

Mahāmālukya Sutta

MN 64 Great Discourse to Mālukya
Translated by Ānanda
Oct. 2020

Thus I have heard—

*Once, the Awakened One was living in Sāvattṭhi,
In Jeta's grove, at Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.*

Then he addressed the monks saying:

“Monks”

“Bhadante” the monks replied.

The Buddha said this:

[The Buddha] “Monks, do you remember my teaching on the five worldly fetters.¹

When this was said, the venerable Mālukyaputta said:

[Malukiyaputta] “Bhante, I remember the Awakened One's teaching on the five lower fetters.

[The Buddha] “And how do you Mālukyaputta remember my teaching?”

[Malukiyaputta] “Bhante, I remember that

(1) Belief in a Self is a worldly fetter taught by the Awakened One.²

(2) Doubt...

(3) Religious adherences...

(4) Longing [for sensory stimulation] ...³

(5) Resentment is a worldly fetter taught by the Awakened One.

Bhante, this is how I remember the Buddha Teaching on the five gross worldly fetters.”⁴

*[The Buddha] “Mālukyaputta, from who do you remember
the five lesser shackles being taught in such a way?⁵*

*Would not the wanderers of different teachers
Refute you with the analogy of the infant?*

¹ *“dhāretha no tumhe, bhikkhave, mayā desitāni pañcorambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni” ti?*

² *“Sakkāyadiṭṭhiṃ kho ahaṃ, bhante, bhagavatā orambhāgiyaṃ saṃyojanaṃ desitaṃ dhāremi;*

³ *kāmacchandaṃ: Longing for sensory input.*

⁴ *Sakkāyadiṭṭhiṃ, vicikicchaṃ, sīlabbataparāmāsaṃ, kāmacchandaṃ, byāpādaṃ.*

⁵ *“Kassa kho nāma tovaṃ, mālukyaputta, imāni evaṃ pañcorambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni desitāni dhāresi?”*

- (1) For an infant,
young in age,
knowing little,
laying on its back,
there is no concept of identity,

How then could there come to be the belief in personal identity?⁶

Still the inclination to believe in personal identity comes up.⁷

- (2) For an infant,
young in age,
knowing little,
laying on its back,
there is no concept of Dhamma,

How then could there come to be doubt?

Still the inclination to doubt comes up.

- (3) For an infant,
young in age,
knowing little,
laying on its back,
there is no concept of customs,⁸

How then could there come to be adherence to religion?

Still the inclination to adhere to religions comes up.

- (4) For an infant,
young in age,
knowing little,

⁶ *Daharassa hi, mālukyaputta, kumārassa mandassa uttānaseyyakassa sakkāyotipi na hoti, kuto panassa uppajjissati sakkāyadiṭṭhi?*

⁷ *Anusetvevassa sakkāyadiṭṭhānusayo. Anusayita [pp. of anuseti, anu + śī] dormant, only in combn. dīgharatta° latent so long. Anuseti [anu + seti. cp. Sk. anuśayate or° śete, from śī] to "lie down with", - 1. trs. to dwell on, harp on (an idea) — 2. (of the idea) to obsess, to fill the mind persistently, to lie dormant & be continually cropping up.*

⁸ *Silabbataparāmāsaṃ: Usually translated as clinging to rites and rituals or observances. Vata2 (m. & nt.) [cp. Vedic vrata vow. fr. vṛt] 1. a religious duty, observance, rite, practice, custom (sīla, vata, tapas, brahmacariya); — subbata of good practice Vv 346. Cp. patibbata, silabbata. **Parāmāsa** [parā+mṛś, cp. Epic Sk. parāmarśa being affected by; as philos. term "reflection"] touching, contact, being attached to, hanging on, being under the influence of, contagion. **Religion:** 1. The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods. 2. A particular system of faith and worship. 3. A pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance. Middle English (originally in the sense 'life under monastic vows'): from Old French, or from Latin religio(n-) 'obligation, bond, reverence', perhaps based on Latin religare 'to bind'.*

*laying on its back,
there is no concept of the six senses,*

How then could there come to be longing for sensory experience?

Still the inclination to long for sensory experiences comes up.

(5) *For an infant,
young in age,
knowing little,
laying on its back,
there is no concept of "living beings,"*

How then could there come to be resentment for living beings?⁹

Still the inclination to resent comes up.

*Would not Mālukiyaṭṭha, the wanderers of different teachers
Refute you with the analogy of the infant?*

[Ānanda's Request]

When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said:

*[Ānanda] "Now is the time Bhagavan,
Now is the time Liberated One!*

*The Awakened One should teach the five worldly fetters.
The monks will remember what the Awakened One says.*

[The Buddha] "Then Ānanda, listen and apply your mind to what I will say."

[Ānanda] "Of course, Bhante," the venerable Ānanda replied.

The Buddha said this:

[Uninformed Person]

*Here, an uninformed person
Does not learn the Dhamma of the awakened people,
Does not visit the awakened people,
Does not know nor practices the Dhamma of the awakened people,
Does not visit the people of Truth,*

⁹ *Daharassa hi, mālukiyaṭṭha, kumārassa mandassa uttānaseyyakassa sattātipi na hoti, kuto panassa uppajjissati sattesu byāpādo? Other possible translation of sattā as attachments instead of living beings.*

Does not know nor practices in the Dhamma of the people of Truth.

(1) *That person lives with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by Identity belief.¹⁰*

One does not understand clearly:

The release from incoming identity belief.¹¹

For them, the belief in identification grows strong

And it remains as a gross fetter.¹²

(2) *That person lives with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by doubt:*

One does not understand clearly:

The release from incoming doubt.

For them, doubt grows strong

And it remains as a gross fetter.

(3) *That person lives with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by religious adherence:*

One does not understand clearly:

The release from incoming religious adherence.

For them, religious adherence grows strong

And it remains as a gross fetter.

(4) *That person lives with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by sensory longing:*

One does not understand clearly:

The release from incoming sensory longing.

For them, sensory longing grows strong

And it remains as a gross fetter.

(5) *That person lives with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by resentment:*

One does not understand clearly:

The release from incoming resentment.

For them, resentment grows strong

And it remains as a gross fetter.

[Well Informed Person]

Here, a wise meditator

Learns the Dhamma of the awakened people,

Visits the awakened people,

Understands and practices the Dhamma of the awakened people,

Visits people of truth,

¹⁰ *sakkāyadiṭṭhipariyuṭṭhitena cetasā viharati sakkāyadiṭṭhiparetena;*

¹¹ *uppannāya ca sakkāyadiṭṭhiyā nissaraṇaṃ yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti.*

¹² *Tassa sā sakkāyadiṭṭhi thāmagatā appaṭivinītā orambhāgiyaṃ saṃyojanaṃ.*

Understands and practices the Dhamma from people of Truth.

- (1) *That person does not live with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by Identity belief:
And one understands clearly:
The release from incoming identity belief.*

*For them, the belief in identification
And its tendency is given up.¹³*

- (2) *That person does not live with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by doubt:
And one understands clearly:
The release from incoming doubt.*

*For them, doubt
And its tendency is given up.*

- (3) *That person does not live with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by religious adherence:
And one understands clearly:
The release from incoming religious adherences.*

*For them, religious adherence
And its tendency is given up.*

- (4) *That person does not live with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by sensory longing:
And one understands clearly:
The release from incoming sensory longing.*

*For them, longing for sensory stimulation
And its tendency is given up.*

- (5) *That person does not live with a mind overwhelmed and obsessed by resentment:
And one understands clearly:
The release from incoming resentment.*

*For them, resentment
And its tendency is given up.*

¹³ *Tassa sā sakkāyadiṭṭhi sānusayā pahīyati.*

[Path to Freedom from the Fetters]

[Not Possible]

Ānanda,
There is a path,
There is a practice,
For the letting go of the five worldly fetters.

That one may know, see and give up the five worldly fetters
without following this path and this practice:

—That is not possible.¹⁴

[Analogy of the Tree]

Ānanda,
Just as if there was a great tree standing,
Thick with heartwood:

That one could cut down its heartwood
without cutting through its bark, phloem and cambium,

—That is not possible.¹⁵

Similarly, Ānanda,
There is a path,
There is a practice,
For the letting go of the five grosser fetters.

That one may know, see and give up the five worldly fetters
Without following this path and this practice

—That is not possible.

[Possible]

Ānanda,
There is a path,

¹⁴ Yo, ānanda, maggo yā paṭipadā pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ pahānāya taṃ maggaṃ taṃ paṭipadaṃ anāgama pañcorambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni nāssati vā dakkhati vā pajahissati vāti—netam thānaṃ vijjati.

¹⁵ Seyyathāpi, ānanda, mahato rukkhassa tiṭṭhato sāravato tacam acchetvā phegguṃ acchetvā sārachedo bhavissatīti—netam thānaṃ vijjati;

*There is a practice,
For the letting go of the five worldly fetters.*

*That one may know, see and give up the five worldly fetters
By following this path and this practice*

—That is possible.

[Analogy of the Tree]

*Ānanda,
Just as if there was a great tree standing,
Thick with heartwood:*

*That one could cut down its heartwood
By [first] cutting through its bark, phloem and cambium,*

—That is possible.

*Similarly, Ānanda,
There is a path,
There is a practice,
For the letting go of the five worldly bonds*

*That one may know, see and give up the five worldly bonds,
by following this path and this practice*

—That is possible.

[The River Ganges]

*Ānanda,
Just as if the river Ganges was full to the brim,
Full up to the crows,¹⁶*

Then a weak person would come saying:

*“I shall swim across this river Ganges
I shall cut across the current with only my arms
and reach the other shore safely.”*

But he would not be able to swim across

¹⁶ *Seyyathāpi, ānanda, gaṅgā nadī pūrā udakassa samatittikā kākaṭṭhā. Kākaṭṭhā: Would be to the crows, the crows could drink from it. An interesting way of measure.*

and reach the other shore safely.¹⁷

[Getting Rid of the Ego]

*In the same way Ānanda,
When the Dhamma is taught about the getting rid of the ego,
Those who do not go along with it,
Who do not rejoice in it,
And who do not remain in it,
They are not liberated.*

Those people can be likened to the weak man.¹⁸

*Ānanda,
Just as if the river Ganges was full to the brim,
Full up to the crows,*

Then a strong man would come saying:

*“I shall swim across this river Ganges
I shall cut across the current with only my arms
and reach the other shore safely.*

*He would be able to swim across
and reach the other shore safely.”*

*Similarly Ānanda,
When the Dhamma is taught about getting rid of the ego,
Those who go along with it,
Rejoice in it,
And remain in it,
Those are liberated:*

Those people can be likened to the strong man.

[Jhānas as the Path]

*Ānanda, what is the path, what is the practice,
To give up the five gross fetters?*

¹⁷ *Atha dubbalako puriso āgaccheyya: ‘ahaṃ imissā gaṅgāya nadiyā tiriyaṃ bāhāya sotaṃ chetvā sotthinā pāraṃ gacchissāmī’ ti; so na sakkuṇeyya gaṅgāya nadiyā tiriyaṃ bāhāya sotaṃ chetvā sotthinā pāraṃ gantuṃ.*

¹⁸ *Evameva kho, ānanda, yesaṃ kesañci sakkāyanirodhāya dhamme desiyamāne cittaṃ na pakkhandati nappasīdati na santiṭṭhati na vimuccati; seyyathāpi so dubbalako puriso evamete daṭṭhabbā.*

[1. First Jhāna]

Here Ānanda,
Letting go of mental limitations,
Giving up unwholesome states of mind
With the relaxing of all bodily tension and discomfort,¹⁹

Disengaging from all longing for sensory stimulation,
And letting go of unwholesome mental states,
Still attended by thinking and imagining,
With blissful happiness born of letting go.
One understands and abides in the first level of meditation.

Whatever there is in the range of
Matter,
Felt experiences,
Perceptions,
Mental processes,
And consciousness;

One considers them to be
Constantly changing,
Unpleasant,
A dis-ease,
A tangled knot,
A sharp edge,
Disturbing,
Oppressive,
Foreign,
Falling apart,
Empty,
And impersonal.²⁰

One frees one's mind from these states,
Then collects one's mind in the deathless attribute thinking:²¹

"This is peaceful, this is sublime
That is; the calming of all processes,
The giving up of all mental limitations,
The falling away of tension,
Calming down, release, Nibbāna."²²

¹⁹ *Upadhivivekā akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānā sabbaso kāyaduṭṭhullānaṃ paṭippassaddhiyā*

²⁰ *So yadeva tattha hoti rūpagataṃ vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ saṅkhāragataṃ viññāgataṃ: te dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati.*

²¹ *So tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāpeti. So tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāpetvā amatāya dhātuyā cittaṃ upasaṃharati:*

²² *'etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti. Nibbāna: Going out (like a lamp). Extinguishing.*

*One then comes to the stilling of the mental movements,²³
If one does not come to the stilling of mental movements,
Because of one's longing for Dhamma,
one's delight in the Dhamma;*

*With the complete wearing away of the five lower fetters
one appears instantaneously,
and attains final unbinding there,
Not subject to return to this world.²⁴*

*This is the path, this is the practice, Ānanda
To give up the five gross fetters?*

[2. Second Jhāna]

*With the calming of thinking and reflection,
With inner tranquilization,
One's mind becoming unified,
Without thinking and reflection,
With the blissful happiness born of mental harmony,*

One understands and dwells in the second level of meditation.

*Whatever there is in the range of
Matter,
Felt experiences,
Perceptions,
Mental processes,
And consciousness;*

*One considers them to be
Constantly changing,
Unpleasant,
A dis-ease,
A tangled knot,
A sharp edge,
Disturbing,
Oppressive,
Foreign,
Falling apart,
Empty,
And impersonal.*

²³ So tattha ðhito āsavānaṃ khayam pāpuṇāti;

²⁴ no ce āsavānaṃ khayam pāpuṇāti teneva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti, tattha parinibbāyī, anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā.

*One frees one's mind from these states,
Then collect one's mind in the deathless attribute.*

*"This is peaceful, this is sublime
That is; the calming of all processes,
The giving up of all mental limitations,
The falling away of tension,
Calming down, release, Nibbāna."*

*One then comes to the stilling of the mental movements,
If one does not come to the stilling of mental movements,
Because of one's longing for Dhamma,
one's delight in the Dhamma;*

*With the complete wearing away of the five lower fetters
one appears instantaneously,
and attains final unbinding there,
Not subject to return to this world.*

[3. Third Jhāna]

*With the calming of excited joy,
One abides in mental steadiness,
Present and fully aware,
Experiencing happiness within his body,
A state which the awakened ones describe as:
"Steady presence of mind:
This is a pleasant abiding."*

One understands and abides in the third level of meditation.

*Whatever there is in the range of
Matter,
Felt experiences,
Perceptions,
Mental processes,
And consciousness;*

*One considers them to be
Constantly changing,
Unpleasant,
A dis-ease,
A tangled knot,
A sharp edge,
Disturbing,
Oppressive,
Foreign,*

*Falling apart,
Empty,
And impersonal.*

*One frees one's mind from these states,
Then collect one's mind in the deathless attribute thinking:*

*"This is peaceful, this is sublime
That is; the calming of all processes,
The giving up of all mental limitations,
The falling away of tension,
Calming down, release, Nibbāna."*

*One then comes to the stilling of the mental movements,
If one does not come to the stilling of mental movements,
Because of one's longing for Dhamma,
one's delight in the Dhamma;*

*With the complete wearing away of the five lower fetters
one appears instantaneously,
and attains final unbinding there,
Not subject to return to this world.*

[4. Fourth Jhāna]

*Leaving behind happiness and unhappiness.
With the settling of mental gladness and affliction,
With neither pain nor pleasure,
Purified by unmoving presence,*

One understands and abides in the fourth level of meditation.

*Whatever there is in the range of
Matter,
Felt experiences,
Perceptions,
Mental processes,
And consciousness;*

*One considers them to be
Constantly changing,
Unpleasant,
A dis-ease,
A tangled knot,
A sharp edge,*

*Disturbing,
Oppressive,
Foreign,
Falling apart,
Empty,
And impersonal.*

*One frees one's mind from these states,
Then collect one's mind in the deathless attribute thinking:*

*"This is peaceful, this is sublime
That is; the calming of all processes,
The giving up of all mental limitations,
The falling away of tension,
Calming down, release, Nibbāna."*

*One then comes to the stilling of the mental movements,
If one does not come to the stilling of mental movements,
Because of one's longing for Dhamma,
one's delight in the Dhamma;*

*With the complete wearing away of the five lower fetters
one appears instantaneously,
and attains final unbinding there,
Not subject to return to this world.*

*This is the path, this is the practice, Ānanda
To give up the five gross fetters.*

[5. The Plane of Endless Space]

*Here Ānanda,
Having entirely gone beyond all perception of form,
With the awareness of sensory impact fading away,
Turning away from the awareness plurality,
Knowing: 'There is Endless Space'
A bhikkhu understands and abides in the plane of endless space.*

*Whatever there is in the range of
Felt experiences,
Perceptions,
Mental processes,
And consciousness;*

*One considers them to be
Constantly changing,*

*Unpleasant,
A dis-ease,
A tangled knot,
A sharp edge,
Disturbing,
Oppressive,
Foreign,
Falling apart,
Empty,
And impersonal.*

*One frees one's mind from these states,
Then collect one's mind in the deathless attribute.*

*"This is peaceful, this is sublime
That is; the calming of all processes,
The giving up of all mental limitations,
The falling away of tension,
Calming down, release, Nibbāna."*

*One then comes to the stilling of the mental movements,
If one does not come to the stilling of mental movements,
Because of one's longing for Dhamma,
one's delight in the Dhamma;*

*With the complete wearing away of the five lower fetters
one appears instantaneously,
and attains final unbinding there,
Not subject to return to this world.*

*This is the path, this is the practice, Ānanda
To give up the five gross fetters.*

[6. Plane of Endless Consciousness]

*Here Ānanda,
Having gone entirely beyond the plane of endless space,
Knowing: 'There is Endless Consciousness'
He understands and abides in the plane of Endless Consciousness.*

*Whatever there is in the range of
Felt experiences,
Perceptions,
Mental processes,
And consciousness;*

*One considers them to be
Constantly changing,
Unpleasant,
A dis-ease,
A tangled knot,
A sharp edge,
Disturbing,
Oppressive,
Foreign,
Falling apart,
Empty,
And impersonal.*

*One frees one's mind from these states,
Then collect one's mind in the deathless attribute thinking:*

*"This is peaceful, this is sublime
That is; the calming of all processes,
The giving up of all mental limitations,
The falling away of tension,
Calming down, release, Nibbāna."*

*One then comes to the stilling of the mental movements,
If one does not come to the stilling of mental movements,
Because of one's longing for Dhamma,
one's delight in the Dhamma;*

*With the complete wearing away of the five lower fetters
one appears instantaneously,
and attains final unbinding there,
Not subject to return to this world.*

*This is the path, this is the practice, Ānanda
To give up the five worldly fetters.*

[7. Plane of Nothingness]

Here Ānanda,
Having entirely gone beyond the plane of endless consciousness,
Knowing: 'There is nothing'²⁵
He understands and abides in the plane of nothingness.

Whatever there is in the range of
Felt experiences,
Perceptions,
Mental processes,
And consciousness;

One considers them to be
Constantly changing,
Unpleasant,
A dis-ease,
A tangled knot,
A sharp edge,
Disturbing,
Oppressive,
Foreign,
Falling apart,
Empty,
And impersonal.

One frees one's mind from these states,
Then collect one's mind in the deathless attribute.

"This is peaceful, this is sublime
That is; the calming of all processes,
The giving up of all mental limitations,
The falling away of tension,
Calming down, release, Nibbāna."

One then comes to the stilling of the mental movements,
If one does not come to the stilling of mental movements,
Because of one's longing for Dhamma,
one's delight in the Dhamma;

²⁵ *Sabbaso viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma 'natthi kiñcī' ti ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati. Ākiñcañña (nt.) [abstr. fr. akiñcana] state of having nothing, absence of (any) possessions; nothingness. Akiñcana (अकिञ्चन).—mf. (-naḥ-nā-naṃ) Poor, indigent. E. a priv. and kiñcana any thing, something. Ākiñcana (आकिञ्चन).—n. (-naṃ) Poverty. E. akiñcana poor, aṇ aff. Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary 1) Akiñcana (अकिञ्चन):—[=a-kiñcana] mf. without anything, utterly destitute 2) disinterested 3) n. that which is worth nothing.*

*With the complete wearing away of the five lower fetters
one appears instantaneously,
and attains final unbinding there,
Not subject to return to this world.*

*“This is the path, this is the practice, Ānanda
To give up the five worldly fetters.”*

[Ānanda] *“Bhante, if this is the path and the practice,
To give up the five worldly fetters.*

*Then why do here,
Some monks are liberated in mind,
And others are liberated by discernment?”²⁶*

[The Buddha] *“This is in reason of the faculties within them.”²⁷*

*This is what the Awakened One Said.
Glad at heart, the venerable Ānanda rejoiced in his words.*

²⁶ *atha kiñcarahi idhekacce bhikkhū cetovimuttino ekacce bhikkhū paññāvimuttino”ti?*

²⁷ *“Ettha kho panesāhaṃ, ānanda, indriyavemattataṃ vadāmi” ti.*