

SN 35.228
Saṃyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta
Connected Discourses On Feelings
Samudda Vagga
The Section on the Ocean

Paṭhama Samudda Sutta
“Simile of the Ocean – Part 1”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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“Bhikkhus, the putujjana or the undisciplined and dense person keeps on saying:

‘The ocean...the ocean!’ as he gazes upon the vast ocean.

“However, Bhikkhus, according to the Noble One’s Discipline, that is *not* what is to be understood as ‘the ocean,’ for that is merely a great body of water, simply a large body of water.

1. “Instead, it is the *eye*, Bhikkhus, that is to be seen and understood as truly ‘the ocean’ for the person; meanwhile, its forcefully rippling waves happen to be the countless visible forms and sights, which the eye sees!

“Now, know this Bhikkhus!

“Whoever is able to withstand those endless currents of powerful waves of visible forms, while coming out unscathed from all the sights the eye sees, is the *only* one, who is declared to have truly traversed ‘the eye ocean!’ He is the one, indeed, who has faced and endured its turbulent waves and menacing undercurrents, its whirlpools, its many sharks and other dangerous animals, as well as its demons.

“Thus, having crossed over, the Brahmin stands on dry land, on the farther shore.

2. “Further, Bhikkhus, it is the *ear*, that is to be seen and understood as truly ‘the ocean’ for the person; meanwhile, its forcefully rippling waves happen to be the countless audible sounds, which the ear hears!

“Now, know this Bhikkhus!

“Whoever is able to withstand those endless currents of powerful waves of audible sounds, while coming out unscathed from all the sounds the ear hears, is the *only* one, who is declared to have truly traversed ‘the ear ocean!’ He is the one, indeed, who has faced and endured its turbulent waves and menacing undercurrents, its whirlpools, its many sharks, and other dangerous animals, as well as its demons.

“Thus, having crossed over, the Brahmin stands on dry land, on the farther shore.

3. “Further, Bhikkhus, it is the *nose*, that is to be seen and understood as truly ‘the ocean’ for the person; meanwhile, its forcefully rippling waves happen to be the countless odors, which the nose smells!

“Now, know this Bhikkhus!

“Whoever is able to withstand those endless currents of powerful waves of odors and fragrances, while coming out unscathed from all the odors the nose smells, is the *only* one, who is declared to have truly traversed ‘the nose ocean!’ He is the one, indeed, who has faced and endured its turbulent waves and menacing undercurrents, its whirlpools, its many sharks and other dangerous animals, as well as its demons.

“Thus, having crossed over, the Brahmin stands on dry land, on the farther shore.

4. “Further, Bhikkhus, it is the *tongue*, that is to be seen and understood as truly ‘the ocean’ for the person; meanwhile, its forcefully rippling waves happen to be the countless flavors, which the tongue tastes!

“Now, know this Bhikkhus!

“Whoever is able to withstand those endless currents of powerful waves of flavors and tastes, while coming out unscathed from all the flavors the tongue tastes, is the *only* one, who is declared to have truly traversed ‘the tongue ocean!’ He is the one, indeed, who has faced and endured its turbulent waves and menacing undercurrents, its whirlpools, its many sharks and other dangerous animals, as well as its demons.

“Thus, having crossed over, the Brahmin stands on dry land, on the farther shore.

5. “Further, Bhikkhus, it is the *body*, that is to be seen and understood as truly ‘the ocean’ for the person; meanwhile, its forcefully rippling waves happen to be the countless tactile objects, which the body touches!

“Now, know this Bhikkhus!

“Whoever is able to withstand those endless currents of powerful waves of tactile objects, while coming out unscathed from all the tactile objects the body touches, is the *only* one, who is declared to have truly traversed ‘the body ocean!’ He is the one, indeed, who has faced and endured its turbulent waves and menacing undercurrents, its whirlpools, its many sharks and other dangerous animals, as well as its demons.

“Thus, having crossed over, the Brahmin stands on dry land, on the farther shore.

6. “Further, Bhikkhus, it is the *mind*, that is to be seen and understood as truly ‘the ocean’ for the person; meanwhile, its forcefully rippling waves happen to be the countless mind objects and thoughts, which the mind thinks about and cognizes!

“Now, know this Bhikkhus!

“Whoever is able to withstand those endless currents of powerful waves of mind objects, while coming out unscathed from all the thoughts and perceptions the mind cognizes and processes, is the *only* one, who is declared to have truly traversed ‘the mind ocean!’ He is the one, indeed, who has faced and endured its turbulent waves and menacing undercurrents, its whirlpools, its many sharks and other dangerous animals, as well as its demons.

“Thus, having crossed over, the Brahmin stands on dry land, on the farther shore.”

This is what The Blessed One said.

Then, having uttered those words, The Sugata, The Fortunate One, The Great Teacher, spoke these verses:

*‘The One who has traversed the vast ocean, so hard to cross,
Navigating through its menacing currents, whirlpools, and forceful waves,
Its countless dangerous animals and sharks, and demons too;
The true master of knowledge completing the goal of the Holy Life,
Reaches the world’s end,
And is thus recognized as
The one who has gone beyond, indeed.’*

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