

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

The Shorter Discourse on Questions and Answers (Cuulavedallasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in the squirrels' Sanctuary in Raajagaha. Then Visaakha the lay disciple approached bhikkhuni Dhammadinnaa worshipped her, sat on a side and said:

Noble lady, it is said the self, for what did the Blessed One say self.? Friend, Visaakha, to these five holding masses the Blessed One said self. Such as the holding mass of matter, the holding mass of feelings, the holding mass of perceptions, the holding mass of determinations and the holding mass of consciousness. To these five holding masses the Blessed One said, self. The lay disciple Visaakha agreeing with the words of bhikkhuni Dhammadinnaa asked a further question. Noble lady, it is said, the arising of the self, to what did the Blessed One say the arising of the self?.

Friend, Visaakha, to this same craving to be born in the future accompanied with interest and greed delighting here and there with greed for sensuality, greed 'to be' and greed 'not to be', to this the Blessed One said, the arising of the self. Noble lady it is said the cessation of self, to what did the Blessed One say the cessation of self? The complete cessation, giving up, the release from that craving is the cessation of self, said the Blessed One..Noble Lady, it is said the path to the cessation of self, to what did the Blessed One say, the path to the cessation of self? Friend, Visaakha, the Blessed One declared this same Noble Eightfold path, is the path, for the cessation of the self. Such as right view, right thoughts, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Noble lady, is the holding, in that same five holding masses, or is there a holding other than that? No, friend Visaakha, there is no holding other than the five holding masses. Friend, Visaakha, the interest and greed for these five masses, is the holding.

Noble Lady, how does the self view arise? Here, friend, Visaakha, the not learned ordinary man who has not seen the noble ones and Great Beings, not clever in their Teaching and not trained in their Teaching, reflects matter in self, or a material self, or in self matter, or in matter self. Reflects feelings in self, or a feeling self, or in self feelings, or in feelings self. Reflects perceptions in self, or a perceiving self, or in self perceptions, or in perceptions self. Reflects determinations in self, or a determining self, or in self determinations, or in determinations self. Reflects consciousness in self, or a conscious self, or in self consciousness, or in consciousness self. Friend, Visaakha, thus arises the self view. Noble Lady, how does the self view not arise? Here, friend Visaakha the learned noble disciple, who has seen noble ones and Great Beings, clever in their teaching, and trained in their Teaching does not reflect matter in self, nor a material self, nor in self matter, nor in matter self. Does not reflect feelings in self, nor a feeling self, nor in self feelings, nor in feelings self. Does not reflect perceptions in self, nor a perceiving self, nor in self, perceptions, nor in perceptions, self. Does not reflect determinations in self, nor a determining self, nor in self determinations, nor in determinations self. Does not reflect consciousness in self, nor a conscious self, nor in self consciousness, nor in consciousness self. Thus the self view does not arise.. .

Noble Lady, what is the Noble Eightfold path? Friend Visaakha, it is this same Noble Eightfold path such as right view, right thoughts, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. .Noble lady, is the Noble Eightfold path compounded or uncompounded? Friend Visaakha, the Noble Eightfold path is compounded. Noble Lady, are the three compounds comprised in the Noble Eightfold path or the Noble Eightfold path comprised in the three compounds? Friend Visaakha, it is not that the three compounds are comprised in the Noble Eightfold path, the Noble Eightfold path is comprised in the three compounds. Friend Visaakha, right speech, right actions and right livelihood go to the compound virtues, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration go to the compound concentration, and right view and right thoughts go to the compound wisdom. Noble Lady, what is concentration? What are the signs of concentration? What are the properties of concentration and what is the development of concentration? Friend Visaakha, one pointedness of mind is concentration. The four foundations of mindfulness are the signs of concentration. The four right efforts (* are the properties of

concentration. To practice, develop, and make much of these things is the development of concentration.

Noble Lady, what are determinations: Friend, Visaakha, these three are the determinations. Bodily determinations, verbal determinations and mental determinations. Lady, what are bodily determinations? What are verbal determinations and what are mental determinations? Friend Visaakha in-breaths and out-breaths are bodily determinations Thinking and pondering are verbal determinations and perceptions and feelings are mental determinations. Noble lady, how are in-breaths and out-breaths bodily determinations, thinking and pondering verbal determinations and perceptions and feelings mental determinations? Friend Visaakha, in-breaths and out-breaths are a bodily matter, are bound up with the body, therefore in-breaths and out-breaths are bodily determinations. Friend, Visaaka, earlier having thought and pondered, someone breaks into speech, therefore thinking and pondering are verbal determinations. Perceiving and feeling is done with the mind, they are things bound up with the mind, therefore perceptions and feelings are mental determinations.

Noble lady, how is the cessation of perceptions and feelings attained? Friend Visaakha, not that it occurs to the bhikkhu I will attain to the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Or I'm attaining to the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Or I have attained to the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Yet his mind should be developed so that it is led to that. Noble lady, of one attained to the cessation of perceptions and feelings, what ceases first? Is it bodily determinations, verbal determinations or mental determinations? Friend Visaakha, of one attained to the cessation of perceptions and feelings, verbal determinations cease first. Next bodily determinations and lastly mental determinations. Noble lady, how is the rising from the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Friend Visaakha, not that it occurs to the bhikkhu rising from the cessation of perceptions and feelings: I will rise from the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Or I'm rising from the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Or I have risen from the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Yet his mind should be developed so that, it is led to that. To a bhikkhu rising from the cessation of perceptions and feelings, what things arise first? Is it bodily determinations, verbal determinations

or mental determinations? Friend, Visaakha, to a bhikkhu rising from the cessation of perceptions and feelings, mental determinations arise first. Then bodily determinations and lastly verbal determinations. Noble Lady, what are the signs that touch the bhikkhu rising from the cessation of perceptions and feelings? Friend Visaakha, three signs touch the bhikkhu rising from the cessation of perceptions and feelings. The sign of voidity, the element of no-sign, and the sign of non-settlement, touches him. Noble lady, what is the bend of the mind of the bhikkhu arisen from the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Friend, Visaakha, the bend of the mind of the bhikkhu arisen from the cessation of perceptions and feelings is to seclusion.

Noble lady, how many feelings are there? Friend Visaakha, there are three feelings, pleasant, unpleasant and neither unpleasant-nor-pleasant feelings.. Noble lady what are pleasant feelings? What are unpleasant feelings and what are neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings? Friend Visaakha, whatever agreeable feeling felt with the body or mind is a pleasant feeling. (*1) Whatever disagreeable, unpleasant feeling felt with the body or mind is an unpleasant feeling (*2). Whatever neither disagreeable nor agreeable feeling felt with the body or mind is a neither unpleasant nor pleasant feeling (*3). Noble lady, in pleasant feelings what is pleasant and what is unpleasant? In unpleasant feelings what is unpleasant and what is pleasant? In neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings what is pleasant and what is unpleasant? Friend Visaakha, in pleasant feelings the presence is pleasant and the change is unpleasant. In unpleasant feelings the presence is unpleasant and the change is pleasant. In neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings the knowledge is pleasant and ignorance is unpleasant. Noble lady, from pleasant feelings what latent tendencies trickle? From unpleasant feelings what latent tendencies trickle? From neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings what latent tendencies trickle? From pleasant feelings the latent tendency greed trickles. From unpleasant feelings the latent tendency aversion trickles. From neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings the latent tendency delusion trickles. Noble lady, does greed trickle from all pleasant feelings? Does aversion trickle from all unpleasant feelings? Does delusion trickle from all neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings. No, friend Visaakha, from all pleasant feelings greed does not trickle. From all unpleasant feelings aversion does not trickle. From all neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings delusion does not trickle. Noble lady, from pleasant feelings what should be dispelled? From unpleasant feelings what should be dispelled? From neither unpleasant nor pleasant

feelings what should be dispelled?. Friend Visaakha, from pleasant feelings the latent tendency to greed should be dispelled, from unpleasant feelings the latent tendency to aversion should be dispelled and from neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings the tendency to ignorance should be dispelled Noble lady, should the tendency to greed be dispelled from all pleasant feelings? Should the tendency to aversion be dispelled from all unpleasant feelings and should the tendency to ignorance be dispelled from all neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings? No, friend, Visaakha, the tendency to greed need not be dispelled from all pleasant feelings. The tendency to aversion need not be dispelled from all unpleasant feelings and the tendency to ignorance need not be dispelled from all neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings. Here, friend Visaakha, the bhikkhu secluded from sensual desires and from thoughts of demerit, with thoughts and discursive thoughts and with joy and pleasantness born of seclusion, attained to abides in the first jhaana. He dispels greed for it, and the latent tendency to greed does not trickle. Then friend, Visaakha, the bhikkhu reflects. O! when shall I attain to, abide in that sphere in which the noble ones attain to abide now. Thus when delight is aroused for the incomparable release, pleasure arises to him, and aversion is dispelled, by that the latent tendency to aversion does not trickle. Then friend Visaakha, the bhikkhu dispelling pleasantness and unpleasantness, and earlier overcoming pleasure and displeasure, without unpleasantness and pleasantness and with equanimity mindfulness purified attained to abides in the fourth jhaana, by that he dispels ignorance, by that the latent tendencies to ignorance do not trickle.

Noble lady, what is the counterpart of pleasant feelings? Friend Visaakha, the counterpart of pleasant feelings are unpleasant feelings. What is the counterpart of unpleasant feelings? Friend Visaakha, the counterpart of unpleasant feelings is pleasant feelings. Noble lady, what is the counterpart of neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings? Friend Visaakha, the counterpart of neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings is ignorance. Noble Lady what is the counterpart of ignorance? Friend, Visaakha, the counterpart of ignorance is knowledge.. Noble lady, what is the counterpart of knowledge?. Friend, Visaakha, the counterpart of knowledge is release. Noble lady what is the counterpart of release?. Friend, Visaakha, the counterpart of release is extinction. Noble lady, what is the counterpart of extinction?.

Friend, Visaakha, the questions have gone beyond limits. It is not possible to go beyond this limit. Friend, Visaakha the holy life is immersed in extinction and extinction is the ultimate aim and end. If you desire approach the Blessed One and ask this question and as he explains it, bear it in mind.

Then the lay disciple Visaakha, delighting and agreeing with the words of bhikkhuni Dhammadinnaa, getting up from his seat worshipped bhikkhuni Dhammadinnaa and circumambulated her and approached the Blessed One. He worshipped the Blessed One, sat on a side and related all the conversation between himself and bhikkhuni Dhammadinnaa. When this was said the Blessed One said, Visaakha, bhikkhuni Dhammadinnaa is very wise, if you had asked these questions from me, I too would have given the same answers. So bear these in your mind as she has explained.

The Blessed One said thus and the lay disciple Visaakha delighted in the words of the Blessed One.

Notes.

1. Whatever agreeable feeling felt with the body or mind is a pleasant feeling. 'ya.m kho aavuso Visaaka, kaayika.m vaa cetasika.m sukha.m saata.m vedayita.m, aya.m sukha.m' Agreeable or disagreeable all bodily feelings are born at one or the other of the doors of mental contact. If on account of one or the other of these feelings the self is elated it is a pleasant feeling of the mind.

2. Whatever disagreeable unpleasant feeling felt with the body or mind is an unpleasant feeling. 'ya.m kho aavuso Visaaka, kaayika.m vaa cetasika.m vaa dukkha.m asaata.m vedayita.m aya.m dukkha vedanaa' An unpleasant feeling felt with the body could be a wound in the body, or some ache or pain. When the wound, or ache, causes acute pain coming even close upon death, it is a feeling of the mind and causes more feelings than the bodily one. They are unpleasant feelings of the mind.

3. Whatever neither disagreeable nor agreeable feeling felt with the body or mind is a neither unpleasant nor pleasant feeling 'ya.m kho aavuso Visaaka, kaayika.m vaa cetasika.m vaa nevasaata.m vaanaasaata.m vedayita.m aya.m adukkhamasukha vedanaati' When neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings are felt with the body, they are not even known, and when such become feelings in the mind, we think we are bored and go in for some excitement. This is called ignorance.

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