

SN 22.102
Saṃyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Khandhavagga Saṃyutta
(Group of Connected Discourses on The Aggregates)
Khandha Saṃyutta
(Connected Discourses on The Aggregates)
Puppha Vagga
(The Section on the Flowers)

Anicca Saññā Sutta
“Perception of Impermanence”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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Once, while in Sāvatti, The Blessed One addressed the Bhikkhus and said:

“Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘*I am*’, from its very roots.

a. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how during the autumn season, the farmer ceaselessly ploughs his farmland clean from all the leftover root systems from the previous harvest, along with all the shrubs that had grown, as he cuts through them, ploughs, and even pulls them by hand, one by one, if necessary.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘*I am*’, from its very roots.

b. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how when the farmer cuts the cattail reeds, he grabs them by their heads and shakes them up and down, quivering the reeds this way and that, as he collects from them what he needs.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘*I am*’, from its very roots.

c. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how when the farmer cuts the cattail reeds, he grabs them by their heads and shakes them up and down, thrashing them this way and that, as he collects from them whatever it is that he needs, while discarding all the rest.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘*I am*’, from its very roots.

d. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how when the farmer approaches a mango tree and cuts down a branch that has on it a cluster of mangoes, and by grabbing that branch itself, he will know that he is also holding the entire cluster of mangoes altogether, seeing that they are all attached to that branch.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘*I am*’, from its very roots.

e. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how the beams supporting the structure of a peaked roof are all built and arranged in such a way so as to maintain the stability of the roof, which makes it their main point of focus, where those supporting beams all lean and incline towards, and converge at the peaked roof.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘*I am*’, from its very roots.

f. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how among all fragrant roots that are used to produce the most valuable of perfumes and fragrances, the *kālānusāri* ‘orris root’ is considered the very best and the most exquisite among them.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual

pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit '*I am*', from its very roots.

g. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how among all trees that produce fragrant heartwood, used to produce the most valuable of perfumes and fragrances, the red sandalwood is considered the very best and the most exquisite among them.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit '*I am*', from its very roots.

h. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how among all fragrant flowers that are used to produce the most valuable of perfumes and fragrances, the white plumeria is considered the very best and the most exquisite among them.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit '*I am*', from its very roots.

i. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how every one of the many kings, princes and stewards ruling under the Kingship of The Universal Wheel-Turning Monarch, considers The Universal Wheel-Turning Monarch to be their chief, their almighty overlord, and the very best among them.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit '*I am*', from its very roots.

j. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how despite their luminescence, all the stars seen in the night sky cannot make up even one sixteenth the brilliance of the Moon in its radiance, for the radiant Moon is truly considered to be the very best and the most exquisite among them.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit '*I am*', from its very roots.

k. “Imagine, Bhikkhus, how right after the Monsoon rainy season is over, and there is finally the clear blue sky above, the Sun rises again, unobstructed by any clouds, dispelling the darkness all around, shining and blazing away, radiating its life-giving warmth throughout.

“In just the same manner, Bhikkhus, when the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, then it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘I am’, from its very roots.

“And how exactly, Bhikkhus, is the perception of impermanence continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, where if it is properly developed, as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘I am’, from its very roots?

“In witnessing form, one knows and understands:

‘This is form; this is how form begins and gets instigated; and this is how form comes to its end, as it disappears.’

“In witnessing feeling, one knows and understands:

‘This is feeling; this is how feeling begins and gets instigated; and this is how feeling comes to its end, as it disappears.’

“In witnessing perceptions, one knows and understands:

‘These are perceptions; this is how perceptions begin and get instigated; and this is how perceptions come to their end, as they disappear.’

“In witnessing habitual drives, one knows and understands:

‘These are habitual drives; this is how habitual drives begin and get instigated; and this is how habitual drives come to their end, as they disappear.’

“In witnessing consciousness, one knows and understands:

‘This is consciousness; this is how consciousness begins by finding its origin, and this is how consciousness comes to its end, as it disappears.’

“In this manner, Bhikkhus, the perception of impermanence is continuously brought to one’s awareness and reminded of again and again, as it becomes properly developed, whereby as a result, it destroys all desires or longing for the experiencing of sensual pleasures; it destroys all desires or longing for further rebecoming; and it puts an end to and destroys all ignorance, while also eradicating the conceit ‘I am’, from its very roots.”

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