AN 6.13 — AN 6:13 Means of Escape | Nissāraṇīya Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Means of Escape

Nissāraṇīya Sutta (AN 6:13)

“Monks, these six properties are means of escape. Which six?

“There is the case where a monk might say, ‘Although goodwill has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still ill will keeps overpowering my mind.’ He should be told, ‘Don’t say that. You shouldn’t speak in that way. Don’t misrepresent the Blessed One, for it’s not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn’t say that. It’s impossible, there is no way that—when goodwill has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an

awareness-release—ill will would still keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from ill will: goodwill as an awareness-release.'

"And further, there is the case where a monk might say, 'Although compassion has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still harmfulness keeps overpowering my mind.' He should be told, 'Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that—when compassion has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an awareness-release—harmfulness would still keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from harmfulness: compassion as an awareness-release.'

"And further, there is the case where a monk might say, 'Although empathetic joy has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still resentment keeps overpowering my mind.' He should be told, 'Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that—when empathetic joy has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an awareness-release—resentment would still keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from resentment: empathetic joy as an awareness-release.'

"And further, there is the case where a monk might say, 'Although equanimity has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still passion keeps overpowering my mind.' He should be told, 'Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that—when equanimity has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an awareness-release—passion would still keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from passion: equanimity as an awareness-release.'

"And further, there is the case where a monk might say, 'Although the signless1 has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken by me as my awareness-release, still my consciousness follows the drift of signs.' He should be told, 'Don't say that. You shouldn't speak in that way. Don't misrepresent the Blessed One, for it's not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn't say that. It's impossible, there is no way that—when the signless has been developed, pursued, handed the reins, taken as a basis, steadied, consolidated, and well-undertaken as an awareness-release—consciousness would follow the drift of signs. That possibility doesn't exist, for this is the escape from all signs: the signless as an awareness-release.'

“And further, there is the case where a monk might say, ‘Although “I am” is gone, and I do not assume that “I am this,” still the arrow of uncertainty & perplexity keeps overpowering my mind.’ He should be told, ‘Don’t say that. You shouldn’t speak in that way. Don’t misrepresent the Blessed One, for it’s not right to misrepresent the Blessed One, and the Blessed One wouldn’t say that. It’s impossible, there is no way that—when “I am” is gone, and “I am this” is not assumed—the arrow of uncertainty & perplexity would keep overpowering the mind. That possibility doesn’t exist, for this is the escape from the arrow of uncertainty & perplexity: the uprooting of the conceit, “I am”.’

“These, monks, are six properties that are means of escape.”

Note

1. Animitta: The signless or themeless concentration. See MN 121 and DN 16.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 138; SN 1:25; SN 42:8, AN 3:66; AN 4:200; AN 5:27; AN 5:200; AN 8:70; AN 9:7; AN 11:16; Khp 9; Iti 27; Iti 72–73