

## **Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses**

### **Classification of the six spheres (Salaayatanavibhangasutta)**

I heard thus.

The Blessed One was living in the monastery offered by Anaathapindika in Jeta's grove in Saavatthi. The Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus from there. 'Bhikkhus, I will teach the Classification of the six spheres, listen attentively,

I will teach' Those bhikkhus agreed and the Blessed One said 'Bhikkhus, you should know, the six internal spheres, the six external spheres, the six bodies of consciousness, the six bodies of contact, the eighteen ramblings of the mind and the thirty six in seven steps. Here on account of this dispel this. When the noble disciple develops, the three establishments of mindfulness, he becomes a Teacher suitable to instruct a gathering. He is said to be the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed. This is the short exposition of the classification of the six mental spheres.

It was said, that the six internal spheres should be known. Why was it said so? The spheres of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind should be known. If it was said the six internal spheres should be known, it was said, on account of this.

It was said, that the six external spheres should be known. Why was it said so? The spheres of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and ideas should be known. If it was said the six external spheres should be known, it was said on account of this..

It was said, that the six conscious bodies should be known. Why was it said so? The conscious bodies of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind should be known. If it was said the six conscious bodies should be known, it was said on account of this..

It was said, that the six bodies of contact should be known. Why was it said so? The bodies of contact of the, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind should be known. If it was said the six bodies of contact should be known, it was said on account of this..

It was said that the eighteen ramblings of the mind should be known. Why was it said so? Seeing a form with the eye, the mind dwells in pleasure, dwells in displeasure, and dwells in equanimity; Hearing a sound,...re..... Smelling ascent,...re... Tasting,...re..... Experiencing a touch...re.... Cognizing an idea dwells in pleasure dwells in displeasure and dwells in equanimity. Thus there are six ramblings in pleasure, six in displeasure and six in equanimity If it was said the eighteen ramblings of the mind should be known, it was said on account of this.

It was said that the thirty six should be known, in seven steps. Why was it said so?

The six clingings to worldly pleasures, the six clingings to non -sensual pleasures, the six clingings to worldly displeasures, the six clingings to non-sensual displeasures, the six clingings to worldly equanimities, and the six clingings to non-sensual equanimities.

What are the six clingings to worldly pleasures? Pleasing agreeable forms that should be cognized with eye consciousness, arousing delight connected with material gains, or with material gains in the past, which changed, are no more and are only the recollections of the past, which arouse pleasure, to these are said clingings to worldly pleasures. Pleasing agreeable sounds, ....re.....Pleasing agreeable smells, ....re.....Pleasing agreeable tastes, ....re.....Pleasing agreeable touches, ....re.....and Pleasing agreeable ideas, ....re.....that should be cognized with mind consciousness, arousing delight connected with material gains, or with material gains in the past, which changed, are no more and are only the recollections of the past, which arouse pleasure, to these are said worldly pleasures. These are the six clingings to worldly pleasures

What are the six clingings to non sensual pleasures? Knowing as it really is that all forms are impermanent, changing, unpleasant things, in the past as well as now, and as a result arises pleasure, to these are said clingings to non-sensual pleasures. Knowing as it really is that all sounds ..re...Knowing as it really is that all smells...re.. Knowing as it really is that all tastes...re.... Knowing as it really is that all touches....re.... Knowing as it really is that all ideas .are impermanent, changing, unpleasant things, in the past as well as now, and as a result arises pleasure, to these are said clingings to non-sensual pleasures. These are the six clingings to non- sensual pleasures

What are the six clingings to worldly displeasures? Pleasing agreeable forms that should be cognized with eye consciouess, arousing delight connected with material gains not obtained, or with material gains not obtained in the past, which changed, are no more and are only the recollections of the past, which arouse displeasure, to these are said clingings to worldly displeasures. Pleasing agreeable sounds, ....re.....Pleasing agreeable smells, ....re.....Pleasing agreeable tastes, ....re.....Pleasing agreeable touches, ....re.....and Pleasing agreeable ideas, that should be cognized with mind consciouess, arousing delight connected with material gains not obtained, or with material gains not obtained in the past, which changed, are no more and are only the recollections of the past, which arouse displeasure, to these are said clingings to worldly displeasures. These are the six clingings to worldly displeasures

What are the six clingings to non sensual displeasures? Knowing as it really is that all forms are impermanent, changing, unpleasant things, in the past as well as now with right wisdom, desires for the incomparable release. ‘When will I abide in that sphere, in which the noble ones at present abide.’ On account of that desire arises displeasure. That displeasure is called, clinging to non-sensual displeasure. Knowing as it really is that all sounds ..re...Knowing as it really is that all smells...re.. Knowing as it really is that all tastes...re.... Knowing as it really is that all touches....re.... Knowing as it really is that all ideas .are impermanent, changing, unpleasant things, in the past as well as now with right wisdom, desires for the incomparable release. ‘When will I abide in that sphere, in which the noble ones at present abide.’ On account of that desire arises displeasure. That displeasure is called, clinging to non-sensual displeasure. These are the six clingings to non- sensual displeasures

What are the six clingings to worldly equanimity? The not learned ordinary man, who has not won over, the boundary and the results of actions and who does not see the dangers, seeing a form gains equanimity, that equanimity does not leap beyond that form, therefore it is said clinging to worldly equanimity. Hearing a sound,...re.... Smelling a scent,...re..... Tasting,...re.....Experiencing a touch with the body,...re....Cognizing an idea with the mind gains equanimity, that equanimity does not leap beyond that idea, therefore it is said clinging to worldly equanimity. These are the six clingings to worldly equanimity.

What are the six clingings to non sensual equanimity? To one who knows as it really is that all forms are impermanent, changing, unpleasant things, in the past as well as now with right wisdom, arises equanimity, that equanimity leaps beyond that form, therefore it is said clinging to non-sensual equanimity. Hearing a sound,...re.... Smelling a scent,...re..... Tasting,...re.....Experiencing a touch with the body,...re....Cognizing an idea with the mind gains equanimity, that equanimity leaps beyond that idea, therefore it is said clinging to non-sensual equanimity. These are the six clingings to non sensual equanimity.

If it was said the thirty six should be known in seven stages, it was said on account of this.

It was said, on account of this dispel this. Why was it said so? Bhikkhus, on account of the six clingings to non-sensual pleasures, overcome and dispel the six clingings to worldly pleasures. Thus comes about the overcoming and the dispelling of the six clingings to worldly pleasures Bhikkhus, on account of the six clingings to non-sensual displeasures, overcome and dispel the six clingings to worldly displeasures. Thus comes about the overcoming and the dispelling of the six clingings to worldly displeasures Bhikkhus, on account of the six clingings to non-sensual equanimities, overcome and dispel the six clingings to worldly equanimities. Thus comes about the overcoming and the dispelling of the six clingings to worldly equanimities Bhikkhus, on account of the six clingings to non-sensual pleasures, overcome and dispel the six clingings to non-sensual displeasures. Thus comes about the overcoming and the dispelling of the six clingings to non-sensual

displeasures. Bhikkhus, on account of the six clings to non-sensual equanimities, overcome and dispel the six clings to non-sensual pleasures. Thus comes about the overcoming and the dispelling of the six clings to non-sensual pleasures.

Bhikkhus, there is equanimity to diverse clinging, and there is equanimity to a single clinging. What is equanimity to diverse clinging? Bhikkhus, there is equanimity to forms, to sounds, smells, tastes and touches. This is equanimity to diverse clinging.

Bhikkhus, what is equanimity to a single clinging? There is equanimity settled, in the sphere of space, in the sphere of consciousness, in the sphere of nothingness and in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. This is equanimity to a single clinging. Bhikkhus, on account of equanimity to a single clinging, overcome and dispel the equanimity to diverse clinging. Thus comes about the overcoming and dispelling of equanimity to diverse clinging. Bhikkhus, without desiring equanimity to a single clinging, overcome and dispel equanimity to a single clinging. Thus comes about the overcoming and dispelling of equanimity to a single clinging. If it was said, on account of this dispel this, it was said on account of this.

These three establishments of mindfulness, the noble disciple practises and becomes a suitable Teacher to instruct a crowd. Why was it said so? Bhikkhus, the Teacher teaches the disciples out of compassion saying, this is for your good and welfare. The disciples do not lend ear, do not attend to know it. They leave the dispensation. Bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One does not feel displeased, abides mindful and aware without leaking thoughts. This is the first establishment of mindfulness, practising which he becomes a suitable Teacher to instruct a crowd

Again bhikkhus, the Teacher teaches the disciples out of compassion saying, this is for your good and welfare. Of them a certain disciple does not lend ear, does not attend to know it. He leaves the dispensation. A certain disciple lends ear, attends to know it. He does not leave the dispensation. Bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One neither feels pleased nor displeased, giving up both abides with

equanimity, mindful and aware. This is the second establishment of mindfulness, practising which he becomes a suitable Teacher to instruct a crowd.

Again bhikkhus, the Teacher teaches the disciples out of compassion saying, this is for your good and welfare. The disciples lend ear, attend to know it. They do not leave the dispensation. Bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One neither feels pleased nor displeased, abides mindful and aware without leaking thoughts. This is the third establishment of mindfulness, practising which he becomes a suitable Teacher to instruct a crowd

If it was said the noble disciple practises, these three establishments of mindfulness and becomes a suitable Teacher to instruct a crowd, it was said on account of this.

Bhikkhus, it is said he is the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed. Why was it said so? The elephant tamer makes the elephant to be tamed go in one direction. either east, west, north or south. The horse tamer makes the horse to be tamed go in one direction. either east, west, north or south. The oxen tamer makes the ox to be tamed go in one direction. either east, west, north or south. Bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One, perfect and rightfully enlightened makes the man to be tamed, go in eight directions. In matter to see matter (\*1). This is the first direction. With internal immaterial perception to see external matter (\*2). This is the second direction. To be released in the pleasant end. (\*3) This is the third direction. Overcoming all perceptions of matter and aversion and not attending to diverse perceptions, with space is boundless, to attain to the sphere of space This is the fourth direction. Overcoming all the sphere of space, with consciousness is boundless, to attain to the sphere of consciousness. This is the fifth direction. Overcoming all the sphere of consciousness, with there is nothing to attain to the sphere of nothingness. This is the sixth direction. Overcoming all the sphere of nothingness to attain to neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh direction. Overcoming neither perceptions nor non-perceptions to attain the cessation of perceptions and feelings This is the eighth direction. Bhikkhus, the Thus Gone One, perfect and rightfully enlightened makes the man to be tamed, go in these eight directions. Bhikkhus, if it was said he is the incomparable tamer of those to be tamed, it was said on account of this.

The Blessed One said thus and those bhikkhus delighted in the words of the Blessed One.

Notes.

1. In matter to see matter ‘ruupii ruupaani passati.’ To see matter in matter is to be aware of whatever matters at one or the other of our six doors of mental contact. It’s for the purpose of cutting short our long journey in existences, by penetratingly seeing the unsatisfactory nature of existences. This is one of the methods to attain the paths and fruits.

2. With internal immaterial perception to see external matter ‘Ajjhatta.m aruupasa~n~nii bahiddhaa ruupaani passati.’ Here the yogi attains to an immaterial perception and then penetratingly sees the futility of existence and tries to attain the paths and fruits. The immaterial perceptions are attained to, by attaining to the jhaanas, or with the help of other meditation objects.

3. To be released in the pleasant end.’Subhan t’eva adhimutto hoti.’ To be released in the pleasant end is to be released in one or the other of the four divine abidings ‘brahmavihaaras.’ The fourth and the other releases are releases in the higher abidings. They all serve the same purpose of bringing release from unpleasantness.

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