

## 8. Knowledge of dharma-status and knowledge of nirvana

In SN 12. 70 and its counterpart SA 347<sup>205</sup> the Buddha speaks of two kinds of knowledge, *knowledge of dharma-status* (dhammaṭṭhitiñāṇaṃ 知法住) and *knowledge of nirvana* (nibbāne ñāṇaṃ 知涅槃),<sup>206</sup> which are connected with the teaching of *arising by causal condition*.

In this discourse a newly ordained bhikṣu, Susīma (須深), questions some elder bhikṣus who have declared they have attained liberation. In the SN version he asks them whether they have attained in turn the psychic powers (abhiññā) up to the fifth, divine eye (dibba-cakkhu),<sup>207</sup> followed by “those *calmed emancipations* (santā vimokkhā) where materiality (rūpa) is transcended and non-materiality (arūpa) [is attained]”.<sup>208</sup> In the SA version he asks whether they have attained in turn the four dhyānas and the *calmed emancipations* (寂靜解脫).<sup>209</sup>

In both versions the bhikṣus reply that they have attained none of these things. Susīma asks how, without these *attainments* (samāpatti 正受) they could make such a *declaration* (veyyākaraṇa 記說), to which the bhikṣus say that they are *wisdom-liberated* (paññā-vimuttā 慧解脫).<sup>210</sup>

Susīma, not fully understanding, goes to ask the Buddha. The Buddha says: “First, *knowledge of dharma-status* (dhammaṭṭhitiñāṇaṃ 知法住); afterwards, *knowledge of nirvana* (nibbāne ñāṇaṃ 知涅槃).”<sup>211</sup>

In the SN version the Buddha explains to Susīma that each of the five aggregates is to be seen as impermanent, suffering, and not-self, and that a noble disciple who sees them thus experiences in succession disgust, fading of desire, liberation, and knowledge of liberation. Then he explains *arising*

205 SN ii, pp. 119-128; T 2, pp. 96a-98a (CSA ii, pp. 60-64).

206 SN ii, p. 124; T 2, p. 97b (CSA ii, p. 62).

207 The five are: 1. iddhi-vidhā (manifold forms of mystic power, such as producing multiple images of oneself; walking on water, etc), 2. dibba-sota (divine power of hearing), 3. cetopariyañāṇa (knowing other minds), 4. pubbe-nivās-anussati (knowing past lives), and 5. dibba-cakkhu (divine sight). SN ii, pp. 121-123.

208 SN ii, p. 123: “ye te santā vimokkhā atikamma rūpe āruppā te kāyena phusitvā viharathāti”.

209 T 2, p. 97a (CSA ii, pp. 61-62).

210 SN ii, p. 123; T 2, p. 97a (CSA ii, p. 62). “Wisdom-liberated” as opposed to “liberated both ways” (P. ubhatobhāga-vimutta, 俱解脫). SN 8. 7: SN i, p. 191 = SA 1212: T 2, p. 330b (CSA iii, p. 201); Additional Translation of the SA 228: T 2, p. 457c; MA 121: T 1, p. 610b; EA 32. 5: T 2, pp. 676-677. Cf. also MN 70: i, pp. 477-478 = MA 195: T 2, p. 751b, which gives definitions of both *wisdom liberated* (paññā-vimutta) and *liberated both ways* (ubhatobhāga-vimutta).

211 SN ii, p. 124; T 2, p. 97b (CSA ii, p. 62).

by *causal condition* (with all twelve factors) in both arising and ceasing modes, and points out that knowing this does not entail the psychic powers and the *calmed emancipations*.<sup>212</sup>

The SA version omits the teaching on the five aggregates, proceeding directly to *arising by causal condition* (twelve factors). The Buddha points out that knowing this does not entail the four dhyānas and the *calmed emancipations*, and he says: “This is what is meant by ‘First, knowledge of dharma-status; afterwards, knowledge of nirvana’.”<sup>213</sup>

In both versions the main message is that liberation requires “knowledge of dharma-status”, followed by “knowledge of nirvana”, without need of the psychic powers (SN)/the dhyānas (SA) and the *calmed emancipations* (santā vimokkhā). The two versions imply that *knowledge of dharma-status*, from which follows *knowledge of nirvana*, consists in knowing and seeing the arising and the ceasing of *arising by causal condition*. The SN version includes also knowledge of the five aggregates as possessing the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering, not-self). The two versions therefore agree that knowledge of *arising by causal condition* is essential for liberation.

A significant difference between the two versions is that in SN the *attainments* (samāpattiyo) preceding the states of meditative concentration called *calmed emancipations* (santā vimokkhā) are the five psychic powers (abhiññā), while in SA they are the four dhyānas. The four dhyānas (SA) seem in better agreement with the context than do the psychic powers (SN), because “the state of *calmed emancipation* where materiality is transcended and non-materiality attained” is a more natural consequence of the four dhyānas than of the psychic powers. Thus, on this point the SA version is the more coherent.

## 9. Nutriment

A few discourses within the saṃyukta (SN 12. 11-12, 63-64; SA 371-378) link *arising by causal condition* with the concept of *nutriment* (āhāra 食).<sup>214</sup>

212 SN ii, pp. 124-127.

213 T 2, p. 97b-c (CSA ii, pp. 62-63).

214 The SA discourses on *nutriment* are grouped at the end of the saṃyukta. In the commentary and in FSA they are reckoned as constituting an independent saṃyukta (食相應). See Appendix 1, p. 244, note 3.