]. Basically, this is *right speech* for the monastics and those working for self-liberation in this life itself. As they are of vital importance, we shall look at them fully as a separate section [3].³⁰

2.4 ZEALOUS EXERTION. The fourth condition for full spiritual maturation is that of “exerting effort” (*āradḍha,viriya*), that is, the practitioner “dwells exerting effort”³¹ in abandoning unwholesome states and promoting wholesome states. He is vigorous, steadfast in striving, unrelentingly working on the wholesome states” [§11]. This is an even more sustained level of the fourfold right effort, this time applied to mindfulness practice, aimed at the removal of unwholesome roots, that is, the root causes themselves. **The Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33) defines **the four right efforts** (*cattāri padhānāni*), thus:³²

- (1) The effort of restraint (*samvara padhāna*). Here, on *seeing a form with the eye* (the same with the other five objects and faculties), you do not grasp at the sign or the details,³³ striving to restrain what might cause evil, unwholesome states, such as covetousness or sorrow, to overwhelm you.
- (2) The effort of abandoning (*pahāna padhāna*). Here, you do not entertain a thought of lust, of hate, or of cruelty, that has arisen, but abandon, dispel it, make it non-existent.
- (3) The effort of cultivation (*bhāvanā padhānā*). Here, you cultivate (the *awakening factors* of mindfulness, of investigation of states, of energy, of zest, of tranquillity, of concentration, of equanimity)³⁴ based on seclusion, detachment, cessation, maturing in relinquishing [release].³⁵

²⁵ S 45.2/5:2 f = SD 34.9.

²⁶ S 45.3/5:3 f = SD 34.10.

²⁷ S 45.49/5:28 f = SD 34.11.

²⁸ S 45.55/5:31 = SD 34.12.

²⁹ For a practical approach to moral virtue, see **Virtue Ethics** = SD 18.11.

³⁰ At this point, you might like to go on to study **part 3** below, before going on the last two sub-sections here.

³¹ Cf M 53.15/1:356, M 85.58/2:95; S 48.9/5.14.4; A 5:197/3:11, A 7.4.4/4:3.

³² See **Cattāro Padhāna** = SD 10.2.

³³ See **Na nimitta-g,gāhī nānuvyañjana-g,gāhī** = SD 19.14.

³⁴ See **Bodhi,pakkhiya,dhamma** = SD 10.1.

³⁵ “Based on solitude...maturity of surrender,” *viveka,nissitam virāga,nissitam nirodha,nissitam vossagga,pari-ṇāminim*: see SD 13.1(4.2c) & also Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001:162-168.

- (4) The effort of maintenance (*anurakkhana padhāna*). Here, you maintain an auspicious object of concentration (*bhadraka samādhi, nimitta*) that has arisen, such as the perception of a skeleton, or of a corpse that is worm-filled, or that is blue-black, or that is full of holes, or that is bloated (or, the practice of lovingkindness, as applicable). (D 33.1.11(10)/3:226)

2.5 INSIGHT INTO IMPERMANENCE. The fifth condition for full spiritual maturation is that the practitioner is “wise” (*paññavā*), “endowed with the noble wisdom into the rise and fall (of the aggregates)”³⁶ [§12]. We, that is, our mind-body being, are nothing more than the five aggregates—form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness. *Form* is the conscious body through which *feelings* arise, and as a result of which we *perceive* (or recognize) familiar patterns. We then go on to *form* or concoct more ideas and realities upon such deeply rooted patterns. This existential drama occurs on the stage of *consciousness* that gives life and reality to it (as movies do), and perpetuates it as an endless loop of recursive virtual reality.³⁷

The simplest way of dealing with this self-created world of virtual reality, propped up by the five aggregates, is to see it for what it really is, that is, as *impermanent*: in fact, this is the practice of the perception of impermanence (*anicca, saññā*).³⁸ Dhammapāla explains **the perception of impermanence** as follows:

One perceives impermanence by way of a contemplation of impermanence that goes by way of “All formations are impermanent” (*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*, Dh 227),

- on account of their being non-existent after having been (*hutvā abhāvato*),
- on account of their arising and falling away (*udaya-b, baya. vantato*),
- on account of their being for their breaking up (*pabhaṅgato*),
- on account of their existing in time [for the time being] (*tāva, kālikato*), and
- on account of their opposing the permanent (*nicca-p, paṭipakkhato*). (UA 236)

Dhammapāla goes on to state that “when one of these three characteristics [impermanence, suffering, not-self] is seen, the remaining pair is itself seen” (id). It should be understood that it is not that all three are seen at the same time, but that true insight into impermanence forms the basis for the realization of the other two characteristics. That is to say, *the realization of the truth of impermanence brings about stream-winning*, which in due course leads to full liberation. [2.5]

Often in our times, the perception of impermanence is rarely spoken of as a practice in itself, but the perception of impermanence is given the highest priority in such texts as **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1)³⁹ and **the Velāma Sutta** (A 9.20). The Velāma Sutta ends with the statement that the perception of impermanence, if done “for even the moment of a finger-snap” (A 9.20.5b) is better than the cultivation of lovingkindness, or observing the precepts, or going for refuge, or building a monastery, or feeding the Buddha, or feeding the Sangha, or doing any other kind of material giving.⁴⁰

It is important to see this in proper context: it does not mean here that the perception of impermanence could or should be done to the exclusion of the other teachings (especially the cultivation of lovingkindness, the observance of precepts, going for refuge and practising charity). Rather, they should be practised in relation to one another, with the perception of impermanence underlying them.

The perception of impermanence here should be taken in the context of streamwinning, especially those teachings given in two remarkable suttas related to lay spiritual training (but also suitable for monastics who are not striving for arhathood), namely, **the Sa, upādisesa Sutta** (A 9.12)⁴¹ and **the (Anicca)**

³⁶ UA 234. On the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k, khandha*), see **(Upādāna) Parivaṭṭa S** (S 22.56/3:58-61) = SD 3.7 & **Khandha** = SD 17, esp (1b): **Abhijāna S** (S 22.24), (9): **Khajjaniya S** (S 22.79).

³⁷ On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

³⁸ See eg **Araka S** (A 7.70/3:136-139) = SD 16.17.

³⁹ S 25.1/3:225 = SD 16.7.

⁴⁰ A 9.20/4:392-396 = SD 16.6.

⁴¹ A 9.12/4:378-382 = SD 3.3(3).

Cakkhu Sutta (S 25.1).⁴² In fact, the last practice on the list (the most important), that is, the perception on impermanence, leads to the very first person on the list, that is, the one endowed with right view (alluding to the streamwinner).⁴³

3 Talk that is conducive to the opening of the heart

3.0 Right speech is clearly defined in §10 of the Sutta, where the Buddha lists the following ten kinds of “**talk concerned with austerity that is conducive to the opening of the heart**,”⁴⁴ that is to say, talk on wanting little, on contentment, on seclusion, on non-socializing,⁴⁵ on exerting effort, on moral virtue, on mental cultivation, on wisdom, on liberation, and on the knowledges and vision of liberation [§10].⁴⁶ “Such talk as this he attains at will, without difficulty, with no trouble.” This is the third factor, which “brings about the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured.” We shall examine each in turn, based mainly on **the Udāna Commentary** (UA 227-234).

3.1 TALK ON WANTING LITTLE. Dhammapāla says that a true practitioner has few wants (*app'icchā*) in four ways, that is,

- (1) he wants little in terms of requisites (almsfood, robes, shelter, medication);
- (2) he does not make known what strict ascetic practice (*dhutaṅga*) he is doing;
- (3) he does not reveal that he is learned in the texts; and
- (4) he does not reveal his spiritual attainment. (UA 228)

As such, “talk on wanting little” (*appiccha,kathā*) refers to having only what is necessary for supporting life so that you can practise the holy life, and which facilitates freedom of movement, going where you wish to dwell for your solitary retreat. Such a monk moves about freely, only with his robe and bowl, like a bird freely flying on its two wings.⁴⁷

3.2 TALK ON CONTENTMENT. While “wanting little” concerns *external* aspects, “contentment” covers the *internal* or mental aspects of the practitioner. “Talk on contentment” (*santutṭhi,kathā*) is, for the practitioner, no talk at all or “noble silence,” or, at best, talk that is limited to necessary wholesome communication. Such “talk” conduces to helping the mind to lessen thinking, facilitating quicker mental focus.⁴⁸

3.3 TALK ON SECLUSION. The “talk on seclusion” (*paviveka,kathā*) concerns the practitioner’s total devotion to spiritual training. Dhammapāla quotes **the Mahā Niddesa** on the three kinds of seclusion (*viveka*),⁴⁹ namely:

- (1) seclusion of body (*kāya,viveka*): living in a solitary dwelling (in terms of body) and avoiding social intercourse (in terms of business), “He resorts to a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw. He dwells physically alone, goes about alone, stands alone, sits alone, uses his bed alone, enters the village for alms alone, returns alone, sits alone in seclusion, walks alone, departs himself alone, proceeds alone, looks after himself alone, keeps himself going alone.” (Nm 26, selected);

⁴² S 25.1/3:225 = SD 16.7.

⁴³ When you have finished studying both parts 2 & 3 here, go on to see their context in §§7b-12 in the Sutta itself.

⁴⁴ *Abhisallekkhikā ceto,vivaraṇa,sappāyā*.

⁴⁵ This refers to avoiding social intercourse while he is under training, not that society is evil or should be shunned in anyway. The Teaching is for the “good of the many” (*bahu,jana,hitāya*).

⁴⁶ This important list is a common (hence important) one: **Sekha S 1** (A 5.90.6/3:117); **(Anāpāna,sati) Kathā S** (A 5.97.2/3:121); **Sambodhi,pakkhika Dhamma S** (A 9.1.5+8/4:352); **Meghiya S** (A 9.3.10+13/4:357 f; U 36, 37); **Kosala S 2** (A 10.30.9/5:67, ×2); AA 4:162; UA 226 (×2); ItA 1:66, 2:90.

⁴⁷ See A 5:130; S 2:194; UA 227 f.

⁴⁸ See UA 229-231.

⁴⁹ *Viveka* and *paviveka* are synonyms.

- (2) seclusion of mind (*citta,viveka*), that is, the eight attainments (the 4 dhyanas and 4 formless attainments), or more simply, deep meditation:
- the mind of one in *the first dhyana* is secluded from the hindrances;⁵⁰
 - the mind of one in *the second dhyana* is secluded from initial application and sustained application;
 - the mind of one in *the third dhyana* is secluded from joy;
 - the mind of one in the fourth dhyana is secluded from happiness and suffering;
 - the mind of one in *the sphere of infinite space* is secluded from the perception of form, from the perception of sense impingement, and from the perception of diversity;
 - the mind of one in *the sphere of infinite consciousness* is secluded from the sphere of infinite space;
 - the mind of one in *the sphere of nothingness* is secluded from the sphere of infinite consciousness;
 - the mind of one in *the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception* is secluded from the sphere of nothingness
 - the mind of *the streamwinner* is secluded from the self-identity view, doubt, and grasping after rules and rituals, and their related latent tendencies...
- (3) seclusion from life-substrates (*upadhi,viveka*),⁵¹ that is, nirvana.
(Nm 26 f, 140, 157, 341; UA 163, 231, 328, 396; DhA 3:129)

3.4 TALK ON NON-SOCIALIZING. The “talk on non-socializing” (*asamsagga,kathā*) concerns the avoidance of the following five kinds of socializing (*samsagga*), on account of which a monk might leave the order to become a layman due to being captivated by a beautiful village girl through any of these five ways:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) socializing by way of <u>hearing</u> : | he hears about her great beauty; or, |
| (2) socializing by way of <u>seeing</u> , | he sees her great beauty; or |
| (3) socializing by way of <u>conversation</u> : | he converses with her, and is captivated by her giggling, etc; or |
| (4) socializing by way of <u>enjoyment</u> : | defilements arise in him through using something given to him by a woman in the present or in the past; or |
| (5) socializing by way of <u>the body</u> : | through such intimacy as holding a woman’s (or a nun’s) hand. (UA 232) |

The Hālidakāni Sutta (S 22.3) and **the Dāru-k,khandha Sutta 1** (S 35.241) states the same points in a single verse:

Here, householder, one lives associating with laypeople—he rejoices with them, he sorrows with them. He is happy when they are happy, and sad when they are sad. He involves himself in their current affairs and duties as if they were his own.⁵² It is in such a way that one is intimate with the village. (S 22.3/3:11 = SD 10.12; S 35.241/4:180 = SD 28.5)

⁵⁰ See §3.11.0 & *Nīvaraṇa* = SD 32.1.

⁵¹ *Upadhi* is an early term referring generally to whatever sustains this life and rebirth, and specifically to “acquisitions” that constitute such a state, and which can be tr as foll: life-substrate, acquisition (that supports life) “prop” or basis of life (and rebirth) (M 66.14/1:453). Comys generally explain it as fourfold: (the objects of) sense-pleasures (*kām’upadhi* or *kāma,guṇ’upadhi*), the 5 aggregates (*khandh’upadhi*), defilement (*kiles’upadhi*), and volitional constructions (ie karmic activities) (*abhisankhār’upadhi*) (MA 2:112, 3:169, 5:60; SA 1:31; ItA 2:64; SnA 436; cf MA 4:55, 56).

⁵² Such intimacy with the laity is considered unbecoming and unskillful of a monastic. See also **Nāgadatta S** (S 9.7/1:200 f) & A 3:116 f. The phrase *samāna,sukha,dukkha* (“same in joy and sorrow”) (D 3:187; S 1:201) is exemplified in a negative sense at **Hālidakāni S 1** (S 22.3.18/3:11), but in **Sigāl’ovāda S**, it has a positive sense, characteristic of a true friend (D 31.21/3:187); see SD 3.16.

In the **Rāhula Sutta** (Sn 2.11), the Buddha admonishes Rāhula thus:

<p><i>Mitte bhajassu kalyāṇe pantañ ca sayan'āsanam vivittaṃ appanigghosaṃ mattaññū hohi bhojane</i></p>	<p>Resort to spiritual friends and a remote dwelling, secluded, with little noise, be moderate in food. (Sn 338)</p>
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3.5 TALK ON EXERTING EFFORT. The “talk on exerting effort” (*viriy'ārambha,kathā*) is exemplified in the (**Āhāra**) **Kāya Sutta** (S 46.2), where it is said:

There are, bhikshus, the element of initiating effort (*ārambha,dhātu*), the element of endeavour (*nikkama,dhātu*), and the element of exertion (*parakkama,dhātu*). Frequently giving wise attention to them is the food for the arising of unarisen awakening factor of energy, and for the fulfillment by cultivation of the arisen awakening factor of energy. (S 46.2/5:66)

The Sutta's Commentary explains that these three are progressive stages of increasing strength (SA 3:141 = Vism 132). This is, as it were, a more refined version of the four right efforts [2.4].

3.6 Talk on moral virtue. The “talk on moral virtue” (*sīla,kathā*) occurs on two levels, the mundane and the supramundane. *The mundane moral virtue* refers to the four kinds of moral virtue by way of purification (*parisuddhi,sīla*), that is,

- the restraint in keeping with the code of discipline (Pāṭimokkha),
- the restraint of the sense-faculties,
- the purification of livelihood, and
- moral virtue concerning the four requisites (almsfood, robes, shelter, and medication).

The supramundane moral virtue is that associated with the paths and with the fruitions, and also the moral virtue associated with the eight attainments (that is, the dhyanas and the attainments).

3.7 TALK ON MENTAL CONCENTRATION. The “talk on mental cultivation” (*samādhi,kathā*) refers to the eight attainments [3.3(2)], along with access concentration, forming the basis of insight: this is *mundane* concentration. The *supramundane* concentration is that of the paths of sainthood.

3.8 TALK ON WISDOM. The “talk on wisdom” (*paññā,kathā*) specifically refers to the knowledge associated with insight (*vipassanā*), namely, that connected with the supramundane paths and fruitions.

3.9 TALK ON LIBERATION. The “talk on liberation” (*vimutti,kathā*) concerns the paths and fruitions of sainthood. The “path” (*magga*) here refers to the descent into the way *heading towards* a particular kind of sainthood, and “fruition” (*phala*) is *the full attainment* of that level.

3.10 TALK ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND VISION OF LIBERATION. The “talk on the knowledge and vision of liberation” (*vimutti,ñāṇa,dassana,kathā*) concerns the “review knowledge” of the arhat who contemplates the nature of his awakening. It can also apply to other levels of attainment as the saint reflects on the nature of his or her awakening.

3.11 “THE OPENING OF THE HEART.”

3.11.0. These ten kinds of talk are said to be “concerned with austerity that is conducive to the opening of the heart,”⁵³ which we shall now examine. **Dhammapāla** explains this important phrase in *two ways*:

- (1) it is “conducive to the opening of the heart” because it employs calm and insight (*samatha,vipassanā*) to keep away the mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) (to mindfulness and samadhi) [3.11.1], or
- (2) it brings into being the mind of calm and insight.⁵⁴

⁵³ *Kathā abhisallekhikā ceto,vivaraṇa,sappāyā.*

⁵⁴ Be Ee *samatha,vipassanā,citass'eva*; Ce Se *samatha,vipassanā'va cittass'eva*. Masefied notes that Dhammapāla's expl here is clearly a combination of those found at AA 2:275 (*ceto,vivaraṇa,saṅkhātānaṃ samatha,vipassanānaṃ sappāya*) and AA 4:162 (*samatha,vipassanā,cittassa vivaraṇe sappāyā upakārakā*). (UA:M 659 n188)

The mental hindrances—sense-desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and doubt—close up the heart and veil up the mind so that we are unable to see beyond our noses: they hinder us from becoming better than what we think we are.

3.11.1 Calm and insight. The “opening of the heart” (*ceto, vivaraṇa*)⁵⁵ is a very interesting meditation term referring to how calm and insight work together to bring about spiritual liberation (UA 177). We need to calm the mind so that wisdom arises; we use wisdom to clear the mind of distractions, so that it is focussed. The two, like the wings of a bird, helps to keep it in the air above the world. In fact, *they are, respectively, the eighth (right concentration) and the first (right view) factors of the noble eightfold path.* And the seventh factor, *right mindfulness*, is the means of applying calm and insight so that they become supramundane, that is, path-factors. In other words, calm and insight are both the means and the ends of meditation and mindfulness training. As the ancient saying goes:

*N’atthi jhānaṃ apaññassa
paññā na’ tthi ajhāyato
yamhi jhānaṃ ca paññā ca
sa ve nibbāna, santike*

There is no dhyana [meditation] for one without wisdom,
there is no wisdom for one without dhyana [meditation]:
but where there is both dhyana [meditation] and wisdom,
one is indeed in nirvana’s presence. (Dh 372)⁵⁶

It is clear here that *jhāna* (in a very early sense) is a non-technical term (that is, not as “dhyana”) but is a generic term for “meditation” (or mindfulness practice).⁵⁷ Its verb form appears in the Dhammapada verse just before the above:

*Jhāya bhikkhu mā ca pamādo
mā te kāma, guṇe bhamassu cittaṃ
mā loha, guḷaṃ gilī pamatto
mā kandi dukkham idan ti dayhamāno*

Meditate, bhikkhu! Be not heedless!
Let not your mind stray amongst the cords of sense-pleasures.
Do not, being heedless, swallow an iron ball.
Do not, while burning, cry out, “This is suffering!”
(Dh 371)⁵⁸

The imperative 2nd person plural verb *jhāyatha* is more common than its singular form *jhāya*, in the same context of exhorting the monks to meditate, as in the stock passage (with minor variations, depending on whom it is addressed to):

*Etāni <Cunda | bhikkhave> rukkha, mūlāni, etāni suññ’āgārāni. Jhāyatha <Cunda | bhikkhave>
mā pamādattha. Mā pacchā vippaṭṭisārino ahuvattha. Ayaṃ vo amhākaṃ anusāsani ti*

These are the root of trees <Cunda | bhikkhus>, these are empty houses. Meditate, <Cunda! | bhikkhus!> Be not heedless! Do not regret later. This is our teaching to you.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Although Dhammapāla uses *citta, vivaraṇa* here, this (*ceto, vivaraṇa*) is the canonical and more common term: A 5.90/3:116+117; A 5.97/3:121; A 9.1.5+8/4:352; A 9.3.10+13/4:357 f; A 10.30.9/5:67 (×2); U 36, 37; AA 4:162; UA 226 (×2); ItA 1:66, 2:90.

⁵⁶ **Patna Dh:** *nāsti jhānaṃ apramāssa pramāṇā nāsti ajhāyato | yamhi jhānaṃ ca pramāṇā ca sa ve nibbāna, santike* || (Dh:Patna 62). **Udāna, varga:** *nāsti jaṇa apraṇasa | praṇa nāsti ajayado || yasa jaṇa ca praṇa ya | so hu nirvaṇasa sadi’i* (Uv 58 = 32.25).

⁵⁷ **Brahmavamsa** has a very interesting view regarding *jhāna*, that it is the Buddha who discovered it: see **Dhyana** = SD 8.4.2.

⁵⁸ **Patna Dh:** *dhammaṃ vicinātha apramattā mā vo kāma, guṇā bhramessu cittaṃ | mā loha, guḷe gilāṃ pramatto kraṇḍe dukkham idan ti dahyamāno* || (Dh:Patna 33). **Udāna, varga:** *ja’i bhikkhu ma yi pramati | ma de kama-guṇa bhamessu cita || ma loha-guḷa gili pramata | kani dukkham ida di ḍajamaṇo* || (Uv 75 = 31.1).

⁵⁹ See eg **Sallekha S** (M 8.18/1:46) = **Dvedha, vitakka S** (M 19.27/1:118) = (**Nava Purāṇa**) **Kamma S** (S 35.-146/4:133) = **Kāya S** (S 43.1/4:359) = **Maggaṅga S** (S 43.11/4:361) = **Asaṅkhata S** (S 43.12/4:362) = **Parāyana S** (S 43.44/4:373) = **Dhamma, vihārī S 1** (A 5.73/3:87) = **Dhamma, vihārī S 2** (A 5.74/3:89) = **Araka S** (A 7.7.70.4/-4:139) = **Devatā S** (A 9.19.4/4:392); (**Ājānīya**) **Saddha S** (A 11.10/5:322-326); **Sumaṅgala Tha** (Tha 43d); **Vajji, putta Tha** (Tha 119c); **Kāṭiyāna Tha** (Tha 414d); cf **Mahā Palobhana J** (J 80.286 = J 507/4:469).

3.11.2 “Breaking the barriers.” In the cultivation of lovingkindness (*mettā, bhāvanā*), traditional teachers often say that the practice is only fully accomplished when the practitioner “breaks the barrier,” that is, when lovingkindness is directed evenly towards self, a dear person, one who is neutral, a hostile person, and to all beings.⁶⁰ The canonical term for this unconditional acceptance of everyone alike is *appamaññā*⁶¹ or *appamāṇa*⁶²—both meaning “immeasurable”—and their various phrases.⁶³

On a supramundane level, this immeasurability refers to the arhat’s destruction of *conceit (māna)*, which is the measuring of oneself with others, that one is better than others (superiority complex), or worse than others (inferiority complex), or equal to others (equality complex). The arhat has given up any such notions, and simply regards everyone as they really are.

The Udāna version of the Meghiya Sutta, adds that these kinds of talk conduce “**to complete revulsion, to fading away, to cessation, to calming [peace], to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana**” [§10].⁶⁴ The Udāna Commentary explains each of the factors thus:

- complete revulsion (*ekanta, nibbidā*) showing disenchantment with the suffering of samsara;
- fading away (*virāga*) lessening of defilements, or dispassion;
- cessation (*nirodha*) ending of suffering;
- calming (*upasama*) ending of all defilements;
- direct knowledge (*abhiññā*) true understanding of reality and liberating knowledge;
- self-awakening (*sambodhi*) awakening to the four paths (the stages of sainthood);
- nirvana (*nibbāna*) the nirvana without remains (final nirvana).

These seven factors are in fact an extended version of the well known canonical *viveka, nissita* formula [2.4(3)], which in the Nikāyas is often applied to the awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*), the spiritual faculties (*indriya*) and the spiritual powers (*bala*).⁶⁵ These factors are related to the five types of abandoning (*pahāna*), as shown in this table:

	The 8 factors (D 16.1.10)	The stages of liberation (<i>viveka, nissita</i> formula) [2.4(3)]	The 5 types of abandoning (<i>pahāna</i>) = SD 13.1(4.2c)
1	complete revulsion	} liberation (temporary)	by suppression
2	fading away		by substitution of opposite (displacement)
3	cessation	cessation	by cutting off
4	calming	seclusion	by tranquillization
5	direct knowledge	detachment	} by escape
6	self-awakening	} relinquishment	
7	nirvana		

[At this point, you might now like go back to 2.3 above and continue your study.]

— — —

⁶⁰ The n for this is *sīma, sambheda* (Vism 9.41-43/307; DAṬ 1:83).

⁶¹ Sn 507; D 2:144 = M 2:14 = A 5:46; D 2:186; A 5:150 = It 21; M 1:197 (*appamaññā ceto, vimutti*) = 3:145; M 2:262; A 3:51, 4:421, 5:299; Tha 549, 647.

⁶² Sn 507; D 3:233; Tha 386; Vbh 272, 276, 282.

⁶³ See CPD svv for refs.

⁶⁴ That is, to complete revulsion at the world, to fading away of lust, to cessation of suffering, to calming (ridding) of all defilements, to direct knowledge (a direct experience of reality), to self-awakening (self-gnosis), to nirvana (spiritual liberation): see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.1.10/2:79 = SD 9).

⁶⁵ See S 5:29-31, 32-34, 35 f, 38-42, 45-62, 134-140, 239-243, 249-253. See also Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening* 2001:162-168, 253-255.

The Discourse to Meghiya

A 9.3/4:354-358 ≈ U 4.1/34-37

1 Thus have I heard. [U 34]

Meghiya is attracted to a mango grove

At one time the Blessed One was staying on Mt Cālikā near Cālikā.⁶⁶

At that time, the venerable Meghiya was the Blessed One's attendant. Then the venerable Meghiya approached the Blessed One, saluted him, and then stood at one side. Standing thus at one side, the elder Meghiya said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, I wish to go into Jantu,gāma for the almsround.”

“Please do what you think is now the time to do, Meghiya.”⁶⁷

2 Then the venerable Meghiya, having dressed himself in the morning and taking robe and bowl, entered Jantu,gāma⁶⁸ for alms. Having made the almsround and taken his meal, he went to the bank of the river Kimi,kālā.

There,⁶⁹ on the bank of the river Kimi,kālā, while walking back and forth to stretch his legs,⁷⁰ the venerable Meghiya saw a pleasant and delightful mango grove. Seeing it, he thought:

“Pleasant, indeed, is this mango grove; delightful, indeed, is this mango grove!⁷¹ Truly, it is fit for a clansman who wishes to strive in meditation. If the Blessed One allows it, I shall return to this mango grove to strive in meditation.”

3a Then the venerable Meghiya approached the Blessed One, saluted him, and then sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the elder Meghiya *related to the Blessed One what he had thought*:

“Pleasant, indeed, is this mango grove; delightful, indeed, is this mango grove! Truly, it is fit for a clansman who wishes to strive in meditation. If the Blessed One allows it, I shall return to this mango grove to strive in meditation.” [U 35]

Meghiya is assailed by old karma

3b When this was said, the Blessed One said this to the venerable Meghiya:⁷²

“Wait awhile, Meghiya. We are now alone⁷³ here. Wait awhile until some other monk comes along⁷⁴ [until some other monk shows up].”⁷⁵

⁶⁶ Mt Cālikā & Cālikā: see Intro (1).

⁶⁷ *Yassa dāni tvam Meghiya kālam maññasī ti* (lit, “Think you the timely for you now!”). This is stock; see: **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.103/1:85 f = SD 8.10), **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.6/2:104 = SD 13), **Sekha S** (M 53.3/-1:354) = SD 21.14), **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90.17/2:132 f = SD 10.8) and **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145.6/3:269).

⁶⁸ AA:Ce AA:Se *Jatugāmaṃ*; AA:Ke *Jattugāmaṃ*.

⁶⁹ The 2 texts minor slightly only in syntax. U adds *upasaṅkamtivā*.

⁷⁰ *Jaṅghā,vihāraṃ anucaṅkamaṇaṃ anuvicaramāno*, lit “wandering to and fro on foot and walking up and down” (K R Norman, *Group of Discourses II*, 1992:63. **Comy** says that he is stretching his legs after a long sitting in meditation (UA 217). Be (evam upari pi), Ee *jaṅghā,vihāraṃ*; Be (Phayre), Ce Ke Se *jaṅgha,vihāraṃ*. This is stock: D 1:235; M 1:108, 2:118, 2:118; Sn p105. Cf Miln 22; J 2:240, 272. See **Tevijja S** (D 13.3/1:234) = D:RD 1:301n. For a detailed treatment on the phrase, see SnA 447 f.

⁷¹ Comy: It was “pleasant” (*pāsādika*) because it brought serenity to those seeing it on account of the density of trees and the glossiness of the leaves; it was “pleasing” (*manuñña*) on account of its dense shade and its rustic character; it is “delightful” (*ramaṇīya*) because it inspires zest and joy in those who enter it. (UA 217 f)

⁷² Be Ee omit this line.

⁷³ A:Be Se, U:Be *ekak’amhi* (1st sg: “I am alone”); A:Ce Ee, U:Ee Po *ekak’amhā*; U:Se *ekako’mhi* (“I am alone”).

⁷⁴ “Comes,” Be *āgacchatī ti*. Amplification: “shows up [is seen],” Se *dissatū ti*; UA also notes *dissatū ti* as vl (UA 219).

4 But, for the second time, the venerable Meghiya said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, for the Blessed One, there is nothing more that needs to be done. There is nothing more to add to what has been done.⁷⁶ But *as for me, bhante, there is more that needs to be done*; I still have to add to what has been done. If the Blessed One permits me, I shall go to that mango grove and strive in meditation.”⁷⁷

[For the second time, the Blessed said this to the venerable Meghiya:]⁷⁸

“Wait awhile, Meghiya. We are now alone here. Wait awhile until some other monk comes along.”

5 But, for the third time, [356] the venerable Meghiya said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, for the Blessed One, there is nothing more that needs to be done. There is nothing more to add to what has been done. But as for me, bhante, there is more that needs to be done; I still have to add to what has been done. If the Blessed One permits me, I shall go to that mango grove and strive in meditation.”

“You are speaking of striving, Meghiya; what can I say?⁷⁹ Please do what you think is now the time to do, Meghiya.”

6 Then the venerable Meghiya, having risen from his seat, saluted the Blessed One, and keeping his right side towards him, headed for the mango grove. Having reached the mango grove, he sat down at the foot of a certain tree for the noontday rest.

But while doing so, three kinds of evil unwholesome thoughts constantly assailed him, that is to say, thoughts of sense-desire, thoughts of ill-will and thoughts of violence.

Then this thought occurred to the venerable Meghiya:

“It’s strange, it’s amazing!⁸⁰ Out of faith I have gone forth from home into homelessness, and yet I am harassed⁸¹ by these three kinds of evil, unwholesome thoughts, (that is to say,) thoughts of sense-desire, thoughts of ill-will and thoughts of violence.”⁸²

⁷⁵ A:Se *Āgamehi tāva meghiya, ekak’amhā tāva, yāva aññe [Ee añño] pi koci bhikkhu āgacchatī ti.* U:Se *āgamehi tāva meghiya, ekak’amhā yāva añño [Ee adds pi] koci bhikkhū āgacchatī ti.* For other vll, see U 35 n1. See Intro (1.3).

⁷⁶ *Bhagavato bhante, n’atthi kiñci uttarim karanīyam, n’atthi katassa paṭicayo.* This is stock: S 22.122.18/3:168 f; A 9.3.4/4:356 = U 4.1/37,5 (x4); A 3:378* (*katassa paṭicayo n’atthi, karanīyam na vijjati*) = Tha 642. AA ad loc: “*There is nothing more that he needs to do: Because he has done the 4 tasks (kicca) regarding the 4 noble truths [Dhamma,cakka S = S 56.11.9-12/5:422 = SD 1.1], there is nothing more to be done. There is nothing more to add to what has been done, that is, there is no (need for a) repetition of the realization. For, the path, once cultivated, not be cultivated again; the abandoned defilements are not abandoned again*” (AA 4:165,3-5); UA adds that the Buddha has accomplished “the 16 functions of full understanding etc, by way of the 4 paths in connection with the 4 truths” (UA 218, also 68: sv *pariññābhisamaya*, & Vism 33.89-129/689-697). Here, see esp (Mahā Koṭṭhita) Sila S (S 12.-122.18/3:168 f). This passage is significant in that it shows that Meghiya is actually sincere and enthusiastic about doing his solitary meditation retreat. However, the conditions are not right yet. See foll n.

⁷⁷ *Bhagavato bhante, n’atthi kiñci uttarim karanīyam, n’atthi katassa paṭicayo. Mayham kho pana bhante, atthi uttarim karanīyam, atthi katassa paṭicayo. Sace maṃ bhagavā anujāneyya, gaccheyyāhaṃ taṃ amba, vanam padhānāyā ti.* Here, the two occurrences of *karanīyam* have been differently rendered to fit the context. See prec n.

⁷⁸ Such parentheses refer to Udāna readings.

⁷⁹ *Padhānan ti kho, Meghiya, vadamānaṃ kin ti vadeyyāma?* See Intro (1.3).

⁸⁰ *Acchariyam vata bho, abbhutam vata bho.* This exclamation is made in reproach, as Ānanda does when he sees the Buddha’s ageing body (UA 219): see (Ānanda) Jarā S (S 48.41/5:216 = SD 42.5) (SA 3:224).

⁸¹ A:Ee *anvāsatto*; A:Ee Se U:Be *anvāsattā*; U:Ee *anvasanno*; U:Pe *anusantā*. Peter Masefield notes that CPD errs in its expl of *anvāsatta*, where he says, “Clearly the explanation being offered is that it was Meghiya’s belief that the Lord had himself, as one also gone forth, been once similarly subjected to such thoughts—cp how he is later [UA 219] said to have thought, ‘The far-seeing Lord must surely have put a stop to this upon seeing it’ [*Idam vata disvā dīgha, dassī bhagavā paṭisedhesī ti*].” (UA:M 648 n40).

⁸² For Buddhaghosa’s explanation of Meghiya’s distractions, see Intro (1.3).

The five conditions conducive to spiritual maturity

7a Then the venerable Meghiya, on emerging from the evening retreat, approached the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the venerable Meghiya *told the Blessed One what had occurred*:

“It’s strange, it’s amazing! Out of faith I have gone forth from home into homelessness, and yet I am harassed by these three kinds of evil, unwholesome thoughts, [that is to say,] [357] thoughts of sense-desire, thoughts of ill-will and thoughts of violence.”⁸³ [U 36]

7b “Meghiya, these **five conditions that bring full maturing**⁸⁴ of the liberation of mind of one who is not fully matured, What are the five?”⁸⁵

8 (1) Here, Meghiya, a monk is a spiritual friend, good companion, good comrade. This is the first factor that brings about the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured.

9 (2) Furthermore, Meghiya, a monk is morally virtuous, restrained in keeping with the code of discipline [Pāṭimokkha], seeing danger in the slightest fault. This is the second factor that brings about the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured.

10 (3) Furthermore, Meghiya, there is this talk concerned with austerity that is conducive to the opening of the heart,⁸⁶ that is to say:

talk on wanting little	<i>appiccha,kathā,</i>
talk on contentment	<i>santuṭṭhi,kathā,</i>
talk on seclusion	<i>paviveka,kathā,</i>
talk on not socializing	<i>asamsagga,kathā,</i>
talk on exerting effort	<i>viriy’ārambha,kathā,</i>
talk on moral virtue	<i>sīla,kathā,</i>
talk on mental cultivation	<i>samādhi,kathā,</i>
talk on wisdom	<i>paññā,kathā,</i>
talk on liberation	<i>vimutti,kathā,</i>
talk on the knowledge and vision of liberation	<i>vimutti,ñāṇa,dassana,kathā.</i>

Such talk as this he attains at will, without difficulty, with no trouble.⁸⁷ This is the third factor that brings about the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured.

11 (4) Furthermore, Meghiya, a monk dwells exerting effort [initiating energy]⁸⁸ in abandoning unwholesome states and promoting wholesome states. He is vigorous, steadfast in striving, unrelentingly working on [not laying down the burden regarding] the wholesome states.⁸⁹ This is the fourth factor that brings about the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured.

12 (5) Furthermore, Meghiya, a monk is wise, endowed with the noble wisdom into the rise and fall (of the aggregates)⁹⁰ that leads to the complete destruction of suffering.⁹¹ This is the fifth factor that brings about the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured.⁹²

⁸³ From here right to the end, the teaching is essentially the same as that given at **Sambodhi,pakkhika Dhamma S** (A 9.1.3-8/4:351-252) = SD 82.1.

⁸⁴ *Pañca dhammā paripakkāya*. **Sambodhi,pakkhika Dhamma S** (A 9.1) here uses the phrase “states conducive to self-awakening” (*sambodhi,pakkhika dhamma*) (A 9.1.3/4:351) = SD 82.1.

⁸⁵ These 5 qualities [§§8-12] are called “the states that are the limbs of awakening” (*sambodhi,pakkhika dhamma*). While **Meghiya S** (A 9.3) say these qualities “bring about the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured,” the **Sambodhi,pakkhika Dhamma S** (A 9.1/3:351-353) describes them as “necessary conditions” (*upanisā*) for the limb of awakening. See **Upanisā S** (S 12.23/2:29-32) = SD 6.12: see esp (1.2) on tr of *upanisā*.

⁸⁶ *Kathā abhisallekkhikā ceto,vivarāna,sappāyā*. See Intro (3.11) above.

⁸⁷ “At will...with no trouble,” *nikāma,lābhī hoti akiccha,lābhī akasira,lābhī*. This is stock: D 3:113 (DA: *akasi-ra,lābhī* = *vipula,lābhī*); M 1:354 = A 3:134; A 2:23 (AA: *akasi-rānam lābhī vipulānam*), 36 etc.

⁸⁸ *Āraddha,vīriyo*. Cf M 53.15/1:356, M 85.58/2:95; S 48.9/5.14.4; A 5:197/3:11, A 7.4.4/4:3.

⁸⁹ *Thāmaṅga dalha,parakkamo anikkhitta,dhuro kusalesu dhammesu*.

⁹⁰ UA 234. On the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*), see SD 17, esp (1b): **Abhijāna S** (S 22.24), (9): **Khajjanīya S** (S 22.79). On watching rise and fall, see SD 13.1(3.8).

These five factors, Meghiya, bring about the full maturing of the liberation of mind not yet fully matured.⁹³

Benefits of spiritual friendship

13a (1) Meghiya, when a monk has a **spiritual friend**, good companion, good comrade,

(2) it can be expected that he will be morally virtuous, restrained in keeping with the Pāṭimokkha [monastic disciplinary code], [U 37] seeing danger in the slightest fault.

13b (3) Meghiya, when a monk has a spiritual friend, it can be expected that this talk concerned with austerity that is conducive to the opening of the heart, that is to say:

talk on wanting little,
talk on contentment,
talk on seclusion,
talk on not socializing,
talk on exerting effort,
talk on moral virtue,
talk on mental cultivation,
talk of wisdom,
talk on liberation,
talk on the knowledge and vision of liberation—

such talk as this he attains at will, without difficulty, with no trouble.

13c (4) Meghiya, when a monk has a spiritual friend, it can be expected that he dwells exerting effort in abandoning unwholesome states and promoting wholesome states. He is vigorous, steadfast in striving, unrelentingly working on the wholesome states.

13d (5) Meghiya, when a monk has a spiritual friend, it can be expected that that he is wise, endowed with noble wisdom into the rise and fall of things that leads to the complete destruction of suffering.

Four supporting meditations

13e Then, Meghiya, when the monk is established in these five things, he should cultivate four more things:⁹⁴

The meditation on foulness ⁹⁵	should be cultivated for abandoning lust.
Lovingkindness	should be cultivated for abandoning ill-will. ⁹⁶
The mindfulness of breathing	should be cultivated for cutting off thoughts. ⁹⁷
The perception of impermanence ⁹⁸	should be cultivated for eliminating the ‘I am’ conceit. ⁹⁹

⁹¹ *Puna ca param Meghiya bhikkhu paññavā hoti uday’atthagāminiyā paññāya samannāgato ariyāya nibbedhikāya sammā,dukkhakkhaya,gāminiyā.*

⁹² *Aparipakkāya Meghiya ceto,vimuttiyā ayaṃ pañcamo dhammo paripākkāya saṃvattati.* Se (BJT) has ...*ime pañca dhammā paripākkāya saṃvattati*, which is clearly an editorial oversight.

⁹³ This line only at U 36 (not found at A 4:357). **Study note:** At this point, you might like to go to **Intro (2)** above for a more detailed analysis of this section.

⁹⁴ From here up tp 13e, as in **Sambodhi,pakkhika Dhamma S** (A 9.1.9/4:353) = SD 82.1. The 4 meditations qu at Vism 3.122/114 f.

⁹⁵ This is the term commonly found in the Suttas, and refers to the 31 (or Comy, 32.incl “brain”) parts of the body, beginning with “head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin.” The term *asubha,nimitta* (the sign of foulness) in Comys, refers to one or other of the 10 foul objects, ie bodily remains in one of the 10 stages of decomposition (Vism 6.1-11/178 f). On details of practice, see **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22.5/2:293 = M 10.10) = SD 13.2-3; **Kāya,gatā,sati S** (M 119.7/3:90) = SD 12.21 Intro (5). See also **Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.29/5:277 f), on the analysis of will or desire (*chanda*).

⁹⁶ See eg **Āghāta Paṭivinaya S** (A 5.161/3:185 f) = SD 12.23.

⁹⁷ *Ānāpāna,sati bhāvetabbā vitakk’upacchedāya.* Cf AA 2:303. This is the same as saying that breath meditation is a basis for dhyana.

⁹⁸ See **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1/3:225) = SD 16.7.

For, one who perceives impermanence, Meghiya, establishes the perception of not-self. One who perceives not-self eliminates the ‘I am’ conceit.¹⁰⁰ He attains nirvana here and now.”¹⁰¹

The udāna

¹⁰²[13f Then, the Blessed One, knowing the significance of the teaching, at that time, uttered this udāna:

*Khuddā vitakkā sukhumā vitakkā
anuggatā manaso uppilāvā,
ete avidvā manaso vitakke
hurā,huraṃ dhāvati bhanta,citto.*

Small thoughts, subtle thoughts,
when followed, they elate the mind.
Not knowing these thoughts of the mind,
the roaming mind runs through many lives.

*Ete ca vidvā manaso vitakke
ātāpi yo saṃvaratī satīmā,
anuggate manaso uppilāve
asesam ete pajahāsi buddho’ ti*

But having known these thoughts of the mind,
the ardent who is mindful restrains the mind,
so that they do not trail the mind, elating it:
an awakened one has abandoned them completely.]

— evaṃ —

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⁹⁹ The “I-am” conceit here is a short-hand for conceit (*māna*) in general: see **Anusaya** = SD 31.3. Comy refers to the elimination of the 9 kinds of conceit (Vbh 962/389 f): see **Anusaya** = SD 31.3(4).

¹⁰⁰ The import is that the true realization of impermanence is the basis for the realization of the other two characteristics in due course: see [2.5].

¹⁰¹ The Aṅguttara (A 9.3) version ends here.

¹⁰² Only found in U 4.1/37; see Intro (1.1).