MN 149 — MN 149 The Great Six Sense-Media Discourse | Mahā Saḷāyatanika Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/MN/MN149.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

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Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

The Great Six Sense-Media Discourse

Mahā Saḷāyatanika Sutta (MN 149)

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 great six sense-media (discourse). Listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

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

The Blessed One said: “Not knowing, not seeing the eye as it has come to be; not knowing, not seeing forms… consciousness at the eye… contact at the eye as they have come to be; not knowing, not seeing whatever arises conditioned through contact at the eye—experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—as it has come to be, one is infatuated with the eye… forms… consciousness at the eye… contact at the eye… whatever arises conditioned by contact at the eye and is experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

“For him—infatuated, attached, confused, not remaining focused on their drawbacks—the five clinging-aggregates head toward future accumulation. The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—grows within him. His bodily disturbances & mental disturbances grow. His bodily torments & mental torments grow. His bodily distresses & mental distresses grow. He is sensitive both to bodily stress & mental stress.

“Not knowing, not seeing the ear…. Not knowing, not seeing the nose…. Not knowing, not seeing the tongue…. Not knowing, not seeing the body….

“Not knowing, not seeing the intellect as it has come to be; not knowing, not seeing ideas… consciousness at the intellect… contact at the intellect as they have come to be; not knowing, not seeing whatever arises conditioned through intellect-contact—experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—as it has come to be, one is infatuated with the intellect… ideas… consciousness at the intellect… contact at the intellect… whatever arises conditioned by contact at the intellect and is experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

“For him—infatuated, attached, confused, not remaining focused on their drawbacks—the five clinging-aggregates head toward future accumulation. The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—grows within him. His bodily disturbances & mental disturbances grow. His bodily torments & mental torments grow. His bodily distresses & mental distresses grow. He is sensitive both to bodily stress & mental stress.

“However, knowing & seeing the eye as it has come to be, knowing & seeing forms… consciousness at the eye… contact at the eye as they have come to be, knowing & seeing whatever arises conditioned through contact at the eye—experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—as it has come to be, one is not infatuated with the eye… forms… consciousness at the eye… contact at the eye… whatever arises conditioned by contact at the eye and is experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

“For him—uninfatuated, unattached, unconfused, remaining focused on their drawbacks—the five clinging-aggregates head toward future diminution. The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—is abandoned by him. His bodily disturbances & mental disturbances are

abandoned. His bodily torments & mental torments are abandoned. His bodily distresses & mental distresses are abandoned. He is sensitive both to ease of body & ease of awareness.

“Any view belonging to one who has come to be like this is his right view. Any resolve, his right resolve. Any effort, his right effort. Any mindfulness, his right mindfulness. Any concentration, his right concentration: just as earlier his actions, speech, & livelihood were already well-purified. Thus for him, having thus developed the noble eightfold path, the four establishings of mindfulness go to the culmination of their development. The four right exertions… the four bases of power… the five faculties… the five strengths… the seven factors for awakening go to the culmination of their development.1 (And) for him these two qualities occur in tandem: tranquility & insight.

“He comprehends through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be comprehended through direct knowledge, abandons through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be abandoned through direct knowledge, develops through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be developed through direct knowledge, and realizes through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be realized through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be comprehended through direct knowledge? ‘The five clinging-aggregates,’ should be the reply. Which five? The form clinging-aggregate, the feeling clinging-aggregate, the perception clinging-aggregate, the fabrications clinging-aggregate, the consciousness clinging-aggregate: These are the qualities that are to be comprehended through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be abandoned through direct knowledge? Ignorance & craving for becoming: These are the qualities that are to be abandoned through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be developed through direct knowledge? Tranquility & insight: these are the qualities that are to be developed through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be realized through direct knowledge? Clear knowing & release: These are the qualities that are to be realized through direct knowledge.2

“Knowing & seeing the ear….

“Knowing & seeing the nose….

“Knowing & seeing the tongue….

“Knowing & seeing the body….

“Knowing & seeing the intellect as it has come to be, knowing & seeing ideas… consciousness at the intellect… contact at the intellect as they have come to be, knowing & seeing whatever arises conditioned through contact at the intellect—experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain—as it has come to be, one is not infatuated

with the intellect… ideas… consciousness at the intellect… contact at the intellect… whatever arises conditioned by contact at the intellect and is experienced as pleasure, pain, or neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

“For him—uninfatuated, unattached, unconfused, remaining focused on their drawbacks—the five clinging-aggregates head toward future diminution. The craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—is abandoned by him. His bodily disturbances & mental disturbances are abandoned. His bodily torments & mental torments are abandoned. His bodily distresses & mental distresses are abandoned. He is sensitive both to ease of body & ease of awareness.

“Any view belonging to one who has come to be like this is his right view. Any resolve, his right resolve. Any effort, his right effort. Any mindfulness, his right mindfulness. Any concentration, his right concentration: just as earlier his actions, speech, & livelihood were already well-purified. Thus for him, having thus developed the noble eightfold path, the four establishings of mindfulness go to the culmination of their development. The four right exertions… the four bases of power… the five faculties… the five strengths… the seven factors for awakening go to the culmination of their development. (And) for him these two qualities occur in tandem: tranquility & insight.

“He comprehends through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be comprehended through direct knowledge, abandons through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be abandoned through direct knowledge, develops through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be developed through direct knowledge, and realizes through direct knowledge whatever qualities are to be realized through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be comprehended through direct knowledge? ‘The five clinging-aggregates,’ should be the reply. Which five? The form clinging-aggregate, the feeling clinging-aggregate, the perception clinging-aggregate, the fabrications clinging-aggregate, the consciousness clinging-aggregate: These are the qualities that are to be comprehended through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be abandoned through direct knowledge? Ignorance & craving for becoming: These are the qualities that are to be abandoned through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be developed through direct knowledge? Tranquility & insight: these are the qualities that are to be developed through direct knowledge.

“And which qualities are to be realized through direct knowledge? Clear knowing & release: these are the qualities that are to be realized through direct knowledge.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Notes

1. The four establishings of mindfulness, the four right exertions, the four bases of power, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors for awakening, and the noble eightfold path are termed the Wings to awakening (bodhi-pakkhiya-dhamma). DN 16 reports that toward the end of his life, the Buddha recommended these qualities as the essence of his teaching. See The Wings to awakening for more details.

2. The duties outlined in this section parallel the duties appropriate to the four noble truths, as outlined in the “wheel” of the Buddha’s first sermon. See SN 56:11.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 22:23; SN 35:204; SN 38:14; AN 2:29; AN 4:41; AN 4:94; AN 4:170