SN 22.57 — Sattatthana Sutta: Seven Bases

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.057.than.html

Source revision: sha256:7c411108530c04aafcca0ac43267ed12227cbb2653320e8ae0bb686e566bb783

License: CC-BY-NC-4.0 — https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

License URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Copyright: ©1997 Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

License notice: The text of this page ("Sattatthana Sutta: Seven Bases", by Thanissaro Bhikkhu) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of the license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. Documents linked from this page may be subject to other restrictions.

Attribution: ©1997 Thanissaro Bhikkhu. The text of this page ("Sattatthana Sutta: Seven Bases", by Thanissaro Bhikkhu) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of the license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. Documents linked from this page may be subject to other restrictions. Transcribed from a file provided by the translator. Last revised for Access to Insight on 30 November 2013. How to cite this document (a suggested style): "Sattatthana Sutta: Seven Bases" (SN 22.57), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.057.than.html .

Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

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

Translator's note: The term "seven bases" here can also mean the seven notes of the musical scale; and it is possible that the phrase "three modes of investigation" may also be borrowed from musical theory: it may refer to three ways of testing a musical scale once it has been tuned. Thus in this discourse the Buddha may be borrowing terms commonly used to describe a consummate musician and applying them to his description of a consummate meditator.

The Commentary, for its part, singles out this discourse as being one that entices a serious meditator to practice.

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Monastery. There he addressed the monks, "Monks!"

"Yes, lord," the monks replied to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said: "Monks, a monk who is skilled in seven bases and has three modes of investigation is fulfilled & fully accomplished in this doctrine & discipline — the ultimate person.

"And how is a monk skilled in seven bases? There is the case where a monk discerns form, the origination of form, the cessation of form, the path of practice leading to the cessation of form. He discerns the allure of form, the drawback of form, and the escape from form.

"He discerns feeling... He discerns perception... He discerns fabrications...

"He discerns consciousness, the origination of consciousness, the cessation of consciousness, the path of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness. He discerns the allure of consciousness, the drawback of consciousness, and the escape from consciousness.

"And what is form? The four great existents [the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, & the wind property] and the form derived from them: this is called form. From the origination of nutriment comes the origination of form. From the cessation of nutriment comes the cessation of form. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of form, i.e., right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. The fact that pleasure & happiness arises in dependence on form: that is the allure of form. The fact that form is inconstant, stressful, subject to change: that is the drawback of form. The subduing of desire & passion for form, the abandoning of desire & passion for form: that is the escape from form.

"For any brahmans or contemplatives who by directly knowing form in this way, directly knowing the origination of form in this way, directly knowing the cessation of form in this way, directly knowing the path of practice leading to the cessation of form in this way, directly knowing the allure of form in this way, directly knowing the drawback of form in this way, directly knowing the escape from form in this way, are practicing for disenchantment — dispassion — cessation with regard to form, they are practicing rightly. Those who are practicing rightly are firmly based in this doctrine & discipline. And any brahmans or contemplatives who by directly knowing form in this way, directly knowing the origination of form in this way, directly knowing the cessation of form in this way, directly knowing the path of practice leading to the cessation of form in this way, directly knowing the allure of form in this way, directly knowing the drawback of form in this way, directly knowing the escape from form in this way, are — from disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, lack of clinging/sustenance with regard to form — released, they are well-released. Those who are well-released are fully accomplished. And with those who are fully accomplished, there is no cycle for the sake of describing them.

"And what is feeling? These six bodies of feeling — feeling born of eye-contact, feeling born of ear-contact, feeling born of nose-contact, feeling born of tongue-contact, feeling born of body-contact, feeling born of intellect-contact: this is called feeling. From the origination of contact comes the origination of feeling. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of feeling... The fact that pleasure & happiness arises in dependence on feeling: that is the allure of feeling. The fact that feeling is inconstant, stressful, subject to change: that is the drawback of feeling. The subduing of desire &

passion for feeling, the abandoning of desire & passion for feeling: that is the escape from feeling...

"And what is perception? These six classes of perception — perception of form, perception of sound, perception of smell, perception of taste, perception of tactile sensation, perception of ideas: this is called perception. From the origination of contact comes the origination of perception. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of perception. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of perception... The fact that pleasure & happiness arises in dependence on perception: that is the allure of perception. The fact that perception is inconstant, stressful, subject to change: that is the drawback of perception. The subduing of desire & passion for perception, the abandoning of desire & passion for perception: that is the escape from perception...

"And what are fabrications? These six classes of intention — intention with regard to form, intention with regard to sound, intention with regard to smell, intention with regard to taste, intention with regard to tactile sensation, intention with regard to ideas: these are called fabrications. From the origination of contact comes the origination of fabrications. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of fabrications. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of fabrications... The fact that pleasure & happiness arises in dependence on fabrications: that is the allure of fabrications. The fact that fabrications are inconstant, stressful, subject to change: that is the drawback of fabrications. The subduing of desire & passion for fabrications, the abandoning of desire & passion for fabrications: that is the escape from fabrications...

"And what is consciousness? These six classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, intellect-consciousness. This is called consciousness. From the origination of name-&-form comes the origination of consciousness. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of consciousness. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness, i.e., right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. The fact that pleasure & happiness arises in dependence on consciousness: that is the allure of consciousness. The fact that consciousness is inconstant, stressful, subject to change: that is the drawback of consciousness. The subduing of desire & passion for consciousness, the abandoning of desire & passion for consciousness: that is the escape from consciousness.

"For any brahmans or contemplatives who by directly knowing consciousness in this way, directly knowing the origination of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the cessation of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the path of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the allure of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the drawback of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the escape from consciousness in this way, are practicing for disenchantment — dispassion — cessation with regard to consciousness, they are practicing rightly. Those who are practicing rightly are firmly based in this doctrine & discipline. And any brahmans or contemplatives who by directly knowing consciousness in this way, directly knowing the

origination of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the cessation of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the path of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the allure of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the drawback of consciousness in this way, directly knowing the escape from consciousness in this way, are — from disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, lack of clinging/sustenance with regard to consciousness — released, they are well-released. Those who are well-released are fully accomplished. And with those who are fully accomplished, there is no cycle for the sake of describing them.

"This is how a monk is skilled in seven bases.

"And how does a monk have three modes of investigation? There is the case where a monk investigates in terms of properties, investigates in terms of sense spheres, investigates in terms of dependent co-arising. This is how a monk has three modes of investigation.

"A monk who is skilled in seven bases and has three modes of investigation is fulfilled and fully accomplished in this doctrine & discipline — the ultimate person."