AN 3.116 — Āneñja Sutta (Immovable States)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

115. Āneñja Sutta (Immovable States) Bhikkhus, these three persons are known to exist in the world. What three?

a. Here, Bhikkhus, a certain person, having overcome all perceptions and memories that have to do with form, having transcended the perception of sensory impingement or compactness, and gone beyond the confines of the physical world and of tangibility, along with the disappearance of perceptions dealing with sensory reflexive contact; and by no longer paying any attention to the multiplicity of unending perceptions, instead, remains fully aware of how “space is infinitely boundless,” as he enters upon and abides in the dimension of ‘Boundless Infinity of Space.’

But, on attaining that state, he becomes attached to it, craving for it to last, as he strives after it while looking for satisfaction in it. Thus, becoming infatuated and making much of it, without falling away from it, after death, he is reborn in the company of Devas within the realm of boundless space, who have a life span of twenty thousand world cycles or eons (kappas).

Now, in the case of an ordinary person, having lived and completed that life span by using up the merits of his divine birth, once his time expires there, he then goes to hell, or to the animal realm, or reappears among the afflicted and miserable ghosts.

In contrast, however, the disciples of The Blessed One, having also reappeared into that same realm of boundless space, and once having completed their life span in that divine realm, they attain final Nibbāna within that very same existence, before expiring and dying in that realm.

Bhikkhus, this is the difference and distinction that exists between the future rebirth destination of the instructed Noble Disciple, and that of the ordinary person.

b. Next, Bhikkhus, by having completely transcended and gone beyond the perception of space being infinitely boundless, and by experiencing and being fully aware of how “consciousness is boundlessly infinite,” he enters upon and abides in the dimension of ‘Boundless infinity of Consciousness.’

But, on attaining that state, he becomes attached to it, craving for it to last, as he strives after it while looking for satisfaction in it. Thus, on becoming infatuated and making much of it, without falling away from it, after death, he is reborn in the company of Devas within the realm of boundlessness of consciousness, who have a life span of forty thousand world cycles or eons (kappas).

Now, in the case of an ordinary person, having lived and completed that life span by using up the merits of his divine birth, once his time expires there, he then goes to hell, or to the animal realm, or reappears among the afflicted and miserable ghosts.

In contrast, however, the disciples of The Blessed One, having also reappeared into that same realm of boundless consciousness, and once having completed their life span in that divine realm, they attain final Nibbāna within that very same existence, before expiring and dying in that realm.

Bhikkhus, this is yet another difference and distinction that exists between the future rebirth destination of the instructed Noble Disciple, and that of the ordinary person.

c. Also, Bhikkhus, by having completely transcended and gone beyond the perception of consciousness being infinitely boundless, and by experiencing and being fully aware of how “there is only nothingness,” he enters upon and abides in the dimension of ‘Nothingness.’

But, on attaining that state, he becomes attached to it, craving for it to last, as he strives after it while looking for satisfaction in it. Thus, on becoming infatuated and making much of it, without falling away from it, after death, he is reborn in the company of Devas within the realm of nothingness, who have a life span of sixty thousand world cycles or eons (kappas).

Now, in the case of an ordinary person, having lived and completed that life span by using up the merits of his divine birth, once his time expires there, he then goes to hell, or to the animal realm, or reappears among the afflicted and miserable ghosts.

In contrast, however, the disciples of The Blessed One, having also reappeared into that same realm of nothingness, and once having completed their life span in that divine realm, they attain final Nibbāna within that very same existence, before expiring and dying in that realm.

Bhikkhus, this is yet another difference and distinction that exists between the future rebirth destination of the instructed Noble Disciple, and that of the ordinary person.

Bhikkhus, these are the three persons known to exist in the world.