

Dutiyakāmaḥhū Sutta

SN IV 41.6 Kāmaḥhū on Nirodha

Translated by Ānanda

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Once,

The Venerable Kāmaḥhū was living in Fisherman's Heap¹
In a wild mango grove.²

Then, Citta,³ the home dweller went to the Venerable Kāmaḥhū,
Sat down before him and asked:

[1. Processes]

[Citta]

Bhante,

How many kinds of [built-in] processes⁴ are there?

There are three kinds of [built-in] processes family man-

- (1) Processes of body
- (2) Processes of speech,
- (3) Processes of mind.⁵

“Sādhū Bhante” said Citta,
and having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:

¹ Macchikāsaṇḍe

² Ambātakavane. According to the Bretheren (107), The village (near Sāvattḥi), was the home of Citta the householder, the owner of the wild mango grove.

³ Citta was a well-known unordained follower of the Buddha and very advanced meditator.

⁴ “Kati nu kho, bhante, saṅkhārā”ti? Saṅkhārā: Bhikkhu Bodhi Bhante translates as ‘Formations.’ Bhante Thānissaro Bhikkhu translates as ‘Fabrications.’ Bhikkhu Sujato Bhante translates as ‘processes.’ Mrs. Rhys-Davids and F.L. Woodward, M.A. in their PTS translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya translate as ‘activities.’ Lord Chalmers (Dialogues, v, 215) translates ‘plastic forces.’ Comy. = saṅkharīyati, nibbattīyati ti’

Saṅkhāra [fr. saṃ+kr, not Vedic, but as saṃskāra Epic & Class. Sk. meaning “preparation” and “sacrament,” also in philosophical literature “former impression, disposition,” cp. vāsanā] one of the most difficult terms in Buddhist metaphysics, in which the blending of the subjective — objective view of the world and of happening, peculiar to the East, is so complete, that it is almost impossible for Occidental terminology to get at the root of its meaning in a translation. We can only convey an idea of its import by representing several sides of its application, without attempting to give a “word” as a def. trsln. — Lit. “preparation, get up”; appld: coefficient (of consciousness as well as of physical life, cp. viññāna), constituent, constituent potentiality; (pl.) synergies, cause — combination. (PED)

⁵ “Tayo kho, gahapati, saṅkhārā—kāyasaṅkhāro, vacīsaṅkhāro, cittasaṅkhāro”ti.

[What are the Processes]

[Citta]

Bhante,
What are the processes of body,
What are the processes of speech,
What are the processes of mind?

[Kāmaḥhū]

- (1) Breathing in and breathing out are the [built-in] processes of the body;
- (2) Thinking and reflecting are the [built-in] processes of the speech;
- (3) Perception and felt experience are the [built-in] processes of the mind.⁶

“Sādhu Bhante” said Citta,
Having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:

[The Reason for the Processes]

[Citta]

Bhante,
How is breathing in and breathing out the [built-in] processes of the body?
How come are thinking and reflecting the [built-in] processes of the mind,
And how come are perceptions and felt experience the [built-in] processes of the mind?

[Kāmaḥhū]

- (1) Breathing in and breathing out, this is bodily.
These things are bound up with the body;
Therefore, breathing in and breathing out are the built-in processes of the body.⁷
- (2) Having first thought and reflected family man,
Then one breaks into speech;
Therefore, thinking and reflection are the built-in processes of the speech.⁸
- (3) Perception and knowing belong to the mind,⁹
These things are bound up with the mind;
Therefore, perception and felt experience are the built-in processes of the mind.¹⁰

“Sādhu Bhante” said Citta,
Having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:

⁶ “Assāsapassāsā kho, gahapati, kāyasaṅkhāro, vitakkavicārā vacīsaṅkhāro, saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaṅkhāro”ti.

⁷ “Assāsapassāsā kho, gahapati, kāyikā. Ete dhammā kāyappaṭibaddhā, tasmā assāsapassāsā kāyasaṅkhāro.

⁸ Pubbe kho, gahapati, vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācaṃ bhindati, tasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsaṅkhāro.

⁹ Cetasika (adj.) belonging to ceto, mental (opp. kāyika physical).

¹⁰ Saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā. Ete dhammā cittaappaṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaṅkhāro”ti.

[2. The Release from Perceptual Awareness]

[Citta]

Bhante,
How can the complete release from perceptual awareness be experienced?

[Kāmaḥhū]

When one enters upon the release from perceptual awareness, one does not think:

- (1) I am will enter the release from perceptual awareness" nor
- (2) I am entering the release from perceptual awareness' nor
- (3) I am in the release from perceptual awareness"

Rather, it is because one has previously cultivated one's mind
In the appropriate way, that it leads one to that state.¹¹

"Sādhu Bhante" said Citta,
Having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:

[Entering]

[Citta]

Bhante,
When one is entering the release from perceptual awareness,
Which thing ceases first:

The processes of the body,
The processes of speech,
Or the processes of mind?

[Kāmaḥhū]

When one is entering the release from perceptual awareness;

- (1) The processes of speech fades away first;
- (2) Then the processes of the body;
- (3) Then the processes of the mind.

"Sādhu Bhante" said Citta,
Having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:

[The Dead and the Liberated]

[Citta]

Bhante,
What is the difference between one who is dead

¹¹ *Atha khvassa pubbeva tathā cittaṃ bhāvitam hoti yaṃ taṃ tathattāya upaneti"ti.*

and one who has entered into the release from perceptual awareness?¹²

[Kāmaḥhū]

Home dweller,

In one who is dead;

- (1) The bodily processes are discontinued and completely calmed;
- (2) The verbal processes are discontinued and completely calmed;
- (3) And the mental processes are discontinued and completely calmed;
 - a. Their vitality is completely gone,
 - b. Their heat is dissipated,
 - c. And their faculties are broken.¹³

But for one who has entered the release of perceptual awareness,

- (1) The bodily activities are also discontinued and completely calmed
- (2) The verbal activities are also discontinued and completely calmed
- (3) The mental activities are also discontinued and completely calmed
 - a. Their vitality continues,
 - b. Their heat has not dissipated,
 - c. And their faculties are pure and bright.¹⁴

This is the difference home dweller.

“Sādhū Bhante” said Citta,

Having accepted and rejoiced,

He asked another question:

[Emerging]

[Citta]

Bhante,

How does one emerge from the release of perceptual awareness?¹⁵

[Kāmaḥhū]

Coming out of the attainment of the release from perceptual awareness, one does not think:

- (1) I will emerge from the release of perceptual awareness
- (2) I am emerging from the release of perceptual awareness
- (3) Or ‘I have emerged from the release of perceptual awareness.

Rather, it is because one has previously cultivated one’s mind

In the appropriate way, that it leads one to that state.

“Sādhū Bhante” said Citta,

¹² “yōvāyaṃ, bhante, mato kālaṅkato, yo cāyaṃ bhikkhu saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpanno, imesaṃ kiṃ nānākaraṇaṃ” ti?

¹³ “Yōvāyaṃ, gahapati, mato kālaṅkato tassa kāyasaṅkhāro niruddho paṭippassaddho, vacīsaṅkhāro niruddho paṭippassaddho, cittasaṅkhāro niruddho paṭippassaddho, āyu parikkhīṇo, usmā vūpasantā, indriyāni viparibhinnāni.

¹⁴ āyu aparikkhīṇo, usmā avūpasantā, indriyāni vipasannāni.

¹⁵ “kathaṃ pana, bhante, saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhānaṃ hotī” ti?

*Having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:*

[Processes when Emerging]

[Citta]

*Bhante,
While emerging from the release of perceptual awareness,
What things manifest first:
Bodily processes,
Verbal processes,
Or mental processes?*

[Kāmaabhū]

*Family man,
When emerging from the release of perceptual awareness:*

- (1) First the mental processes become manifest,*
- (2) Then the bodily processes,*
- (3) Then the verbal processes.*

*“Sādhu Bhante” said Citta,
Having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:*

[Three Contacts]

[Citta]

*Bhante,
When one has emerged from the release of perceptual awareness,
How many kinds of contacts impinge [on their minds].*

[Kāmaabhū]

*Family man,
When one has emerged from the release of perceptual awareness,
Three kinds of contacts impinge [on their minds]¹⁶*

- (1) The contact with emptiness,¹⁷*
- (2) The contact with signlessness,¹⁸*
- (3) The contact with undirectedness.¹⁹*

¹⁶ “*Saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhitam kho, gahapati, bhikkhum tayo phassā phusanti—*

¹⁷ *Suññato phasso:*

¹⁸ *Animitto phasso: Nimitta (nt.) [cp. Sk. nimitta, to mā, although etym. uncertain] 1. sign, omen, portent, prognostication. Miln 298; Vism 577. — 2. outward appearance, mark, characteristic, attribute, phenomenon (opp. essence). — 3. mark, aim. — 4. sexual organ (cp. lakkhaṇa) (n. & a°, as term of abuse); see also kāṭa & koṭacikā. — 5. ground, reason, condition, in nimittena (instr.) and nimittam (acc.) as adv.=by means of, on account. adj. nimitta (— °) caused by, referring to. — animitta free from marks or attributes, not contaminated by outward signs or appearance, undefiled, unaffected, unconditioned (opp. sa°)*

¹⁹ *Appaṇihito phasso”ti. Also translates as ‘unappliedness’.*

“Sādhū Bhante” said Citta,
Having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:

[Inclination of a Released Mind]

[Citta]

Bhante,
Once emerged out of the release from perceptual awareness,
What does the mind lean, tilt and incline to?²⁰

[Kāmabhū]

Once emerged out of the release from perceptual awareness,
One’s mind leans towards release,
Tilts towards release,
It inclines towards release.²¹

“Sādhū Bhante” said Citta,
Having accepted and rejoiced,
He asked another question:

²⁰ Bhikkhuno kiṃninaṃ cittaṃ hoti, kiṃpoṇaṃ, kiṃpabbhāraṃ”ti?

²¹ When the mind has known and experienced cessation, the stilling of all processes and activities, the waters have turned in the mind. Just as if one were to cross between two watersheds on a canoe. Crossing from the flood of saṃsāra over to the stream of the Dhamma. For some time, one paddles upstream, against the current (the flood in the mind). The stream gets narrower and smaller, even barely perceptible. Miniature streams (Conditioned Processes) which are the beginning of all flowing body of water (Consciousness). Then comes a time when no canoe can be carried further (mental objects), one has to alight, on foot, there is no more stream (of consciousness). This is the birth place of all rivers, streams and tributaries, where they all begin. There is this marshy area where a mix of water (Awareness) and ground (Nibbāna) can be discerned upon erring in and out of it (This is the limit of awareness). The grounds then get dryer as one carries on. These are elevated grounds (mental grounds), the ridge that delineates in between two distinct basins, the drainage divides of the mind. On one side of this ridge, the water flows south, and on the other side, the water flow north. Once the ridge is crossed, at some point the marsh will be seen again, then the smallest streams of currents, barely perceptible, one can only know in which direction it is moving by watching coarse residues and grass slowly moving downstream with the faintest currents. Once this ridge is crossed, the mind naturally leans, tilts and inclines towards release. There is a slight shift in the mind, a shift in the meditation. This is where the meditation changes to become almost effortless. With no real object or subject or vehicle. That is where the mind takes release as its object (Vossaggārammana). The mind has crossed over to another drainage basin. The watershed of Nibbāna, the unconditioned, deathless territory. Bhikkhuno vivekaninnaṃ cittaṃ hoti vivekapaṇaṃ vivekapabbhāraṃ”ti.

[Helpful things for Release]

[Citta]

Bhante,
How many things are truly helpful for the attainment of Nirodha?²²

Surely family man,
That which should have been asked first, you finally ask.²³
But I will still answer you.²⁴

[Kāṃabhū]
Family man,
Two things are truly helpful for its attainment,
Letting go²⁵ and discernment.²⁶

²² “saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyaṃ pana, bhante, kati dhammā bahūpakāraṃ” ti?

²³ “Addhā kho toaṃ, gahapati, yaṃ paṭhamaṃ pucchitabbaṃ taṃ pucchasi.

²⁴ Api ca tyāhaṃ byākarissāmi.

²⁵ Samatha [fr. śam, cp. BSk. śamatha] 1. calm, quietude of heart.

²⁶ Samatho ca vipassanā cā” ti. Vipassanā : Knowing the mind, observing the mind, knowing when distractions arise. Vipassanā (f.) [fr. vi+passati; BSk. vipaśyanā] inward vision, insight, intuition, introspection.



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