

... So if there is *no self*, who will in future time receive the results (受報) of *karmas* performed by the *not-self* (作無我業)?

The two versions then state that the Buddha, reading the bhiksu's mind, responded by teaching that the five aggregates are impermanent, suffering, and not-self, and that one who sees this attains liberation.¹³⁵ Thus, the Buddha appears not to answer the question. On the other hand, his teaching implies that since the five aggregates are impermanent, suffering, and not-self, there is no unchanging entity as doer of actions or recipient of their effects. In any case, this teaching shared by the two versions suggests that there was in early Buddhism a perceived need to show that there was no contradiction between the teaching of not-self and the notion of karma operating in *samsara*.¹³⁶

8. The Fully Enlightened One and the Wisdom-liberated One

In SN 22. 58 the Buddha says:¹³⁷

Bhiksus! The Tathāgata, arahant, fully enlightened (sammāsam-buddho), is without attachment (anupādā), liberated (vimutto), through disgust (nibbidā), fading of desire (virāgā), and cessation (nirodhā) with regard to material form [likewise to feeling, perception, activities, and consciousness], and he is called *fully enlightened*. Bhiksus! A bhiksu liberated by wisdom/insight (paññāvimutto) is also without attachment, liberated, through disgust, fading of desire, and cessation with regard to material form [and the rest], and he is called *liberated by wisdom* (paññāvimutto)

...

Now herein, bhiksus, what is the distinction, the specific feature, the difference between the Tathāgata, arahant, fully enlightened, and a bhiksu liberated by wisdom?

His answer is:¹³⁸

135 SN iii, pp. 103-104; T 2, p. 15c.

136 SN 22. 99-100 and their counterparts SA 266-267: SN iii, pp. 149-152; T 2, pp. 69b-70a (CSA i, pp. 68-71).

137 SN iii, pp. 65-66.

138 SN iii, p. 66.

The Tathāgata, arahant, fully enlightened, is one who causes the path to arise which had not arisen before, who produces the path which had not been produced before, who proclaims the path which had not been proclaimed before, who knows the path, who understands the path, who fully comprehends the path; and now, bhiksus, hearer-disciples (sāvakā) abide following the path after him. That, bhiksus, is the distinction, the specific feature, the difference between the Tathāgata, arahant, fully enlightened, and a bhiksu liberated by wisdom.

The corresponding SA 75 asks the question in identical terms, except that it refers to the Buddha as “the Tathāgata, worthy/realised one, fully enlightened” (如來、應、等正覺); and instead of “a bhiksu liberated by wisdom” it has “an arhant liberated by wisdom (阿羅漢慧解脫)”.¹³⁹ It answers the question rather differently:¹⁴⁰

... The Tathāgata, worthy one, fully enlightened, is one who had never before heard the Dharma, but who is able, on his own, to know the Dharma, perfectly understanding the highest enlightenment; and who thereafter, to enlighten hearer-disciples, teaches the Dharma, namely: the *four stations of mindfulness*, the *four right efforts*, the *four factors of supernormal power*, the *five faculties*, the *five powers*, the *seven factors of enlightenment*, the *noble eightfold way*. Bhiksus! This is called the Tathāgata, worthy one, fully enlightened: one who attains what had not been attained before, who gains benefit that had not been gained before, who knows the path, who distinguishes the path, who proclaims the path, who fully comprehends the path, who also by teaching can lead hearer-disciples to achievement, and thus teaches rightly according to the delightful good Dharma. This is the difference between the Tathāgata and an arhant.

The SA version has much more information than the SN, listing the 37-fold path: the *four stations of mindfulness*, etc. Also, as mentioned above, when referring to the *fully enlightened one* (Tathāgata) and the *wisdom-liberated one*, the two versions use different expressions, as follows:

¹³⁹ T 2, p. 19b (CSA i, p. 123).

¹⁴⁰ T 2, p. 19c (CSA i, p. 123).

SN 22. 58	SA 75
the Tathāgata, <i>arahant</i> , fully enlightened a bhiksu liberated by wisdom.	the Tathāgata, worthy one, fully enlightened an <i>arhant</i> liberated by wisdom

The SN version applies the term “*arahant*” (Skt. arhant) to the Tathāgata but not to the person who is “liberated by wisdom”.¹⁴¹ The SA version does the reverse. The expression “worthy one”, used in SA, is equivalent in meaning to “*arhant*”;¹⁴² but normally in the Chinese āgamas the term “*arhant*” is not *translated*, as here; the usual practice is to *transcribe* the Sanskrit thus: 阿羅漢, a-luo-han = arhant. It is therefore clear that here the SA version is distinguishing not only between the *fully enlightened one* (the Tathāgata) and the *wisdom-liberated one*, but also, and particularly, between the Buddha and the arhant (who is liberated by wisdom).

It is possible that this feature of the SA version to some extent reflects later Mahāyāna developments, whereby arhants, apart from the historical Buddha, came to be rated less highly than practitioners of the Bodhisattva path. That would explain why the term *arhant* appears to have been transferred from the *fully enlightened one* (SN) to the *wisdom-liberated one* (SA). It is perhaps significant that the translator of SA, Gunabhadra, is believed to have belonged to a Mahāyāna school (Vijñānavāda or Yogācāra).¹⁴³

The description of *one who is liberated by wisdom* (paññāvimutta 慧解脫), in terms of liberation from attachment to the five aggregates, through disgust, fading of desire, and cessation, is found repeated, with some variation in terminology, in several other discourses. For example, SN 22. 51 = SA 1¹⁴⁴ and SN 22. 115-116 = SA 28¹⁴⁵ give much the same account of one whose *mind is liberated* (cittam vimuttam 心解脫) and one who

141 In this SN discourse (SN 22. 58) one who is “liberated by wisdom” has attained liberation from attachment to the five aggregates. In other discourses one who has achieved this is also called *arahant*; e.g. SN 22. 76-77, 110: SN iii, pp. 82-84, 161 (no SA counterpart); SN 22. 63-65: SN iii, pp. 73-76 (= SA 21: T 2, p. 4b-c; CSA i, pp. 28-29).

142 PED, p. 77.

143 CSA i, “RESA”, pp. 58-59.

144 SN iii, p. 51 (cf. SN 22. 12: SN iii, p. 21 = SA 1); T 2, p. 1a (CSA i, pp. 2-3).

145 SN iii, pp. 163-164 (= SA 26-29: T 2, pp. 5c-6a; CSA i, pp. 35-37); T 2, p. 6a (CSA i, p. 36).

experiences *nirvana* in this very life (diṭṭhadhamma-nibbāna 見法涅槃) respectively.¹⁴⁶

9. Sectarian components or teachings

The possibility of Mahāyāna influence in SA has already been mentioned in connection with the SA emphasis on emptiness and its seeming downgrading of the arhant. Note will now be taken of a few further pieces of evidence indicating the possible influence of sectarian teachings.

(1) SN 22. 21 states:¹⁴⁷

... material form [and the rest] is impermanent (aniccam), compounded (saṅkhatam), arisen by condition (paticcasamuppānam). It is subject to destruction (khayadhammam), to decay (vayadhammam), to fading away (virāgadhammam), to cessation (nirodhadhammam). Because of its cessation, one says ‘cessation’.

The corresponding SA 260 reads:¹⁴⁸

... the five aggregates with attachment are grounded on the compounded (本行所作)¹⁴⁹ and are grounded on the thought out (本所思願).¹⁵⁰ They (the five aggregates with attachment) are impermanent, subject to cessation. Because those phenomena are subject to cessation, one says ‘cessation’.

Thus, the SA version has “grounded on the thought out”, where the SN has simply “arisen by condition”.

A similar situation is found in another discourse. In SN 22. 81 an activity (saṅkhāro) is described as:¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ See also SA 2: T 2, p. 1a (CSA i, p. 3) = SN 22. 52: SN iii, p. 52. Cf. also Chapter 3, p. 100, and SN 35. 124: SN iv, p. 109 = SA 237: T 2, p. 57c (CSA i, p. 286); SN 12. 16: SN ii, p. 18 = SA 363-365: T 2, p. 101a (CSA ii, p. 81).

¹⁴⁷ SN iii, p. 24.

¹⁴⁸ T 2, p. 65c (CSA i, p. 51).

¹⁴⁹ P. abhisamkhata; Skt. abhisamṣkṛta.

¹⁵⁰ P. Skt. abhisacetayita. Cf. CHOONG Mun-keat (Wei-keat), *The Notion of Emptiness in Early Buddhism* (1995; Motilal Banarsi-dass, Delhi, 1999), p. 74.

¹⁵¹ SN, iii, pp. 96-99.