

However, in the case of the wisdom of right view, there are two kinds: “knowledge of dharma-status” (dhamma-*ṭṭhiti-nāṇa*) and “knowledge of nirvana” (*nibbāna-nāṇa*). As mentioned in section 1.4, SN 12. 70 and SA 347 report the Buddha as saying:

Susīma, first [one comes to have] knowledge of dharma-status (the nature of phenomena, dhamma-*ṭṭhiti-nāṇa*), afterwards [one comes to have] the knowledge of nirvana (*nibbāna-nāṇa*).<sup>176</sup>

Knowledge of dharma-status is knowledge of conditioned genesis.<sup>177</sup> According to SN 12. 70 and SA 347, a person who attains this knowledge of dharma-status is also called “one who is wisdom-liberated” (*paññā-vimutta*),<sup>178</sup> and achieves this without the first five “supernormal knowledges” (*pañcā-bhiññā*),<sup>179</sup> or the four *jhānas*, or the *arūpa* (non-physical) meditations.<sup>180</sup> Since “knowledge of dharma-status” (*dhammaṭṭhiti-nāṇa*) is liberation through wisdom (*paññā-vimutti*), it follows that “knowledge of nirvana” (*nibbāna-nāṇa*) is “twofold liberation” (*ubhatobhāga-vimutti*).<sup>181</sup>

As stated in section 1.3 and 1.4, “right view”, rightly seeing things as they really are, is to know and see the arising and ceasing of suffering, to see the four noble truths or conditioned genesis. This is to remove the view of self (emptiness), leading to realisation of nirvana (emptiness). Knowing and seeing things as they really are (conditioned genesis) is also achieved by seeing and knowing “impermanence” (*anicca*) or the “middle way” (*majjhimā-paṭipadā*) in the nature of life. In other words, one sees that compounded nature is “impermanent”, so it is “suffering” (the first noble truth), and thus is “empty of self”; or one sees that conditioned genesis (compounded nature) is the

“middle way”, so it is connected with “emptiness” – nirvana.

Thus, this “right view” of emptiness (devoid of desires, empty of self, the middle way, nirvana) is crucial for the attainment of “liberation by wisdom” (*paññāvimutti*) and “liberation both ways” (*ubhatobhāga-vimutti*) in the practice of *vipassanā* (insight).

## 2.2. *Emptiness and Mind-liberation or Mind-concentration*

“Meditation” or “concentrative meditation” (*samādhi*) is closely connected with “emptiness” in a set of four kinds of “mind-liberation” (*cetovimutti*) in the Pāli SN 41. 7 or of “mind-concentration” (心三昧 *xin-sanmei*)<sup>182</sup> in its Chinese counterpart SA 567.<sup>183</sup>

SN 41. 7 is a conversation between the venerable Godatta and the housemaster Citta, whereas SA 567 is a conversation between the venerable Nāgadatta (那伽達多 *Naqiedaduo*) and the housemaster Citra (質多羅 *Zhiduoluo*). Also at MN 43 there is a discussion of these four mind-liberations by Sāriputta teaching Mahā-koṭṭhita.<sup>184</sup> According to SN 41. 7, the four kinds of mind-liberation are:

1. immeasurable mind-liberation (*appamāṇa-cetovimutti*),
2. nothingness-mind-liberation (*ākiñcañña-cetovimutti*),
3. emptiness-mind-liberation (*suññatā-cetovimutti*), and
4. signless mind-liberation (*animitta-cetovimutti*).

The same four are given at SA 567, but with the term *cetovimutti* “mind-liberation” replaced by 心三昧 *xin-sanmei* “mind-concentration”.



It appears, however, that “mind-concentration” has the same meaning as “mind-liberation”, because SN 41. 7 uses the term “*animitta-cetosamādhi*” (signless mind-concentration) to explain “*animitta-cetovimutti*” (signless mind-liberation):

Sir, herein, a monk, by not attending (*amanasikārā*) to all signs, enters and abides in the “*signless mind-concentration*” (*animittaṃ cetosamādhim*). This, sir, is called the “*signless mind-liberation*” (*animittā cetovimutti*).<sup>185</sup>

The same content is seen at SN 40. 9, but with “mind-concentration” (*cetosamādhi*) instead of “mind-liberation” (*cetovimutti*).<sup>186</sup> Furthermore, “mind-concentration” (*cetosamādhi*) is elsewhere also called “concentration” (*samādhi* or 三昧 *sanmei*).<sup>187</sup> According to SA 567, the housemaster Citra asks the venerable Nāgadatta, concerning the four kinds of mind-concentration:

Are all these *concentrations* (三昧 *sanmei*) taught by the World-Honoured One (the Buddha) or are they the Venerable Sir’s own teaching?

The venerable Nāgadatta replies: These are taught by the World-Honoured One.

Thus, *ceto-vimutti* (mind-liberation), *cetosamādhi* or 心三昧 *xin sanmei* (mind-concentration), and *samādhi* or 三昧 *sanmei* (concentration) all have the same meaning: “the state of concentrative meditation” or “meditation”.

According to both SA 567 and SN 41. 7, these four mind-liberations/mind-concentrations, which are closely connected with emptiness, can be either different in name and meaning, or the same in meaning but different in name.

The Pāli SN 41. 7 explains the different names and different meanings as follows.

1. “Immeasurable mind-liberation” (*appamāṇa-cetovimutti*) is meditation in which one dwells pervading (*pharivā viharati*) the whole world with a mind full of the four immeasurables (*catasso appamaññāyo*): loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), empathic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*), free from hatred and suffering.

2. “Nothingness-mind-liberation” (*ākiñcañña-cetovimutti*) is meditation with the idea “there is nothing” (*natthi kiñcīti*); it is the “nothingness-attainment” (*ākiñcañña-samāpatti*) or the “realm of nothingness” (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), the third of the “four non-physical *jhānas*” (*cattāro arūpā*).

3. “Emptiness-mind-liberation” (*suññatā-cetovimutti*) is meditation that consists in reflecting (*patisañcikkhati*) on emptiness of self or of anything belonging to self. The text says:

Venerable Sir, here a monk goes to the forest, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty place, and thus *reflects*: *This is empty of self or of anything belonging to self*. This, Venerable Sir, is called “*emptiness-mind-liberation*”. (*Idha bhante bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā iti patisañcikkhati. Suññam idam attena vā attaniyena vā ti. Ayaṃ vuccati bhante suññatā cetovimutti*).<sup>188</sup>

This also has the same meaning as the expression “empty world” discussed in section 1.2, but here it is connected with the “empty places” for practising the meditation of emptiness, such as a forest, the root of a tree, or an empty place. The Chinese counterpart says: