



On these pages are organized some of the more important things said in the Pali texts about the hindrances. Some are global statements made about the hindrances generally (*left column*), some give specific information about each of the hindrances (*lower box*), while some are said about each hindrance in turn, (*each is to be placed, one after the other, in the position of the variable ...x...*). Taken as a whole, these teachings paint a pretty comprehensive picture of how to understand the hindrances, identify them in one's experience, and work with them both in meditation and in daily life.

There are these five hindrances. This noble eight-fold path is to be developed for direct knowledge of these five hindrances, for the full understanding of them, for their utter destruction, for their abandoning. (S45)

There are these five hindrances. [A certain person] is obstructed, hindered, blocked, and enveloped by these five hindrances. That he could know of see or realize a superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones—this is impossible. (M99)

There are these five obstacles, hindrances, which overspread the heart, which weaken insight...That a person, without being rid of these five obstacles, hindrances, which overspread the heart, which weaken insight, without strength and weak in insight, shall know his own good, shall know another's good, shall know the good of both, or shall realize the excellence of knowledge and insight proper to the noble ones, which goes beyond the human condition—that cannot be.

Suppose in the case of a mountain stream, winding here and there, swiftly flowing, taking all along with it, a man were to open watercourses into it from both sides; then indeed, the flow in mid-stream would be disturbed, swirled about and diverted, nor would the stream wind here and there, nor flow swiftly, nor take all along with it. (A5:51)

A person should consider thus: "Are the five hindrances abandoned in me?" If by reviewing, he knows thus: "The five hindrances are not abandoned in me," then he should make an effort to abandon those five hindrances. But if, by reviewing, he knows thus: "The five hindrances are abandoned in me," then he can abide happy and glad, training day and night in wholesome states. (M151)

References are to sections in the *Nikayas*: *Digha* (D), *Majjhima* (M), *Samyutta* (S), and *Anguttara* (A). The translation mostly follows Bhikkhu Bodhi (Wisdom). --A. Olendzki

There are these five debasements of gold by reason of which debased gold is neither pliable nor workable nor bright, but is brittle and of no use for the best work: iron, copper, tin, lead and silver.

In just the same way, there are these five debasements of the mind by reason of which a debased mind is neither pliable nor workable nor bright, but is brittle and not rightly composed for the destruction of the taints. (A5:23)

If [...x...] is present in himself, a monk knows that it is present. If [...x...] is absent in himself, a monk knows that it is absent. And he knows how unarisen [...x...] comes to arise, and he knows how the abandonment of arisen [...x...] comes about, and he knows how the non-arising of the abandoned [...x...] in the future will come about. (D22/M10)

SENSE DESIRE kāma-cchanda

Suppose there is a bowl of water, mixed with lac, turmeric, blue or crimson dye. If a man with good sight were to examine his own facial reflection in it, he would neither know nor see it as it really is. (A5:193)

ILL WILL vyāpāda

Suppose there is a bowl of water being heated over a fire, bubbling and boiling. If a man with good sight were to examine his own facial reflection in it, he would neither know nor see it as it really is. (A5:193)

SLOTH & TORPOR thīna-middha

Suppose there is a bowl water covered over with water plants and algae. If a man with good sight were to examine his own facial reflection in it, he would neither know nor see it as it really is. (A5:193)

RESTLESSNESS & REMORSE uddhacca-kukkucca

Suppose there is a bowl of water stirred by the wind, rippling, swirling, churned into wavelets. If a man with good sight were to examine his own facial reflection in it, he would neither know nor see it as it really is. (A5:193)

DOUBT vicikicchā

Suppose there is a bowl of water that is turbid, unsettled, muddy, placed in the dark. If a man with good sight were to examine his own facial reflection in it, he would neither know nor see it as it really is. (A5:193)

UNDERSTANDING THE HINDRANCES

<p>Equipped with this noble morality, with this noble restraint of the senses, with this noble contentment, he finds a solitary lodging, at the root of a forest tree, in a mountain cave or gorge, a charnel-ground, a jungle-thicket, or in the open air on a heap of straw. Then, having eaten after his return from the alms-round, he sits down cross-legged, holding his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.</p> <p>Abandoning [...x...], he abides with a mind freed from [...x...]; he purifies his mind of [...x...]. (D2)</p>	<p>When one dwells with a mind obsessed and oppressed by [...x...], and does not understand as it really is the escape from arisen [...x...].</p> <p>On that occasion one neither knows nor sees as it really is one's own good, the good of others, or the good of both. (A5:193)</p>	<p>By frequently giving attention to things that are a basis for [...x...], or when one attends carelessly, unarisen [...x...] arises and arisen [...x...] increases and expands.</p> <p>When one attends carefully, unarisen [...x...] does not arise and arisen [...x...] is abandoned. (S46)</p>
<p>Just as a man who had taken a loan to develop his business, and whose business had prospered, might pay off his old debts, and with what was left over could support a wife, might think: "Before this I developed my business by borrowing, but now it has prospered...", and he would rejoice and be glad about that. (D2)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to cause the arising of sense desire, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its development and increase, as the thought of beauty. In one who gives careless attention to the thought of beauty, sense desire, if not already arisen, arises; or, if already arisen, is liable to increase and expand. (A1)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to prevent the arising of sense desire, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its abandonment, as the thought of non-beauty. In one who gives careful attention to the thought of non-beauty, sense desire, if not already arisen, does not arise; or, if arisen, it is abandoned. (A1)</p>
<p>Just as a man who was ill, suffering, terribly sick, with no appetite and weak in body, might after a time recover, and regain his appetite and bodily strength, and he might think: "Before this I was ill, but now I have recovered...", and he would rejoice and be glad about that. (D2)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to cause the arising of ill-will, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its development and increase, as the thought of dislike. In one who gives careless attention to the thought of dislike, ill-will, if not already arisen, arises; or, if already arisen, is liable to increase and expand. (A1)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to prevent the arising of ill-will, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its abandonment, as the thought of loving-kindness. In one who gives careful attention to the thought of loving-kindness, ill-will, if not already arisen, does not arise; or, if arisen, it is abandoned. (A1)</p>
<p>Just as a man might be bound in prison, and after a time he might be freed from his bonds without any loss, with no deduction from his possessions. He might think: "Before this I was in prison, but now I am freed from my bonds...", and he would rejoice and be glad about that. (D2)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to cause the arising of sloth and torpor, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its development and increase, as regret, drowsiness, languor, surfeit after meals and torpidity of mind. In one who is of torpid mind, sloth and torpor, if not already arisen, arises; or, if already arisen, is liable to increase and expand. (A1)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to prevent the arising of sloth and torpor, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its abandonment, as the element of putting forth effort, of exertion, of striving. In one who energetically strives, sloth and torpor arises not, or, if arisen, it is abandoned. (A1)</p>
<p>Just as a man might be a slave, not his own master, dependent on another, unable to go where he liked, and after some time he might be freed from slavery, able to go where he liked, might think: "Before this I was a slave, but now I can go where I like...", and he would rejoice and be glad about that. (D2)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to cause the arising of restlessness and remorse, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its development and increase, as non-tranquility of mind. In one who is of troubled mind, restlessness and remorse, if not already arisen, arises; or, if already arisen, is liable to increase and expand. (A1)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to prevent the arising of restlessness and remorse, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its abandonment, as tranquility of mind. In the tranquil-minded, restlessness and remorse, if not already arisen, does not arise, or, if arisen, it is abandoned. (A1)</p>
<p>Just as a man, laden with goods and wealth, might go on a long journey through the desert where food was scarce and danger abounded, and after a time he would get through the desert and arrive safe and sound at the edge of a village, might think: "Before this I was in danger, now I am safe at the edge of a village", and he would rejoice and be glad about that. (D2)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to cause the arising of doubt, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its development and increase, as careless attention. In one who gives careless attention, doubt, if not already arisen, arises; or, if already arisen, is liable to increase and expand. (A1)</p>	<p>I know of no other single thing of such power to prevent the arising of doubt, if not already arisen, or, if arisen, to cause its abandonment, as careful attention. In one who gives careful attention, doubt, if not already arisen, does not arise, or, if arisen, it is abandoned. (A1)</p>