SN 41.7 — SN 41:7 To Godatta (On Awareness-release) | Godatta Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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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

To Godatta (On Awareness-release)

Godatta Sutta (SN 41:7)

On one occasion Ven. Godatta was staying near Macchikāsaṇḍa in the Wild Mango Grove. Then Citta the householder went to him and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, Ven. Godatta said to him, “Householder, the immeasurable awareness-release, the nothingness awareness-release, the emptiness awareness-release, the themeless awareness-release: Are these phenomena different in meaning and different in name, or are they one in meaning and different only in name?”

“Venerable sir, there is a line of reasoning by which these phenomena are different in meaning and different in name, and there is a line of reasoning by which they are one in meaning and different only in name.

“And what is the line of reasoning by which they are different in meaning and different in name? There is the case where a monk keeps pervading the first direction [the east] with an awareness imbued with goodwill, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with goodwill—abundant, enlarged, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will. He keeps pervading the first direction with an awareness imbued with compassion… empathetic joy… equanimity, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with equanimity—abundant, enlarged, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will. This is called the immeasurable awareness-release.

“And what is the nothingness awareness-release? There is the case where a monk, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, thinking, ‘There is nothing,’ enters & remains in the dimension of nothingness. This is called the nothingness awareness-release.

“And what is the emptiness awareness-release? There is the case where a monk, having gone into the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or into an empty dwelling, considers this: ‘This is empty of self or of anything pertaining to self.’1 This is called the emptiness awareness-release.

“And what is the themeless awareness-release? There is the case where a monk, not attending to any theme (object of awareness) enters & remains in the themeless concentration of awareness.2 This is called the themeless awareness-release.

“This, venerable sir, is the line of reasoning by which these phenomena are different in meaning and different in name.

“And what, venerable sir, is the line of reasoning by which they are one in meaning and different only in name? Passion, venerable sir, is a making of measurement, aversion a making of measurement, delusion a making of measurement. For a monk whose effluents are ended these have been abandoned, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. To the extent that there are immeasurable awareness-releases, the unprovokable awareness-release is declared supreme. And that unprovokable awareness-release is empty of passion, empty of aversion, empty of delusion.

“Passion is a something, aversion a something, delusion a something. For a monk whose effluents are ended these have been abandoned, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. To the extent that there are nothingness awareness-releases, the unprovokable

awareness-release is declared supreme. And that unprovokable awareness-release is empty of passion, empty of aversion, empty of delusion.

“Passion is a making of themes, aversion a making of themes, delusion a making of themes. For a monk whose effluents are ended these have been abandoned, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. To the extent that there are themeless awareness-releases, the unprovokable awareness-release is declared supreme. And that unprovokable awareness-release is empty of passion, empty of aversion, empty of delusion.

“This, venerable sir, is the line of reasoning by which these phenomena are one in meaning and different only in name.”

“It’s a gain for you, householder, a great gain: what your eye of discernment plumbs in the deep word of the Buddha.”

Notes

1. See MN 106

2. See MN 121.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 43