SN 22.57 — SN 22:57 Seven Bases | Sattaṭṭhāna Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN22_57.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

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: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017

License notice: Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

Attribution: From Handful of Leaves, Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu; https://www.dhammatalks.org/Archive/Writings/Ebooks/SuttaPitaka_251113.epub. Copyright 2014 Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, Revised edition 2017 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported. To see a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/. “Commercial” shall mean any sale, whether for commercial or non-profit purposes or entities. Questions about this book may be addressed to Metta Forest Monastery Valley Center, CA 92082-1409 U.S.A. Additional resources More Dhamma talks, books and translations by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu are available to download in digital audio and various ebook formats at dhammatalks.org. Printed copy A paperback copy of this book is available free of charge. To request one, write to: Book Request, Metta Forest Monastery, PO Box 1409, Valley Center, CA 92082 USA.

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

Seven Bases

Sattaṭṭhāna Sutta (SN 22:57)

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 seems to be borrowing terms commonly used to describe a consummate musician and applying them to his description of a consummate meditator.

The Commentary singles out this discourse as one that entices a serious meditator to practice.

* * *

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.

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 Dhamma & Vinaya—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.1 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 arise 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 contemplatives or brahmans 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 Dhamma & Vinaya. And any contemplatives or brahmans 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 arise 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 bodies 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 arise 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 bodies 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 arise 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 bodies 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 arise 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 contemplatives or brahmans 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 Dhamma & Vinaya. And any contemplatives or brahmans 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 media, 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 Dhamma & Vinaya—the ultimate person.”

Note

1. For an alternative description of the origination of this and the other aggregates, see SN 22:5.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: AN 4:94; AN 6:55