

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

The Discourse on Many Elements (Bahudhaatukasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in the monastery offered by Anaathapindika in Jeta's grove in Saavatthi. From there the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus. 'Whatever fears, misfortunes and dangers arise, they all arise from the foolish not from the wise. Thus bhikkhus, the foolish are with fears, misfortunes and dangers. Therefore bhikkhus, to become wise inquirers, you should train thus.

When this was said, venerable Aananda asked the Blessed One, 'Venerable sir, saying it rightly how does the wise bhikkhu become an inquirer?'

'Aananda, when the bhikkhu becomes clever, in the elements, in the spheres, in dependent arising and in the possible and impossible, he becomes an inquirer'

'Venerable sir, saying it rightly how is the wise bhikkhu clever in the elements?'

'Aananda, there are eighteen elements. They are the elements of eye, forms and eye consciousness; ear, sounds, and ear consciousness; nose, scents and nose consciousness; tongue, tastes and tongue consciousness; body, touches and body consciousness; mind, ideas and mind consciousness. Aananda, these are the eighteen elements, when the bhikkhu knows and sees them, he becomes clever in the elements.

'Venerable sir, is there another method through which the bhikkhu becomes clever in the elements?'

‘There is a method. The bhikkhu becomes clever in the six elements, such as the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space and consciousness. Ananda, these are the six elements, when the bhikkhu knows and sees them, saying it rightly he becomes clever in the elements’.

‘Venerable sir, is there another method through which the bhikkhu becomes clever in the elements?’

‘There is a method. These six are the elements of pleasantness, unpleasantness, pleasure, displeasure, equanimity and ignorance, when the bhikkhu knows and sees them, saying it rightly he becomes clever in the elements’

‘Venerable sir, is there another method through which the bhikkhu becomes clever in the elements?’

‘There is a method. These six are the elements of sensuality, non sensuality, anger, non anger, hurting and non hurting, when the bhikkhu knows and sees them, saying it rightly he becomes clever in the elements’

‘Venerable sir, is there another method through which the bhikkhu becomes clever in the elements?’

‘There is a method. These three are the elements, of sensuality, materiality and immateriality, when the bhikkhu knows and sees them, saying it rightly he becomes clever in the elements.’

‘Venerable sir, is there another method through which the bhikkhu becomes clever in the elements?’

‘There is a method. These two are the elements, such as the compounded and the un-compounded element when the bhikkhu knows and sees them, saying it rightly he becomes clever in the elements.’

‘Venerable sir, saying it rightly how is the bhikkhu clever in the spheres?’

‘Aananda, these six are the internal and external spheres of the eye and forms, ear and sounds, nose and scents, tongue and tastes, body and touches and mind and ideas, when the bhikkhu knows and sees them, saying it rightly he becomes clever in the spheres.’

‘Venerable sir, saying it rightly how is the bhikkhu clever in dependent arising?’

‘Aananda, the bhikkhu knows, when this is present, this happens, when this arises, this arise. When this is not present, this does not happen, when this ceases, this cease. Such as from ignorance arise determinations, from determinations arise consciousness, from consciousness arise name and matter. From name and matter arise the six spheres, from the six spheres arise contact and from contact arise feelings. From feelings arise craving, from craving arises holding, from holding arises being and from being arises birth. From birth arises decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness displeasure and distress. Thus arises the complete mass of unpleasantness. With the cessation of ignorance, cease determinations, with the cessation of determinations cease consciousness, with the cessation of consciousness cease name and matter. With the cessation of name and matter cease the six spheres, with the cessation of the six spheres cease contact. With the cessation of contact cease feelings, with the cessation of feelings cease craving, with the cessation of craving ceases holding. With the cessation of holding ceases being, with the cessation of being ceases birth and with the cessation of birth cease decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. Thus ceases the complete mass of unpleasantness. When the bhikkhu knows and sees this, saying it rightly he becomes clever in dependent arising’

‘Venerable sir, saying it rightly how is the bhikkhu clever in the possible and impossible.’

‘Aananda, the bhikkhu knows, it is impossible, that one come to right view should take any determination as permanent. It is possible that an ordinary person should take any determination as

permanent. It is impossible, that one come to right view should take any determination as pleasant. It is possible that an ordinary person should take any determination as pleasant. It is impossible, that one come to right view should take any thought as his. It is possible that an ordinary person should take any thought as his. It is impossible, that one come to right view should deprive the life of his mother. It is possible that an ordinary person should deprive the life of his mother. It is impossible, that one come to right view should deprive the life of his father. It is possible that an ordinary person should deprive the life of his father. It is impossible, that one come to right view, should cause hurt to the body of the Thus Gone One with a defiled mind. It is possible that an ordinary person should cause hurt to the body of the Thus Gone One, with a defiled mind. It is impossible that one come to right view should cause a breach in the Community. It is possible that an ordinary person should cause a breach in the Community. It is impossible that one come to right view should go to another Teacher. It is possible that an ordinary person should go to another Teacher. It is impossible that two rightfully Enlightened Ones should be born in the same world element at one and same time. It is possible that a single rightfully Enlightened One should be born in the world element at one time. It is impossible that two Universal Monarchs. should be born in the same world element at one and same time. It is possible that a single Universal Monarch should be born in the world element at one time. It is impossible that a woman should be the perfect rightfully Enlightened One. It is possible that a man should be the perfect rightfully Enlightened One. It is impossible that a woman should be the Universal Monarch. It is possible that a man should be the Universal Monarch. It is impossible that a woman should be the King of Gods. It is possible that a man should be the King of Gods. It is impossible that a woman should be the King of Death. It is possible that a man should be the King of Death. It is impossible that a woman should be Brahmaa. It is possible that a man should be Brahmaa. It is impossible that bodily misconduct should .give birth to welcome pleasant results. It is possible that bodily misconduct should .give birth to unwelcome unpleasant results. It is impossible that verbal misconduct, ...re.... mental misconduct should .give birth to welcome pleasant results. It is possible that verbal misconduct,..re... mental misconduct should .give birth to unwelcome unpleasant results. It is impossible that bodily good conduct should .give birth to unwelcome unpleasant results. It is possible that bodily good conduct should .give birth to welcome pleasant results. It is impossible that verbal good conduct, ...re.... mental good conduct should .give birth to unwelcome unpleasant results. It is possible that verbal good conduct,..re... mental good

conduct should .give birth to welcome pleasant results. It is impossible that one misconductingbodily, originating from that, on

account of that should be born in heaven, in a higher state after death.It is possible that one misconductingbodily, originating from that, on account of that should be born in hell in a lower state after death. It is impossible that one misconductingverbally,...re... mentally, originating from that, on account of that should be born in heaven in a higher state after death.It is possible that one misconducting verbally,...re...mentally, originating from that, on account of that should be born in hell in a lower state after death. It is impossible that one well conductedbodily, originating from that, on account of that should be born in hell in a lower state after death.It is possible that one well conductedbodily, originating from that, on account of that should be born in heaven in a higher state after death. It is impossible that one well conductedverbally,...re... mentally, originating from that, on account of that should be born in hell,in a lower state after death.It is possible that one well conducted verbally,...re...mentally, originating from that, on account of that should be born in heaven, in a higher state after death.

Then venerable Aananda said, ‘It is wonderful venerable sir. What is the name of thisdiscourse?’

‘Aananda, call it, the Discourse on many elements, or The fourfold circle, or The mirror of the Teaching, or The drum of deathlessness, or The noble victory in the battle.

The Blessed One said thus and venerable Aananda delighted in the words of the Blessed One.

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