MN 148 — Six By Six

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/mn148/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Middle Discourses 148

Six By Six

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Mendicants, I shall teach you the Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And I shall reveal a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure, namely, the six sets of six. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"The six interior sense fields should be understood. The six exterior sense fields should be understood. The six classes of consciousness should be understood. The six classes of contact should be understood. The six classes of feeling should be understood. The six classes of craving should be understood.

'The six interior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are the sense fields of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. 'The six interior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the first set of six.

'The six exterior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are the sense fields of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. 'The six exterior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the second set of six.

'The six classes of consciousness should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. 'The six classes of consciousness should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the third set of six.

'The six classes of contact should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is

contact. Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. The meeting of the three is contact. Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. The meeting of the three is contact. Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. The meeting of the three is contact. Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. The meeting of the three is contact. Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. 'The six classes of contact should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the fourth set of six.

'The six classes of feeling should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. 'The six classes of feeling should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the fifth set of six.

'The six classes of craving should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. Ear consciousness … Nose consciousness … Tongue consciousness … Body consciousness … Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. 'The six classes of craving should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the sixth set of six.

If anyone says, 'the eye is self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of the eye is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that the eye is self. So the eye is not self.

If anyone says, 'sights are self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of sights is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that sights are self. So the eye is not self and sights are not self.

If anyone says, 'eye consciousness is self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of eye consciousness is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that eye consciousness is self. So the eye, sights, and eye consciousness are not self.

If anyone says, 'eye contact is self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of eye contact is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that eye contact is self. So the eye, sights, eye consciousness, and eye contact are not self.

If anyone says, ‘feeling is self,’ that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of feeling is evident, so it would follow that one’s self arises and vanishes. That’s why it’s not tenable to claim that feeling is self. So the eye, sights, eye consciousness, eye contact, and feeling are not self.

If anyone says, ‘craving is self,’ that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of craving is evident, so it would follow that one’s self arises and vanishes. That’s why it’s not tenable to claim that craving is self. So the eye, sights, eye consciousness, eye contact, feeling, and craving are not self.

If anyone says, ‘the ear is self’ … ‘the nose is self’ … ‘the tongue is self’ … ‘the body is self’ … ‘the mind is self,’ that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of the mind is evident, so it would follow that one’s self arises and vanishes. That’s why it’s not tenable to claim that the mind is self. So the mind is not self.

If anyone says, ‘ideas are self’ … ‘mind consciousness is self’ … ‘mind contact is self’ … ‘feeling is self’ … ‘craving is self,’ that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of craving is evident, so it would follow that one’s self arises and vanishes. That’s why it’s not tenable to claim that craving is self. So the mind, ideas, mind consciousness, mind contact, feeling, and craving are not self.

Now, mendicants, this is the practice that leads to the origin of substantial reality. You regard the eye like this: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self.’

You regard sights … eye consciousness … eye contact … feeling … craving like this: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self.’ You regard the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind … ideas … mind consciousness … mind contact … feeling … craving like this: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self.’

But this is the practice that leads to the cessation of substantial reality. You regard the eye like this: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’

You regard sights … eye consciousness … eye contact … feeling … craving like this: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’ You regard the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind like this: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’ You regard ideas … mind consciousness … mind contact … feeling … craving like this: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.’

Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for the arising of what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral. When you experience a pleasant feeling, if you approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it, the underlying tendency to greed underlies that. When you experience a painful feeling, if you sorrow and wail and lament, beating your breast and falling into confusion, the underlying tendency to aversion underlies that. When you experience a neutral feeling, if you don’t truly understand that feeling’s origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, the underlying tendency to ignorance underlies that. Mendicants, without giving up the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant feeling, without dispelling the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling, without eradicating ignorance in the case of neutral feeling, without giving up ignorance and

without giving rise to knowledge, it is quite impossible to make an end of suffering in this very life.

Ear consciousness … Nose consciousness … Tongue consciousness … Body consciousness … Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for the arising of what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral. When you experience a pleasant feeling, if you approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it, the underlying tendency to greed underlies that. When you experience a painful feeling, if you sorrow and wail and lament, beating your breast and falling into confusion, the underlying tendency to aversion underlies that. When you experience a neutral feeling, if you don't truly understand that feeling's origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, the underlying tendency to ignorance underlies that. Mendicants, without giving up the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant feeling, without dispelling the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling, without eradicating ignorance in the case of neutral feeling, without giving up ignorance and without giving rise to knowledge, it is quite impossible to make an end of suffering in this very life.

Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for the arising of what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral. When you experience a pleasant feeling, if you don't approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it, the underlying tendency to greed does not underlie that. When you experience a painful feeling, if you don't sorrow or wail or lament, beating your breast and falling into confusion, the underlying tendency to aversion does not underlie that. When you experience a neutral feeling, if you truly understand that feeling's origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, the underlying tendency to ignorance does not underlie that. Mendicants, after giving up the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant feeling, after dispelling the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling, after eradicating ignorance in the case of neutral feeling, after giving up ignorance and giving rise to knowledge, it's quite possible to make an end of suffering in this very life.

Ear consciousness …

Nose consciousness …

Tongue consciousness …

Body consciousness …

Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral. When you experience a pleasant feeling, if you don't approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it, the underlying tendency to greed does not underlie that. When you experience a painful feeling, if you don't sorrow or wail or lament, beating your breast and falling into confusion, the underlying tendency to aversion does not underlie that. When you experience a neutral feeling, if you truly understand that feeling's origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, the underlying tendency to ignorance does not underlie that. Mendicants, after giving up the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant feeling, after dispelling the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling, after

eradicating ignorance in the case of neutral feeling, after giving up ignorance and giving rise to knowledge, it's quite possible to make an end of suffering in this very life.

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with the eye, sights, eye consciousness, eye contact, feeling, and craving.

They grow disillusioned with the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind, ideas, mind consciousness, mind contact, feeling, and craving. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they're freed. When it is freed, they know it is freed.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'"

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. And while this discourse was being spoken, the minds of sixty mendicants were freed from defilements by not grasping.