MN 148 — MN 148 The Six Sextets | Chachakka Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

The Six Sextets

Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Monastery. There he addressed the monks: “Monks!”

“Yes, lord,” the monks responded to him.

“Monks, I will teach you the Dhamma admirable in the beginning, admirable in the middle, admirable in the end; I will expound the holy life both in its particulars & in its essence, entirely complete, surpassingly pure—in other words, the six sextets. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, lord,” the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said: “The six internal media should be known. The six external media should be known. The six classes of consciousness should be known. The six classes of contact should be known. The six classes of feeling should be known. The six classes of craving should be known.

“‘The six internal media should be known.’ Thus it was said. In reference to what was it said? The eye-medium, the ear-medium, the nose-medium, the tongue-medium, the body-medium, the intellect-medium. ‘The six internal media should be known.’ Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said. This is the first sextet.

“‘The six external media should be known.’ Thus it was said. In reference to what was it said? The form-medium, the sound-medium, the aroma-medium, the flavor-medium, the tactile sensation-medium, the idea-medium. ‘The six external media should be known.’ Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said. This is the second sextet.

“‘The six classes of consciousness should be known.’ Thus it was said. In reference to what was it said? Dependent on the eye & forms there arises consciousness at the eye. Dependent on the ear & sounds there arises consciousness at the ear. Dependent on the nose & aromas there arises consciousness at the nose. Dependent on the tongue & flavors there arises consciousness at the tongue. Dependent on the body & tactile sensations there arises consciousness at the body. Dependent on the intellect & ideas there arises consciousness at the intellect. ‘The six classes of consciousness should be known.’ Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said. This is the third sextet.

“‘The six classes of contact should be known.’ Thus it was said. In reference to what was it said? Dependent on the eye & forms there arises consciousness at the eye. The meeting of the three is contact. Dependent on the ear & sounds there arises consciousness at the ear. The meeting of the three is contact. Dependent on the nose & aromas there arises consciousness at the nose. The meeting of the three is contact. Dependent on the tongue & flavors there arises consciousness at the tongue. The meeting of the three is contact. Dependent on the body & tactile sensations there arises consciousness at the body. The meeting of the three is contact. Dependent on the intellect & ideas there arises consciousness at the intellect. The meeting of the three is contact. ‘The six classes of contact should be known.’ Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said. This is the fourth sextet.

“‘The six classes of feeling should be known.’ Thus it was said. In reference to what was it said? Dependent on the eye & forms there arises consciousness at the eye. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. Dependent on the ear & sounds there arises consciousness at the ear. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. Dependent on the nose & aromas there arises consciousness at the nose. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. Dependent on the tongue & flavors there arises consciousness at the tongue. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a

requisite condition there is feeling. Dependent on the body & tactile sensations there arises consciousness at the body. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. Dependent on the intellect & ideas there arises consciousness at the intellect. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. 'The six classes of feeling should be known.' Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said. This is the fifth sextet.

"'The six classes of craving should be known.' Thus it was said. In reference to what was it said? Dependent on the eye & forms there arises consciousness at the eye. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. With feeling as a requisite condition there is craving. Dependent on the ear & sounds there arises consciousness at the ear. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. With feeling as a requisite condition there is craving. Dependent on the nose & aromas there arises consciousness at the nose. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. With feeling as a requisite condition there is craving. Dependent on the tongue & flavors there arises consciousness at the tongue. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. With feeling as a requisite condition there is craving. Dependent on the body & tactile sensations there arises consciousness at the body. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. With feeling as a requisite condition there is craving. Dependent on the intellect & ideas there arises consciousness at the intellect. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition there is feeling. With feeling as a requisite condition there is craving. 'The six classes of craving should be known.' Thus it was said. And in reference to this was it said. This is the sixth sextet.

"If anyone were to say, 'The eye is the self,' that wouldn't be tenable. The arising & falling away of the eye are discerned. And when its arising & falling away are discerned, it would follow that 'My self arises & falls away.' That's why it wouldn't be tenable if anyone were to say, 'The eye is the self.' So the eye is not-self.1 If anyone were to say, 'Forms are the self,' that wouldn't be tenable.... Thus the eye is not-self and forms are not-self. If anyone were to say, 'Consciousness at the eye is the self,' that wouldn't be tenable.... Thus the eye is not-self, forms are not-self, consciousness at the eye is not-self. If anyone were to say, 'Contact at the eye is the self,' that wouldn't be tenable.... Thus the eye is not-self, forms are not-self, consciousness at the eye is not-self, contact at the eye is not-self. If anyone were to say, 'Feeling is the self,' that wouldn't be tenable.... Thus the eye is not-self, forms are not-self, consciousness at the eye is not-self, contact at the eye is not-self, feeling is not self. If anyone were to say, 'Craving is the self,' that wouldn't be tenable. The arising & falling away of craving are discerned. And when its arising & falling away are discerned, it would follow that 'My self arises & falls away.' That's why it wouldn't be tenable if anyone were to say, 'Craving is the self.' Thus the eye is not-self, forms are not-self, consciousness at the eye is not-self, contact at the eye is not-self, feeling is not self, craving is not-self.

"If anyone were to say, 'The ear is the self,' that wouldn't be tenable....

"If anyone were to say, 'The nose is the self,' that wouldn't be tenable....

“If anyone were to say, ‘The tongue is the self,’ that wouldn’t be tenable….

“If anyone were to say, ‘The body is the self,’ that wouldn’t be tenable….

“If anyone were to say, ‘The intellect is the self,’ that wouldn’t be tenable. The arising & falling away of the intellect are discerned. And when its arising & falling away are discerned, it would follow that ‘My self arises & falls away.’ That’s why it wouldn’t be tenable if anyone were to say, ‘The intellect is the self.’ So the intellect is not-self. If anyone were to say, ‘Ideas are the self,’ that wouldn’t be tenable…. Thus the intellect is not-self and ideas are not-self. If anyone were to say, ‘Consciousness at the intellect is the self,’ that wouldn’t be tenable…. Thus the intellect is not-self, ideas are not-self, consciousness at the intellect is not-self. If anyone were to say, ‘Contact at the intellect is the self,’ that wouldn’t be tenable…. Thus the intellect is not-self, ideas are not-self, consciousness at the intellect is not-self, contact at the intellect is not-self. If anyone were to say, ‘Feeling is the self,’ that wouldn’t be tenable…. Thus the intellect is not-self, ideas are not-self, consciousness at the intellect is not-self, contact at the intellect is not-self, feeling is not self. If anyone were to say, ‘Craving is the self,’ that wouldn’t be tenable. The arising & falling away of craving are discerned. And when its arising & falling away are discerned, it would follow that ‘My self arises & falls away.’ That’s why it wouldn’t be tenable if anyone were to say, ‘Craving is the self.’ Thus the intellect is not-self, ideas are not-self, consciousness at the intellect is not-self, contact at the intellect is not-self, feeling is not self, craving is not-self.

“This, monks, is the path of practice leading to self-identification. One assumes about the eye that ‘This is me, this is my self, this is what I am.’ One assumes about forms…. One assumes about consciousness at the eye…. One assumes about contact at the eye…. One assumes about feeling…. One assumes about craving that ‘This is me, this is my self, this is what I am.’

“One assumes about the ear….

“One assumes about the nose….

“One assumes about the tongue….

“One assumes about the body….

“One assumes about the intellect that ‘This is me, this is my self, this is what I am.’ One assumes about ideas…. One assumes about consciousness at the intellect…. One assumes about contact at the intellect…. One assumes about feeling…. One assumes about craving that ‘This is me, this is my self, this is what I am.’

“Now, this is the path of practice leading to the cessation of self-identification. One assumes about the eye that ‘This is not me, this is not my self, this is not what I am.’ One assumes about forms…. One assumes about consciousness at the eye…. One assumes about contact at the eye…. One assumes about feeling…. One assumes about craving that ‘This is not me, this is not my self, this is not what I am.’

“One assumes about the ear….

“One assumes about the nose….

“One assumes about the tongue….

“One assumes about the body….

“One assumes about the intellect that ‘This is not me, this is not my self, this is not what I am.’ One assumes about ideas…. One assumes about consciousness at the intellect…. One assumes about contact at the intellect…. One assumes about feeling…. One assumes about craving that ‘This is not me, this is not my self, this is not what I am.’

“Dependent on the eye & forms there arises consciousness at the eye. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there arises what is felt either as pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain. If, when touched by a feeling of pleasure, one relishes it, welcomes it, or remains fastened to it, then one’s passion-obsession gets obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of pain, one sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats one’s breast, becomes distraught, then one’s resistance-obsession gets obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, one does not discern, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling, then one’s ignorance-obsession gets obsessed. That a person—without abandoning passion-obsession with regard to a feeling of pleasure, without abolishing resistance-obsession with regard to a feeling of pain, without uprooting ignorance-obsession with regard to a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, without abandoning ignorance and giving rise to clear knowing—would put an end to suffering & stress in the here & now: Such a thing isn’t possible.

“Dependent on the ear & sounds….

“Dependent on the nose & aromas….

“Dependent on the tongue & flavors….

“Dependent on the body & tactile sensations….

“Dependent on the intellect & ideas there arises consciousness at the intellect. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there arises what is felt either as pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain. If, when touched by a feeling of pleasure, one relishes it, welcomes it, or remains fastened to it, then one’s passion-obsession gets obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of pain, one sorrows, grieves, & laments, beats one’s breast, becomes distraught, then one’s resistance-obsession gets obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, one does not discern, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, or escape from that feeling, then one’s ignorance-obsession gets obsessed. That a person—without abandoning passion-obsession with regard to a feeling of

pleasure, without abolishing resistance-obsession with regard to a feeling of pain, without uprooting ignorance-obsession with regard to a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, without abandoning ignorance and giving rise to clear knowing—would put an end to suffering & stress in the here & now: Such a thing isn't possible.

"Dependent on the eye & forms there arises consciousness at the eye. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there arises what is felt either as pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain. If, when touched by a feeling of pleasure, one does not relish it, welcome it, or remain fastened to it, then one's passion-obsession doesn't get obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of pain, one does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, beat one's breast or become distraught, then one's resistance-obsession doesn't get obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, one discerns, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, & escape from that feeling, then one's ignorance-obsession doesn't get obsessed. That a person—through abandoning passion-obsession with regard to a feeling of pleasure, through abolishing resistance-obsession with regard to a feeling of pain, through uprooting ignorance-obsession with regard to a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, through abandoning ignorance and giving rise to clear knowing—would put an end to suffering & stress in the here & now: Such a thing is possible.

"Dependent on the ear & sounds....

"Dependent on the nose & aromas....

"Dependent on the tongue & flavors....

"Dependent on the body & tactile sensations....

"Dependent on the intellect & ideas there arises consciousness at the intellect. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there arises what is felt either as pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain. If, when touched by a feeling of pleasure, one does not relish it, welcome it, or remain fastened to it, then one's passion-obsession does not get obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of pain, one does not sorrow, grieve, or lament, beat one's breast or become distraught, then one's resistance-obsession does not get obsessed. If, when touched by a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, one discerns, as it has come to be, the origination, passing away, allure, drawback, & escape from that feeling, then one's ignorance-obsession does not get obsessed. That a person—through abandoning passion-obsession with regard to a feeling of pleasure, through abolishing resistance-obsession with regard to a feeling of pain, through uprooting ignorance-obsession with regard to a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, through abandoning ignorance and giving rise to clear knowing—would put an end to suffering & stress in the here & now: Such a thing is possible.

"Seeing thus, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with the eye, disenchanted with forms, disenchanted with consciousness at the eye, disenchanted with contact at the eye, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with craving.

“He grows disenchanted with the ear…

“He grows disenchanted with the nose…

“He grows disenchanted with the tongue…

“He grows disenchanted with the body…

“He grows disenchanted with the intellect, disenchanted with ideas, disenchanted with consciousness at the intellect, disenchanted with contact at the intellect, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with craving. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted at his words. And while this explanation was being given, the hearts of sixty-some monks, through lack of clinging/sustenance, were released from effluents.

note

1. The reasoning here appears to be that nothing can discern itself arising and passing away, so if one can discern x arising and passing away, one cannot be identical with x. So x cannot be one’s self.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: DN 15; MN 18; MN 44; SN 22:56; SN 35:23; SN 35:191