SN 6.15 — Parinibbana Sutta: Total Unbinding

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn06/sn06.015.than.html

Source revision: sha256:7c411108530c04aafcca0ac43267ed12227cbb2653320e8ae0bb686e566bb783

License: CC-BY-NC-4.0 — https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

License URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Copyright: ©1998 Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

License notice: The text of this page ("Parinibbana Sutta: Total Unbinding", by Thanissaro Bhikkhu) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of the license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. Documents linked from this page may be subject to other restrictions.

Attribution: ©1998 Thanissaro Bhikkhu. The text of this page ("Parinibbana Sutta: Total Unbinding", by Thanissaro Bhikkhu) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of the license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. Documents linked from this page may be subject to other restrictions. Transcribed from a file provided by the translator. Last revised for Access to Insight on 30 November 2013. How to cite this document (a suggested style): "Parinibbana Sutta: Total Unbinding" (SN 6.15), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn06/sn06.015.than.html .

Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Translator's note: This discourse reports the way the Buddha passed away, giving four verses uttered by those who witnessed the event. It is interesting to note that the verses ascribed to heavenly beings make general comments on how the nature of all beings — even a Buddha — is to pass away, whereas the verses ascribed to the monks comment specifically on the Buddha's display of mental mastery immediately prior to the moment of his total Unbinding.

On one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Kusinara in Upavattana, the Sal Tree Grove of the Mallans, on the occasion of his total Unbinding. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, "I exhort you, monks: All fabrications are subject to decay. Bring about completion by being heedful." Those were the Tathagata's last words.

Then the Blessed One entered the first jhana. Emerging from that he entered the second jhana. Emerging from that, he entered the third... the fourth jhana... the dimension of the infinitude of space... the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness... the dimension of nothingness... the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Emerging from that, he entered the cessation of perception & feeling.

Then emerging from the cessation of perception & feeling, he entered the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Emerging from that, he entered the dimension of nothingness... the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness... the dimension of the infinitude of space... the fourth jhana... the third... the second... the first jhana. Emerging from the first jhana he entered the second... the third... the fourth jhana. Emerging from the fourth jhana, he immediately was totally Unbound.

When the Blessed One was totally Unbound, simultaneously with the total Unbinding, Sahampati Brahma uttered this verse:

All beings — all — in the world, will cast off the bodily heap in the world where a Teacher like this without peer in the world the Tathagata, with strength attained, the Rightly Self-Awakened One, has been totally Unbound.

When the Blessed One was totally Unbound, simultaneously with the total Unbinding, Sakka, ruler of the gods, uttered this verse:

How inconstant are compounded things! Their nature: to arise & pass away. They disband as they are arising. Their total stilling is bliss.

When the Blessed One was totally Unbound, simultaneously with the total Unbinding, Ven. Ananda uttered this verse:

It was awe-inspiring. It was hair-raising when, displaying the foremost accomplishment in all things, the Rightly Self-Awakened One was totally Unbound.

When the Blessed One was totally Unbound, simultaneously with the total Unbinding, Ven. Anuruddha uttered this verse:

He had no in-&-out breathing, the one who was Such, the firm-minded one, imperturbable & bent on peace: the sage completing his span. With heart unbowed he endured the pain. Like a flame's unbinding was the liberation of awareness.

See also: DN 16; SN 5.7; SN 9.6; SN 48.56.