

Again, SA 104 uses the same eight terms, together with a ninth, “not belonging to self (非我所)”,<sup>82</sup> but its counterpart SN 22. 85 describes the five aggregates more briefly as impermanent, suffering, not-self, compounded (saṅkhata), and deadly (vadhaka).<sup>83</sup>

Finally, SA 110 also uses the eight terms, but it has no SN counterpart.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, the second formulation (impermanent, suffering, empty, not-self) is not emphasised in SN. This indicates that the first formulation (impermanent, suffering, and not-self), being common to the two versions, is the more basic.

The two formulations of the insight that leads on to liberation draw attention to the following noteworthy details:

- (1) the reason why “impermanence is suffering”
- (2) the various terms for the notion of “not-self”

Regarding (1), the reason why “impermanence is suffering”, SN 22. 43 reports the Buddha as saying:<sup>85</sup>

Herein, bhīksus, the untaught ordinary person ... views (samanupassati) *material form as self* (rūpam attato), *self as possessed of material form* (rūpavantaṃ attānam), *material form as being in self* (attani rūpam), *self as being in material form* (rūpasmiṃ attānaṃ). Such a person’s material form (body) *changes and becomes different*. Owing to *the changing and becoming different* (vipariṇāmaññathābhāvā) of material form, *grief, lamentation, pain, depression, and despair* come to exist in him. He views *feeling ... perception ... activities ... consciousness as self ...*

This text indicates that the origin of suffering lies in self-view, in self-attachment to the five aggregates, which are impermanent phenomena. When the five aggregates change or become different, this produces grief,

82 T 2, p. 31c (CSA i, p. 186).

83 SN iii, pp. 114-115.

84 T 2, p. 35b-c (CSA i, pp. 203-205). The Pāli counterpart of SA 110 is MN 35 (MN i, pp. 227-237); it mentions only “impermanence” and “not-self”. SA 110 has a Chinese counterpart, EA 37. 10 (T 2, p. 715b-c); it states that the five aggregates are “impermanent; impermanence is suffering; suffering is not-self; not-self is emptiness; emptiness is neither this is self nor self is this”, i.e. it treats emptiness and not-self as the same notion.

85 SN iii, pp. 42-43.

lamentation, pain, depression and despair in the one who holds the self-view. This is why impermanence is suffering for an unenlightened being.

The SA counterpart of the quoted section, SA 36, agrees in stating that suffering is caused by attachment to the impermanent five aggregates, but it does not mention how or why impermanence implies suffering.<sup>86</sup> However, clear explanations of why impermanence is suffering are found elsewhere in both versions. The following are examples.

In SN 22. 84 and its counterpart SA 271<sup>87</sup> the Buddha teaches that if one is not rid (*avigata*) of desire (*rāga*), excitement/impulse (*chanda*), love (*pema*), thirst (*pipāsa*), fever (*pariḷāha*), and craving (*taṇhā*)<sup>88</sup> for the five aggregates, then when those aggregates change and become different, there comes to exist the affliction of grief, lamentation, pain, depression, and despair.<sup>89</sup> Hence, impermanence is suffering.

Similarly, SN 22. 7 describes the effect of holding self-view with regard to the five aggregates:<sup>90</sup>

... The material form of such a person changes and becomes different. His material form having become changed and different, his consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is occupied (*anuparivatti*) with the changing material form. From this being occupied with the changing material form, worried thoughts arise (*paritassanā dhammasamuppādā*), and remain gripping his mind (*cittam pariyādāya tiṭṭhanti*). From this gripping of his mind, he becomes fearful (*uttāsavā*), perplexed (*vighātavā*), full of longing (*apekhevā*), attached (*upādāya*), and worried (*paritassati*). (And similarly for the other aggregates.)

The corresponding SA 43 has similar content.<sup>91</sup>

Other texts with similar content are also found in both versions.<sup>92</sup> Thus, with regard to the explanation of why impermanence is suffering, the two versions are in agreement.

86 T 2, p. 8a-b (CSA i, p. 141).

87 SN iii, pp. 107-108; T 2, p. 71a-b (CSA i, p. 80).

88 SA 271 has: desire, excitement/impulse, love, longing, and craving (T 2, p. 71a-b; CSA i, p. 80).

89 SA 271 has: depression, lamentation, despair and pain (T 2, p. 71b; CSA i, p. 80).

90 SN iii, p. 16.

91 T 2, pp. 10c-11a (CSA i, pp. 154-155).

92 SN 22. 8 = SA 44: SN iii, p. 18; T 2, p. 11a (CSA i, p. 155). SN 22. 1-2 = SA 107-108: SN iii, pp. 3-4, 7; T 2, pp. 33b-34a (CSA i, pp. 194, 196). Cf. EA 13. 4: T 2, p. 573a-b (counterpart of SN 22. 1 and SA 107).

(2) Various terms for the notion of “not-self”. Investigation into the various expressions used in the two versions for “not-self”, suggests a classification into five groups, as follows.

1. “Not belonging to self” (anattaniya 非我所); and “neither self nor belonging to self” (anatta-anattaniya 非我非我所 or 非我非我所應).

These two expressions are common to the two versions.<sup>93</sup> A similar meaning is contained in the following Pāli verse, which appears in several locations:<sup>94</sup>

no c' assaṃ no ca me siyā,  
na bhavissāmi na me bhavissati.  
(If I were not, and it was not mine,  
I shall not be [and] it will not be mine.)

Its only SA counterpart (at SA 64) reads: <sup>95</sup>

法無有吾我，亦復無我所，我既非當有，我所何由生？  
(Dharmas (phenomena) are not-self, and not belonging to self.  
Since self will not be, whence will there be belonging to self?)

The meaning is again “neither self nor belonging to self”.

2. “Not belonging to you” (na tumhākaṃ 非汝所應法).

In SN 22. 33-34 and their counterpart SA 269 the Buddha tells the monks that each of the five aggregates is “not belonging to you” (na tumhākaṃ), so they should “put it away” (pajahatha) for their profit and happiness.<sup>96</sup>

93 E.g. SN 22. 69: SN iii, p. 78 = SA 17-18: T 2, pp. 3c-4a (CSA i, pp. 25-26); SN 22. 89: SN iii, pp. 127-129 = SA 103: T 2, pp. 29c-30b (CSA i, pp. 179-181); SN 22. 33: SN iii, p. 34 and SA 269: T 2, p. 70a (counterpart of SN 22. 33 and 34: SN iii, pp. 33-34; CSA i, p. 75).

94 SN 22. 81: SN iii, p. 99 (lacking in counterpart SA 57: T 2, pp. 13c-14b; CSA i, pp. 170-172); SN 22. 152: SN iii, p. 183 (no SA counterpart); SN 22. 55: SN iii, p. 55 = SA 64: T 2, p. 16c (CSA i, p. 102). SN 22. 55 has *assa* for *assaṃ*, and *bhavissati* for *bhavissāmi*. The Nālandā edition has *nābhavissaṃ* (I would not be) for *na bhavissāmi* in all cases (Nālandā Saṃyutta Nikāya vol. 2-3, pp. 322, 396-7, 285-7). It is possible that the earlier unsanskritised form, with eight syllables per line, was: no c'assaṃ no ca me siyā, nāhessaṃ na me hessati.

95 T 2, p. 16c (CSA i, p. 102) = SN 22. 55: SN iii, p. 55.

96 SN iii, pp. 33-34; T 2, p. 70b (CSA i, p. 75).

3. “Self-conceit/pride” (asmi-māna 我慢), “self-excitement/impulse” (asmi-chanda 我欲), and “self-bias” (asmi-anusaya 我使=我隨眠).

In SN 22. 91-92 and their counterparts SA 23-24 Rāhula asks the Buddha how one should know (jānato 知) and see (passato 見) so that with regard to this body with its consciousness (saviññāṇake kāye 此識身) and all external objects (bahiddhā sabbanimittesu 外境界一切相), one will be without “the view of I and mine, the conceit, the bias” (ahaṃkāra-mamaṃkāra-mānānusayā 我、我所見、我慢、使); the Buddha tells him it is achieved by seeing (disvā 觀) with right insight (sammappaññāya 平等慧) the five aggregates as not-self.<sup>97</sup> Hence, in this teaching conceit and bias (mānānusayā 慢、使) based on the view of I and mine (ahaṃkāra-mamaṃkāra 我、我所見) are overcome by the insight of not-self.

A similar teaching with these three terms, self-conceit (asmi-māna 我慢), self-excitement/impulse (asmi-chanda 我欲), and self-bias (asmi-anusaya 我使), together in the same sequence is found in SN 22. 89 and its counterpart SA 103.<sup>98</sup> Each of the terms is combined with the word asmi 我 (“I am” or “self”); the conceit, excitement, and bias are based on the view of I or mine, and liberation from them entails the insight of not-self. Thus, expression of the notion of not-self as freedom from self-conceit, self-excitement, and self-bias is a feature shared in common by the two versions.

4. SN has these two forms of expression:

- I. “This<sup>99</sup> is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self” (n’etam mama, n’eso ’ham asmi, na m’eso attā ti).<sup>100</sup>
- II. One does not regard (na samanupassati) material form as self (rūpaṃ attato), or self as possessing material form (rūpavantaṃ attānaṃ), or material form as being in self (attani rūpaṃ), or self as being in material form (rūpasmiṃ attānaṃ). (and similarly for feeling, perception, activities, and consciousness)<sup>101</sup>

Corresponding to these two forms of wording found in SN, SA has just one form of wording: “This is not self, this is not other than self, neither is

97 SN iii, pp. 136-137; T 2, p. 5a-b (CSA i, pp. 31-32). See also SN 22. 72: SN iii, pp. 80-81 (no SA counterpart), and SN 22. 124-125: SN iii, pp. 169-170, but their counterpart SA 22: T 2, pp. 4c-5a (CSA i, p. 30) has different expression.

98 SN iii, pp. 130-131; T 2, p. 30a-c (CSA i, pp. 180-182).

99 Referring to each of the five aggregates.

100 E.g. SN. 22. 45, 49, 59, 118-119: SN iii, pp. 45, 49-50, 67-68, 165-166.

101 E.g. SN 22. 55, 85; cf. 47: SN iii, pp. 56-57, 113-114, 46.

self in this nor this in self” (非我/不是我, 不異我, 不相在).<sup>102</sup> The difficult phrase 不相在 (neither is self in this nor this in self) is clarified at SA 45 and SA 109, and specific explanation of each wording, such as “this is not other than self” etc., is found in SA 109.<sup>103</sup>

The two forms of expression in SN and the corresponding one form in SA are frequent in the two versions.<sup>104</sup> They are semantically close, meaning simply that there is nothing in compounded phenomena (whether within or beyond the five aggregates) that is self or belongs to self. Thus, despite the different wording, the two versions share this fundamental teaching of the notion of not-self.

5. Freedom from the view “superior am I” (seyyo ’ham asmi, 我勝), “equal am I” (sadiṣo ’ham asmi, 我等), or “inferior am I” (hīno ’ham asmi, 我劣).

In SN 22. 49 the Buddha says to Soṇa:<sup>105</sup>

Whatsoever recluses or brahmins, Soṇa, in regard to the impermanent material form, the suffering unstable phenomenon, have the view (samanupassanti) “superior am I”, “equal am I”, or “inferior am I”, what else are they but non-seers of things as they really are? (and similarly for feeling, perception, activities, and consciousness)

He then says that those who do not have this view are seeing things as they really are; and he goes on to use the more familiar formulation: “This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self”.

The corresponding SA 30 instead has Śroṇa asking Śāriputra:<sup>106</sup>

102 Corresponding to the first form of SN: SA 84 (= SN 22. 45), SA 30 (= SN. 22. 49), SA 34 (= SN 22. 59), and SA 76 (= SN 22. 118-119): T 2, pp. 21c, 6b, 7c, 19c (CSA i, pp. 135, 38-39, 139, 124). Corresponding to the second form of SN: SA 64 (= SN. 22. 55), SA 104 (= SN 22. 85); cf. SA 45 and 63 (= SN 22. 47): T 2, pp. 16c, 31a, 11b, 16b (CSA i, pp. 102, 185, 157, 100).

103 T 2, pp. 11b, 34b-35a. SA 45 is counterpart of SN 22. 47: SN iii, pp. 46-47; SA 109 has no SN counterpart (CSA i, pp. 157, 198-200).

104 E.g. SN 22. 15-17, 44-47, 49, 55, 59, 71-72, 76-77, 79-80, 82, 85, 91-93, 99, 118-119, 124-125, 150, 158; SN iii, pp. 22-23, 44-46, 49-50, 56-57, 67-68, 80-81, 82-84, 88-89, 94, 102-104, 113-114, 136-138, 150, 165-166, 169-170, 181-182, 187. SA 23-24, 30, 33-34, 45, 62-64, 76, 82-87, 104, 109, 264: T 2, pp. 5a-b, 6b, 7c, 11b, 16a-c, 19c, 21b-22b, 31a, 34b-35a, 68b (CSA i, pp. 31-32, 38, 63-64, 98-102, 124, 134-139, 157, 185, 198-200).

105 SN 22. 49: SN iii, pp. 48-49.

106 T 2, p. 6a-b (CSA i, p. 38). Cf. also SA 45 and 63: T 2, pp. 11b, 16b-c (CSA i, pp. 157, 100), counterparts of SN 22. 47: SN iii, pp. 46-47.

Whatsoever recluses or brahmins, in regard to the impermanent material form, the changing unstable material form, declare “superior am I” (我勝), “equal am I” (我等), or “inferior am I” (我劣) – why have they such a perception, not seeing the truth? (and similarly for feeling, perception, activities, and consciousness)

Śāriputra replies that well-taught disciples do not have this view, but instead see, with regard to material form etc., “This is not self, this is not other than self, neither is self in this nor this is self”.

Thus, both versions express not-self in terms of not having the view “I am superior”, “I am equal”, or “I am inferior”.

To conclude, in regard to the notion of seeing the five aggregates *as they really are*, this section has identified two formulations of the insight, namely: (1) “impermanent, suffering, not-self”, and (2) “impermanent, suffering, empty, not-self”. Formulation (1) is common to the two versions, whereas formulation (2) is emphasised in SA. This suggests that the first formulation of the insight is the more basic teaching, since it is widely shared by the two versions. Regarding the connection between impermanence and suffering, and the various expressions for the teaching of not-self, there is no significant difference between the two versions, despite some unshared wording.

## 6. The middle way

As mentioned above, seeing the five aggregates as *impermanent, suffering, and not-self* is identified, in both versions, as *right view* (sammādiṭṭhi 正見). The two versions also identify *right view* with *the middle way*. That teaching will be investigated in this section.

In SN 22. 90 Ānanda tells Channa (Skt. Chanda) that he heard the Buddha teach Kaccāna<sup>107</sup> as follows:<sup>108</sup>

Indeed, Kaccāna, this world usually depends on two [extremes]: *existence* (or eternalism: atthitā) and *non-existence* (or nihilism: natthitā).

Now, Kaccāna, one who with *right wisdom* (sammappaññāya) sees the arising of the world as it really is, does not hold to the non-

107 = Kaccāyana in SN 12. 15: SN ii, p. 17.

108 SN iii, pp. 134-135. See also Chapter 6, pp. 192-195.