

## Saḷ-āyatana Vibhaṅga Sutta

### The Discourse on the Analysis of the Six Sense-bases

[Feelings and the spiritual life]

(Majjhima Nikāya 137/3:216-222)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2009

#### 1 Summary

**The Saḷ-āyatana Sutta** (M 137) used the six sense-bases and related teachings as the ground for insight. The discourse, located in Sāvathī [§1], opens with a summary (*uddesa*) of its teachings, namely:

(1) The six internal sense-bases	<i>cha ajjhattika āyatana</i>	[§4]
(2) The six external sense-bases	<i>cha bāhira āyatana</i>	[§5]
(3) The six classes of consciousnesses	<i>cha viññāṇa, kāya</i>	[§6]
(4) The six classes of contacts	<i>cha phassa, kāya</i>	[§7]
(5) The 18 kinds of mental explorations	<i>aṭṭhārasa manôpavicāra</i>	[§8]
(6) The 36 states of beings	<i>cha-t, tiṃsa satta, pada</i>	[§§9-15]
(7) Therein, depending on this, abandon that	<i>tatra idaṃ nissāya idaṃ pajahatha</i>	[§§16-17]
Equanimity and non-identification	<i>upekkha, attammayatā</i>	[§§18-20]
(8) The three bases of mindfulness	<i>tayo satipaṭṭhānā</i>	[§§21-24]
(9) The peerless guide of persons to be tamed	<i>anuttara purisa, damma sarathi</i>	[§25]
The eight liberations	<i>aṭṭha, vimokkha</i>	[§§26-27]

The 24 elements (*dhātu*)—the six internal sense-bases, the six external sense-objects, the six sense-contacts and the six sense-consciousnesses [§§4-7]—are first listed without any detail, as they are a familiar list. The workings of these elements are then presented by way of the eighteen kinds of mental explorations [§8], that is, each sense-base is listed by its feeling (as reacting with pleasure, pain, or equanimity).

#### 2 Feelings

**2.1 TYPES OF FEELINGS.** The feelings are further analyzed in terms of those of the household life (*gehasita*) or of renunciation (*nekkhammasita*), into the 36 states of beings [§§9-15].<sup>1</sup> The 36 feelings comprises the following:

The 6 internal sense-bases	(eye, ear, nose, tongue, body)	
× The 3 types of feelings	(pleasure, pain, equanimity)	
× The 2 types of life	(household life or renunciation)	= 36 states of beings

These are the feelings that beings are overwhelmed with, as regards whether they are intent on continuing the samsaric rounds, or on the ending of the rounds (MA 5:25).

**2.2 THE FEELINGS OF HOUSEHOLD LIFE AND OF RENUNCIATION.** The practitioner is then explained the differences between the two types of feelings. In the case of one enjoying household life, a sense-experience perceived as *pleasant* is regarded as a “reception, gain” (*paṭilābha*), delighting in it, and he recalls such an experience with **pleasure** [§10]. But when he is *unable* to find such a desirable sense-experience, he is **displeased** [§12]. Furthermore, he still has so much defilements remaining and under the weight of his own karma, that he can be *equanimous* towards a sense-experience without any understanding of *the danger* that it poses (such as its being the condition for misfortune) [§14] (MA 5:24).

<sup>1</sup> The 36 feelings are listed (without elaboration) in **Aṭṭha, sata S** (S 36.22.9/4:232).

The one enjoying the joy of renunciation, on the other hand, sees each sense-experience, whether one arising in the present or one that is recalled, according to reality, as being impermanent, and as such feels joy [§11]. Understanding that sense-experiences, both past and present, as being “impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,” he thinks of liberation, such as arhathood [§13]. Understanding the impermanence of a sense-experience, both past and present, “as it really is, with right wisdom,” he is truly *equanimous* [§15].

The discourse then advises the practitioner to cultivate the feelings associated with renunciation in order to abandon those of the household life. That is to say, by attaining the joys of renunciation, he abandons the household joys; through the pain associated with renunciant’s life, he abandons the pain of household life; and the *equanimity* of renunciation pushes away that of the household life.

Then the practitioner should, depending on the joy of renunciation to overcome the pain of renunciation. And finally, he should overcome this joy by the *equanimity* of renunciation. §16]

On a higher level, two other types of equanimity are distinguished. First, there is the *equanimity of diverse sense-experiences* (discussed above). Then there is the *equanimity of unified meditative attainments*, that is, of the form dhyanas and the formless attainments [§§17-20].

**2.3 THE IDEAL TEACHER.** In the closing section, the Buddha himself is presented as a teacher with the three bases of mindfulness (*tayo satipaṭṭhāna*), or an example of a worthy teacher, that is, one fit to teach the masses (*satthā gaṇam anusāsituṃ arahati*). Even when his audience refuses to listen, he is calmly untroubled [§22]; or when they respond in part, he is not delighted [§23]; and when they do listen, he is not elated [§24]. As such, he is the peerless guide of those to be tamed [§§25, 27].

The teaching of the “three bases of mindfulness” of the Saḷ-āyatana Sutta should be studied with the **Lohicca Sutta** (D 12), which is a very instructive discourse on bad teachers and good teachers. Three of such teachers are blameworthy:

- (1) A renunciant who has *not* gained the fruit of recluseship teaches, but his pupils reject him;
- (2) A renunciant who has *not* gained the fruit of recluseship teaches, but his pupils listen to him;
- (3) A renunciant who *has* gained the fruit of recluseship teaches, but his pupils reject to him.

In the first two cases, the teachers have “not attained the fruit of recluseship” (*sāmaññattho ananuppatto*): as such, whether their pupils rejected or accepted them, they are blameworthy because they have not been liberated themselves.<sup>2</sup>

**2.4 THE 8 LIBERATIONS.** And what does he guide them in? He guides them into eight “directions,”<sup>3</sup> that is, profound and liberating levels of meditation called the eight liberations (*aṭṭha vimokkha*) [§26], listed in the **Mahā Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77.2/2:12), and which are to be fully cultivated. The Commentary there explains liberation (*vimokkha*) as referring to the mind’s full (but temporary) release from the opposing states and its full (but temporary) release by delighting in the object.

The first liberation is the attainment of the four dhyanas, traditionally said to be attained by the use of a kasiṇa, derived from a coloured object in one’s own body. The second liberation is the attainment of dhyana using a kasiṇa derived from an external object. The third liberation may be taken as the attainment of the dhyanas through either a very pure and beautiful coloured kasiṇa or the four divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*). The remaining liberations are the formless attainments and the attainment of cessation. (MA 3:255 f; DhsA 191)<sup>4</sup>

### 3 Feelings and emotion

From the whole picture of all this [1-2], we can see a clear progression in the Buddha’s spiritual training. Here, it starts with an understanding of the physical elements (the senses and their objects), and then on to the mental (consciousness, contacts, etc), and finally to the transcendental (the eight liberations), and cessation.

<sup>2</sup> D 12/1:224-234 = SD 34.8.

<sup>3</sup> These 8 “directions” (*disa*) are called “liberations” in such discourses as **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16.3.332:-111 f) = SD 9.

<sup>4</sup> Cf Analayo, *From Craving to Liberation*, New York, 2009: 141-148, a rev ed of “Vimokkha” in Ency Bsm.

The key element in all this is feeling (*vedanā*). When we really understand feelings, we master them, and we experience positive emotions (*saṅkhāra*). Early Buddhism gives very clear definitions of feeling and emotion. *Feeling* is the hedonic tone (or pleasure level) of sense-experience, and there are only three kinds: pleasant (arising from a desirable object), painful (from an undesirable object) and neutral (from a unfamiliar object).

When we morally colour such feelings by liking them, or hating them, or ignoring them, we *form* karmic states. As such, these are sometimes karma-formations, or simply, formations (*saṅkhāra*). These are what we would call *emotions*.<sup>5</sup>

Having said that, we can now say that the spiritual life begins *when we understand feelings, avoid negative emotions and cultivate wholesome emotions*. On an even higher level of spirituality, the practitioner understand feeling, shows wholesome emotions, but he does not identify them. This is known as “non-identification” (*atammayatā*) [§20b].

A true Dharma teacher is one who understands feelings, shows wholesome emotions and yet does not identify with them. He is a great inspiration to others, and often moves others to goodness, or at least make them realize the errors of their ways, so that they can begin to look for the path to awakening.

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## The Discourse on the Analysis of the Six Sense-bases (M 137/3:216-222)

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was residing in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s forest near Sāvathī. There the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:

“Bhikshus!”

“Bhante!” the monks answered the Blessed One in assent.

### Summary of the analysis of the six sense-bases

2 The Blessed One said this:

“Bhikshus, I shall teach you the analysis of the six sense-bases. Listen, pay close attention. I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” the monks answered the Blessed One in assent.

The Blessed One said this: [216]

3 THE SYLLABUS

- |  |                                     |                       |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) “The six internal sense-bases                          | ( <i>cha ajjhattika āyatana</i> )   | should be understood. |
| (2) The six external sense-bases                           | ( <i>cha bāhira āyatana</i> )       | should be understood. |
| (3) The six classes of consciousnesses                     | ( <i>cha viññāṇa, kāya</i> )        | should be understood. |
| (4) The six classes of contacts                            | ( <i>cha phassa, kāya</i> )         | should be understood. |
| (5) The 18 kinds of mental explorations                    | ( <i>aṭṭhārasa manôpavicāra</i> )   | should be understood. |
| (6) The 36 states of beings                                | ( <i>cha-t, tiṃsa satta, pada</i> ) | should be understood. |
| (7) Therein, depending on this, abandon that. <sup>6</sup> |                                     |                       |

<sup>5</sup> On “feelings and emotions,” see *Vedanā* = SD 17.3.

(8) There are **the three bases of mindfulness**<sup>7</sup> that the noble ones attend to, attending to which that noble one is a teacher, worthy of teaching the group.<sup>8</sup>

(9) Of the teachers of training, he is **the peerless guide of persons to be tamed**.<sup>9</sup>

This is the summary of the analysis of the six sense-bases.

### (1) The six internal sense-bases<sup>10</sup>

4 ‘The six internal sense-bases should be understood,’ thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

There are

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) the eye-base,    | <i>cakkhv’āyatana</i> |
| (2) the ear-base,    | <i>sot’āyatana</i>    |
| (3) the nose-base,   | <i>ghān’āyatana</i>   |
| (4) the tongue-base, | <i>jivhāyatana</i>    |
| (5) the body-base,   | <i>kāy’āyatana</i>    |
| (6) the mind-base.   | <i>man’āyatana</i>    |

—‘The six internal sense-bases should be understood,’ thus it is said in this connection.

### (2) The six external sense-bases

5 ‘The six external sense-bases should be understood,’ thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

There are

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) the form-base,        | <i>rūp’āyatana</i>       |
| (2) the sound-base,       | <i>sadd’āyatana</i>      |
| (3) the smell-base,       | <i>gandh’āyatana</i>     |
| (4) the taste-base,       | <i>ras’āyatana</i>       |
| (5) the touch-base,       | <i>phoṭṭhabb’āyatana</i> |
| (6) the mind-object-base. | <i>dhamm’āyatana</i>     |

—‘The six external sense-bases should be understood,’ thus it is said in this connection.

### (3) The six classes of consciousness

6 ‘The six classes of consciousnesses should be understood,’ thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

There are

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) eye-consciousness,    | <i>cakkhu,viññāṇa</i> |
| (2) ear-consciousness,    | <i>sota,viññāṇa</i>   |
| (3) nose-consciousness,   | <i>ghāna,viññāṇa</i>  |
| (4) tongue-consciousness, | <i>jivhā,viññāṇa</i>  |
| (5) body-consciousness,   | <i>kāya,viññāṇa</i>   |
| (6) mind-consciousness.   | <i>mano,viññāṇa</i>   |

—‘The six classes of consciousnesses should be understood,’ thus it is said in this connection.

### (4) The six classes of contact

7 ‘The six classes of contacts should be understood,’ thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?

There are

<sup>6</sup> *Tatra idaṃ nissāya idaṃ pajahatha.*

<sup>7</sup> As will be evident below [§21], this is not the better known “focuses of mindfulness” (*satipaṭṭhāna*).

<sup>8</sup> *Tayo sati,paṭṭhānā yad ariyo sevati yad ariyo sevamāno satthā gaṇam anusāsitaṃ arahati.*

<sup>9</sup> *So vuccati yogg’ācariyānaṃ anuttaro purisa,damma,sārathī ’ti.*

<sup>10</sup> On this and the next three headings, see D 3:243.

- |                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) eye-contact,    | <i>cakkhu,samphassa</i> |
| (2) ear-contact,    | <i>sota,samphassa</i>   |
| (3) nose-contact,   | <i>ghāna,samphassa</i>  |
| (4) tongue-contact, | <i>jivhā,samphassa</i>  |
| (5) body-contact,   | <i>kāya,samphassa</i>   |
| (6) mind-contact.   | <i>mano,samphassa</i>   |

—‘The six classes of contacts should be understood,’ thus it is said in this connection.

### (5) The eighteen kinds of mental explorations

8 ‘The eighteen kinds of mental explorations<sup>11</sup> should be understood,’ thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?<sup>12</sup>

- (1) <sup>13</sup>On seeing a *form* with the eye,  
one explores<sup>14</sup> a form that gives rise to *pleasure*,  
one explores a form that gives rise to *pain [displeasure]*,  
one explores a form that gives rise to *equanimity*.
- (2) On hearing a *sound* with the ear,  
one explores a sound that gives rise to *pleasure*,  
one explores a sound that gives rise to *pain [displeasure]*,  
one explores a sound that gives rise to *equanimity*.
- (3) On smelling a *smell* with the nose,  
one explores a smell that gives rise to *pleasure*,  
one explores a smell that gives rise to *pain [displeasure]*,  
one explores a smell that gives rise to *equanimity*.
- (4) On tasting a *taste* with the tongue, [217]  
one explores a taste that gives rise to *pleasure*,  
one explores a taste that gives rise to *pain [displeasure]*,  
one explores a taste that gives rise to *equanimity*.
- (5) On feeling a *touch* with the body,  
one explores a touch that gives rise to *pleasure*,  
one explores a touch that gives rise to *pain [displeasure]*,  
one explores a touch that gives rise to *equanimity*.
- (6) On cognizing a *mind-object* with the mind,  
one explores a mind-object that gives rise to *pleasure*,  
one explores a mind-object that gives rise to *pain [displeasure]*,  
one explores a mind-object that gives rise to *equanimity*.

Thus there are six mental explorations with regards to *pleasure*; six mental explorations with regards to *pain [displeasure]*; six mental explorations with regards to *equanimity*.

—‘The 18 kinds of mental explorations should be understood,’ thus it is said in this connection.

### (6) The 36 states of beings

9 ‘The thirty-six states of beings should be understood,’<sup>15</sup> thus it is said. And in what connection is this said?<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Aaṭṭhārāsa manôpavicāra*. Comy: “Mental exploration” (*manôpavicāra*) is initial application and sustained application (or thinking and pondering) (*vitakka,vicāra*). One explores (*upavicarati*) the object by way of sustained application (or pondering) (*vicāra*), with which initial application (or thinking) is associated (MA 5:21).

<sup>12</sup> The 18 kinds of mental explorations are the 18 kinds of feelings: see D 3:244 f; M 3:239 f; Vbh 381. Cf the 18 feelings (*vedanā*), see S 4:232.

<sup>13</sup> *Cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā somanassa-ṭ,thānīyaṃ rūpaṃ upavicarati, domanassa-ṭ,thānīyaṃ rūpaṃ upavicarati, upekkhā-ṭ,thānīyaṃ rūpaṃ upavicarati.*

<sup>14</sup> *Upavicarati*, ie, explores with eye-consciousness (MA 5:22; cf VbhA 508).

There are

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| (A) the six kinds of joy of the household life;        | <i>cha gehasita somanassa</i>      |
| (B) the six kinds of joy of renunciation;              | <i>cha nekkhammasita somanassa</i> |
| (C) the six kinds of pain of the household life;       | <i>cha gehasita domanassa</i>      |
| (D) the six kinds of pain of renunciation;             | <i>cha nekkhammasita domanassa</i> |
| (E) the six kinds of equanimity of the household life; | <i>cha gehasitā upekkhā</i>        |
| (F) the six kinds of equanimity of renunciation;       | <i>cha nekkhammasitā upekkhā</i>   |

**10** (A) Therein, what are **the six kinds of joy of the household life** (*cha gehasita somanassa*)?<sup>17</sup>

<sup>18</sup>(1) From regarding a reception of *visual forms* as a reception cognizable by *the eye* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of the household life.

(2) From regarding a reception of *sounds* as a reception cognizable by *the ear* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of the household life.

(3) From regarding a reception of *smells* as a reception cognizable by *the nose* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of the household life.

(4) From regarding a reception of *tastes* as a reception cognizable by *the tongue* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of the household life.

(5) From regarding a reception of *touches* as a reception cognizable by *the body* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of the household life.

(6) From regarding a reception of *mind-objects* as a reception cognizable by *the mind* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of the household life.<sup>19</sup>

These are the six kinds of joy of the household life.

**11** (B) Therein, what are **the six kinds of joy of renunciation** (*cha nekkhammasita somanassa*)?<sup>20</sup>

(7) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *forms*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *forms* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—joy arises.<sup>21</sup>

A joy such as this is called a joy of renunciation.

<sup>15</sup> *Cha-t, timsa satta, pada*. Comy: These are states (*pada*) for beings who are rooted in the round of samsara (*vaṭṭa*), and those intent on ending it (MA 5:21).

<sup>16</sup> The 36 feelings are listed (without elaboration) in **Aṭṭha, sata S** (S 36.22.9/4:232) = SD 17.3 (4.1).

<sup>17</sup> “Of the household life” (*gehasita*) means connected with the cords of sense-pleasures (MA 5:21).

<sup>18</sup> *Cakkhu, viññeyyānaṃ rūpānaṃ iṭṭhānaṃ kantānaṃ manāpānaṃ manoramānaṃ lok’āmisā, paṭisaṃyuttānaṃ paṭilābhaṃ vā paṭilābhato samanupassato pubbe vā paṭiladdha, pubbaṃ atītaṃ niruddhaṃ vipariṇataṃ samanussarato uppajjati somanassaṃ.*

<sup>19</sup> Cf Vism 319.

<sup>20</sup> “Of renunciation” (*nekkhammasita*) means connected with insight (MA 5:21).

<sup>21</sup> *Rūpānaṃ tv-eva aniccatāṃ viditvā vipariṇāma, virāga, nirodhaṃ, “pubbe c’eva rūpā etarahi ca sabbe te rūpā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāma, dhammā’ti evam etaṃ yathā, bhūtaṃ samma-p, paññāya passato uppajjati somanassaṃ.* Comy: This is joy that arises when one has established insight and is sitting observing the breaking-up of formations with a flow of sharp and bright insight-knowledge focussed on the formations (MA 5:22).



(8) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *sounds*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *sounds* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of renunciation.

(9) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *smells*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *smells* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of renunciation.

(10) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *tastes*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *tastes* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of renunciation.

(11) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *touches*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *touches* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of renunciation.

(12) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *mind-objects*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *mind-objects* [218] both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—joy arises.

A joy such as this is called a joy of renunciation.

These are the six kinds of pain of the household life.

**12 (C)** Therein, what are **the six pains of the household life** (*cha gehasita domanassa*)?

(13) <sup>22</sup>From regarding a non-reception of *visual forms* as not receiving what are cognizable by *the eye* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—pain [displeasure] arises.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of the household life.

(14) From regarding a non-reception of *sounds* as not receiving what are cognizable by *the ear* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—pain [displeasure] arises.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of the household life.

(15) From regarding a non-reception of *smells* as not receiving what are cognizable by *the nose* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—pain [displeasure] arises.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of the household life.

(16) From regarding a non-reception of *tastes* cognizable by *the tongue* as not receiving what are that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—pain [displeasure] arises.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of the household life.

(17) From regarding a non-reception of *touches* cognizable by *the tongue* as not receiving what are that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;

or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—pain [displeasure] arises.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of the household life.

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<sup>22</sup> *Cakkhu,viññeyyānaṃ rūpānaṃ iṭṭhānaṃ kantānaṃ manāpānaṃ manoramānaṃ lok'āmisapaṭisaṃyuttānaṃ appaṭilābhaṃ vā appaṭilābhato samanupassato pubbe vā appaṭiladdha,pubbaṃ atītaṃ niruddhaṃ vipariṇataṃ samanussarato uppajjati domanassaṃ.*

(18) From regarding a non-reception of *mind-objects* as not receiving what are cognizable by *the mind* that are wished for, desired, agreeable, gratifying, and associated with worldliness;  
or, when one recalls what was formerly received that has passed, ceased, changed—displeasure arises.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of the household life.<sup>23</sup>

These are the six kinds of pain of the household life.

**13 (D)** Therein, what are **the six kinds of pain of renunciation** (*cha nekkhammasita domanassa*)?

(19) <sup>24</sup>When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *forms*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *forms* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one arouses a desire for the supreme liberation,<sup>25</sup> thus, ‘When shall I attain and dwell in that base that the noble ones now attain and dwell in?’

In whom there arises such a desire, pain [displeasure] arises conditioned by that desire.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of renunciation.

(20) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *sounds*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom that *sounds* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one arouses a desire for the supreme liberation, thus, ‘When shall I attain and dwell in that base that the noble ones now attain and dwell in?’

In whom there arises such a desire, pain [displeasure] arises conditioned by that desire.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of renunciation.

(21) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *smells*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *smells* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one arouses a desire for the supreme liberation, thus, ‘When shall I attain and dwell in that base that the noble ones now attain and dwell in?’

In whom there arises such a desire, pain [displeasure] arises conditioned by that desire.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of renunciation.

(22) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *tastes*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *tastes* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one arouses a desire for the supreme liberation, thus, ‘When shall I attain and dwell in that base that the noble ones now attain and dwell in?’

In whom there arises such a desire, pain [displeasure] arises conditioned by that desire.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of renunciation.

(23) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *touches*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *touches* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one arouses a desire for the supreme liberation, thus, ‘When shall I attain and dwell in that base that the noble ones now attain and dwell in?’

In whom there arises such a desire, pain [displeasure] arises conditioned by that desire.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of renunciation.

<sup>23</sup> Cf Vism 319.

<sup>24</sup> “When, by knowing...dwell in?” *rūpānaṃ tv-eva aniccataṃ viditvā vipariṇāma, virāga, nirodhaṃ*, “pubbe c’eva rūpā etarahi ca sabbe te rūpā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāma, dhammā’ti evaṃ etaṃ yathā’bhūtaṃ samma-p, pañ-ñāya disvā anuttāresu vimokkhesu pihaṃ upaṭṭhāpeti—“*kudāssu nāmaṃ tad āyatanāṃ upasampajja viharissāmi yad ariyā etarahi āyatanāṃ upasampajja viharanti’ti iti anuttāresu vimokkhesu pihaṃ upaṭṭhāpayato uppajjati piha, paccayā domanassaṃ*.

<sup>25</sup> *Auttara vimokkha*, ie arhathood (MA 5:23). See *Cūḷa Vedalla S* (M 44.28/1:303).



(24) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *mind-objects*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *mind-objects* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature, [219]

one arouses a desire for the supreme liberation, thus, ‘When shall I attain and dwell in that base that the noble ones now attain and dwell in?’

In whom there arises such a desire, pain [displeasure] arises conditioned by that desire.

A pain [displeasure] such as this is called a pain of renunciation.

These are the six kinds of pain [displeasure] of renunciation.

**14** (E) Therein, what are **the six kinds of equanimity of the household life** (*cha gehasitā upekkhā*)?<sup>26</sup>

(25) On seeing *a form with the eye*, equanimity arises in a foolish, confused, worldling, in an unconstructed worldling who has not conquered his limitations<sup>27</sup> nor conquered his karmic fruits,<sup>28</sup> who sees not danger.<sup>29</sup>

Such an equanimity as this does not transcend form.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, it is called the equanimity of the household life.

(26) On hearing *a sound with the ear*, equanimity arises in a foolish, confused, worldling, in an unconstructed worldling who has not conquered his limitations nor conquered his karmic fruits, who sees not danger.

Such an equanimity as this does not transcend sound.

Therefore, it is called the equanimity of the household life.

(27) On smelling *a smell with the nose*, equanimity arises in a foolish, confused, worldling, in an unconstructed worldling who has not conquered his limitations nor conquered his karmic fruits, who sees not danger.

Such an equanimity as this does not transcend smell.

Therefore, it is called the equanimity of the household life.

(28) On tasting *a taste with the tongue*, equanimity arises in a foolish, confused, worldling, in an unconstructed worldling who has not conquered his limitations nor conquered his karmic fruits, who sees not danger.

Such an equanimity as this does not transcend taste.

Therefore, it is called the equanimity of the household life.

<sup>26</sup> *Cha gehasitā upekkhā*. Here it is the equanimity of ignorance (MA 5:24).

<sup>27</sup> “Not conquered his limitations,” *anodhi,jina*, ie one who has not overcome the whole extent (*odhi*, “to the limit”) of his defilements (*kilesa*), as such, his influxes (*āsava*) are not destroyed (MA 5:34; cf Vbh 246). The oldest list is perhaps the set of **3 influxes**—of sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), of existence (*bhav’āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63)—which are essentially the same as the **3 grasplings** (*ti,gaha*) of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and views (*diṭṭhi*), on account of which arise, resp, the notions “this is mine,” “this I am,” and “this is my self”: see **Vatthūpama S** (M 7.18/1:38) = SD 28.12. The term *āsava* (lit “in-flow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards or inwards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untr. The Abhidhamma lists **4 āsavas**, which is also found in the Nikāyas: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 16.1.12/2:82, 16.2.4/2:91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). See BDict: āsava.

<sup>28</sup> “Nor conquered his karmic fruits,” *avipāka,jina*, ie one whose influxes are not destroyed (see prec n). For one whose influxes are destroyed is called a conqueror of karmic fruition because he has overcome what remains of his future karmic fruitions (MA 5:24).

<sup>29</sup> *Cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā uppajjati upekkhā bālassa mūlhasa puthujjanassa anodhi,jinassa avipāka,jinassa anādīnava,dassāvino assutavato puthujjanassa*. Here “danger” (*ādīnava*) usu refers to sense-pleasures, but is more broadly connected with any kind of misfortune (*upaddava*) (MA 5:24).

<sup>30</sup> Comy: This is the equanimity of unknowing that arises in one who has not overcome the limitations of the defilements or karmic fruits. It “does not transcend form” because it is stuck, hitched to the object like flies to a ball of sugar (MA 5:24).

(29) On feeling *a touch with the body*, equanimity arises in a foolish, confused, worldling, in an uninstructed worldling who has not conquered his limitations nor conquered his karmic fruits, who sees not danger.

Such an equanimity as this does not transcend touch.

Therefore, it is called the equanimity of the household life.

(30) On cognizing *a mind-object with the mind*, equanimity arises in a foolish, confused, worldling, in an uninstructed worldling who has not conquered his limitations nor conquered his karmic fruits, who sees not danger.

Such an equanimity as this does not transcend mind-object.

Therefore, it is called the equanimity of the household life.

These are the six kinds of equanimity of the household life.

**15 (F)** Therein, what are **the six kinds of equanimity of renunciation** (*cha nekkhammasitā upekkhā*)?

(31) <sup>31</sup>When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *forms*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *forms* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *forms* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—equanimity arises.<sup>32</sup>

An equanimity such as this transcends form.

Therefore, it is called equanimity of renunciation.

(32) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *sounds*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *sounds* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *sounds* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—equanimity arises.

An equanimity such as this transcends sound.

Therefore, it is called equanimity of renunciation.

(33) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *smells*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *smells* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *smells* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—equanimity arises.

An equanimity such as this transcends smell.

Therefore, it is called equanimity of renunciation.

(34) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *tastes*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *tastes* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *tastes* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—equanimity arises.

An equanimity such as this transcends taste.

Therefore, it is called equanimity of renunciation.

(35) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *touches*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *touches* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *touches* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—equanimity arises.

An equanimity such as this transcends touch.

<sup>31</sup> *Rūpānaṃ tv-eva aniccatam veditvā vipariṇāma, virāga, nirodhaṃ, 'pubbe c'eva rūpā etarahi ca sabbe te rūpā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāma, dhammā'ti evam etaṃ yathā, bhūtaṃ samma-p, paññāya passato uppajjati upekkhā.*

<sup>32</sup> Comy: This is the equanimity connected with insight knowledge. It does not lust after desirable objects that come within the range of the senses, nor does it become angry because of undesirable objects (MA 5:25).

Therefore, it is called equanimity of renunciation.

(36) When, by knowing the impermanence, change, fading away and ending of *mind-objects*, one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *mind-objects* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature,

one sees, according to reality, with right wisdom those *mind-objects* both in the past and now are all impermanent, suffering, changing by nature—equanimity arises.

An equanimity such as this transcends mind-object.

Therefore, it is called equanimity of renunciation.

These are the six kinds of equanimity of renunciation.

—“The 36 states of beings should be known should be understood,” thus it is said in this connection.

### (7) Towards greater joy

[220] 16 ‘Therein, depending on this, abandon that,’ so it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Therein, bhikshus,

(1) by depending on, by relying on<sup>33</sup> the six kinds of joy of renunciation,  
abandon the six kinds of joy of the household life,  
overcome them.

It is thus that they are abandoned, thus that they are overcome.<sup>34</sup>

(2) By depending on, by relying on the six kinds of pain of renunciation,  
abandon the six kinds of pain of the household life,  
overcome them.

It is thus that they are abandoned, thus that they are overcome.

(4) By depending on, by relying on the six kinds of equanimity of renunciation,  
abandon the six kinds of equanimity of the household life,  
overcome them.

It is thus that they are abandoned, thus that they are overcome.

(4) By depending on, by relying on the six kinds of joy of renunciation,  
abandon the six kinds of pain of the renunciation,  
overcome them.

It is thus that they are abandoned, thus that they are overcome.

(5) By depending on, by relying on the six kinds of equanimity of renunciation,  
abandon the six kinds of joy of the renunciation,  
overcome them.

It is thus that they are abandoned, thus that they are overcome.

### Equanimity

17 There is, bhikshus, equanimity of diversity, based on diversity; there is equanimity of unity, based on unity.<sup>35</sup>

18 And what, bhikshus, is the equanimity of diversity, based on diversity?

There is, bhikshus, the equanimity in forms, in sounds, in smells, in tastes, in touches.

This, bhikshus, is the equanimity of diversity, based on diversity.

19 And what, bhikshus, is the equanimity of unity, based on unity?

<sup>33</sup> “Depending on, relying on,” *tāni nissāya tāni āgamma*; the two phrases are synonymous: *āgasmā ti nissāya* (KhpA 229).

<sup>34</sup> Cf M 1:446.

<sup>35</sup> Comy says that here the contrast is between the equanimity of diverse sense-experience and the equanimity of meditative attainments (MA 5:26). Cf M 1:364-367.

There is, bhikshus, the equanimity dependent on the mind-base of space, dependent on the mind-base of consciousness, dependent on the mind-base of nothingness, dependent on the mind-base of neither-perception-and-non-perception.

This, bhikshus, is the equanimity of unity, based on unity.

**20a** Therein, bhikshus, depending on, relying on, the equanimity of unity, based on unity, abandon and overcome the equanimity of diversity, based on diversity.

It is thus that they are abandoned, it is thus that they are overcome.<sup>36</sup>

**20b** Bhikshus, depending on non-identification,<sup>37</sup> abandon and overcome the equanimity of unity, based on unity.

It is thus that this is abandoned, it is thus that it is overcome. [221]

‘Therein, depending on this, abandon that,’ thus it is said in this connection.

### (8) The 3 bases of mindfulness (*sati’paṭṭhāna*)

**21** ‘There are the three foundations of mindfulness that the noble ones attend to, attending to which that noble one<sup>38</sup> is a teacher worthy of instructing the masses,’<sup>39</sup> so it is said. In what connection is this said?

**22** (1)<sup>40</sup> Here, bhikshus, the Teacher teaches the Dharma to his disciples, out of compassion, for their happiness, moved by compassion, thinking,

‘This is for your welfare! This is for your happiness!’

His disciples do *not* wish to listen, do not lend ear, do not arouse their minds to understand, and deviate from the Teacher’s teaching.<sup>41</sup>

As such, the Tathagata [thus come] is not pleased, but although not feeling pleased, he dwells untroubled, mindful and fully aware.<sup>42</sup>

This, bhikshus, is the first basis of mindfulness that the noble one attends to, attending to which the noble one is a teacher worthy of instructing the group.

**23** (2) Furthermore, bhikshus, the Teacher teaches the Dharma to his disciples, out of compassion, for their happiness, moved by compassion, thinking,

‘This is for your welfare! This is for your happiness!’

Some of his disciples wish to listen, lend their ear, arouse their minds to understand, and do not deviate from the Teacher’s teaching.

As such, the Tathagata is pleased, but although feeling pleased, he dwells untroubled,<sup>43</sup> mindful and fully aware.

<sup>36</sup> Comy: By the equanimity of the formless attainments, abandon the form attainments. By insight into the formless sphere, abandon insight into the form sphere (MA 5:24).

<sup>37</sup> *Atammayātā*, as at **Sappurisa S** (M 113.21/3:42). Comy says that *atammayātā* here refers to “insight leading to emergence” (*vuṭṭhāna, gāminī, vipassanā*), ie, the insight immediately before the arising of the supramundane path. For, this effects the abandoning of the equanimity of the formless attainments and the equanimity of insight (MA 5:24). See *Atammayātā* = SD 19.13.

<sup>38</sup> The context here obviously refers to the Buddha, but in principle applies to any worthy teacher.

<sup>39</sup> *Tayo sati, paṭṭhānā yad ariyo sevati yad ariyo sevamāno satthā gaṇam anusāsituṃ arahati*. The *satipaṭṭhāna* here is not the well known “foundations of mindfulness,” but the “exceptional bases of mindfulness” (*āveṇika sati-paṭṭhāna*), ie the Buddha’s even-mindedness (*sama, citta*), whether his audience ignores, partly responds, or listens to him. Cf *tribhir āveṇikāḥ smṛtyupasthāna* (Divy 182, 268), *tribhiḥ smṛtyupasthānair* (126). Cf the 18 special attributes of the Buddha (*āveṇikā buddha, dharmā*), Mvst 1:160; Śata, sāhasrikā 9.1449-14550 (tr E Conze, *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*, 1954: 145). No such list is found in Pali, although a different set of 18 *buddha, dhammā* are mentioned at Miln 105, 285, UA 87.

<sup>40</sup> Cf M 3:117.

<sup>41</sup> *Tassa sāvakā na sussūsanti, na sotam odahanti, na aññā cittam upaṭṭhapenti, vakkamma ca satthu, sāsanā vattanti*.

<sup>42</sup> *Tatra, bhikkhave, tathāgato na ceva anattamano hoti, na ca anattamanataṃ paṭisaṃvedeti, anavassuto ca viharati sato sampajāno*. Here, “untroubled,” *anavassuta*, means not overcome by repulsion (*paṭigha*) (MA 5:27).

<sup>43</sup> Here, “untroubled,” *anavassuta*, means not overcome by lust (*rāga*) (MA 5:27).

This, bhikshus, is the second basis of mindfulness that the noble one attends to, attending to which the noble one is a teacher worthy of instructing the group.

24 (3) Furthermore, bhikshus, the Teacher teaches the Dharma to his disciples, out of compassion, for their happiness, moved by compassion, thinking,

‘This is for your welfare! This is for your happiness!’

His disciples wish to listen, lend their ear, arouse their minds to understand, and do not deviate from the Teacher’s teaching.

As such, the Tathagata is pleased, but although feeling pleased, he dwells untroubled, mindful and fully aware.

This, bhikshus, is the third basis of mindfulness that the noble one attends to, attending to which the noble one is a teacher worthy of instructing the group. [222]

‘There are the three foundations of mindfulness that the noble ones attend to, attending to which that noble one is a teacher worthy of instructing the masses,’ thus it is said in this connection.<sup>44</sup>

### (9) The peerless teacher

25 ‘Of the teachers of training, he is the peerless guide of persons to be tamed,’<sup>45</sup> so it is said. And in what connection is this said?

Bhikshus, the elephant to be tamed, driven<sup>46</sup> by the elephant trainer, runs in only one direction—to the east, or the west, or the north, or the south.

Bhikshus, the horse to be tamed, driven by the horse trainer, runs in only one direction—to the east, or the west, or the north, or the south.

Bhikshus, the cattle to be tamed, driven by the cattle trainer, runs in only one direction—to the east, or the west, or the north, or the south.

### The eight liberations

26 Bhikshus, a person to be tamed, guided by the Tathagata, the worthy, fully self-awakened one, roams<sup>47</sup> the eight directions:<sup>48</sup>

(1) One with physical form sees physical forms.<sup>49</sup>

This is the first direction.<sup>50</sup>

(2) One does not see physical form internally, but sees physical forms externally.<sup>51</sup>

This is the second direction.

(3) One is liberated after contemplating the idea of the beautiful.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>44</sup> See Intro (2.3).

<sup>45</sup> *So vuccati yoggācariyānaṃ anuttaro purisadammasārathī ’ti.* “Peerless guide of persons to be tamed” (*anuttara purisa, damma, sarathī*) is the 6<sup>th</sup> traditional quality of the Buddha: see **Buddhānussati** = SD 15.7. On *yogācariya*, see M 1:124, 3:97.

<sup>46</sup> *Sārita*, pp both of *sāreti*, caus of *sarati*, “he goes, runs, move along, flows”; and of *sarati*, “he calls to mind, remembers.” Cf *sāreyya* (M 1:124) explained as “would send it straight on” (*ujukūṃ peseyya*); but here Comy glosses *sārita* as “tamed” (*damita*) (MA 5:27).

<sup>47</sup> *Vidhāvati*, “he runs about, roams,” ie *vi* (“various”) + *dhāvati* (“he runs”). Here *vidhāvati* is used for the mind only. For the person sits cross-legged, does not twist his body around no matter which quarter he is facing, and attains these eight attainments (*samāpatti*). The directions are the liberations, (MA 5:28)

<sup>48</sup> The 8 directions = liberations (*vimokkha*): see Intro (2.4).

<sup>49</sup> *Rūpī rūpāni passati*. This first liberation refers to the attainment of the 4 dhyanas using a *kaṣiṇa* (meditation device) derived from a coloured object on one’s own body. See §3.33 n on “the eight liberations.”

<sup>50</sup> In **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16), this line reads: “This is the first liberation” and so too the other lines *mutatis mutandis* (D 16.3.332:111 f) = SD 9. See above n on “the 8 directions.”

<sup>51</sup> *Ajjhattaṃ arūpa, saññī bahiddhā rūpāni passati*. This second liberation is the attainment of dhyana using a *kaṣiṇa* derived from an external object and the arising of the concentration sign externally.

<sup>52</sup> *‘Subhaṃ’ t’eva adhimutto hoti*. This third liberation refers to the attainment of the perception of either a very pure, bright and beautiful (*subha*) coloured *kaṣiṇa* or of the 4 *brahma, vihārā*. See §3.33 n on “the eight liberations.”

This is the third direction.

(4) Through the utter transcending of the perception of physical form, the passing away of the perception of impingement [sense-contact], and non-attention to the perception of diversity, (contemplating,) ‘Space is infinite,’ one enters and dwells in the sphere of the infinity of space.<sup>53</sup>

This is the fourth direction.

(5) Through the utter transcending of the infinity of space, [contemplating,] ‘Consciousness is infinite,’ one enters and dwells in the sphere of the infinity of consciousness.<sup>54</sup>

This is the fifth direction.

(6) Through the utter transcending of the sphere of the infinity of consciousness, [contemplating,] ‘There is nothing,’ one enters and dwells in the sphere of nothingness.<sup>55</sup>

This is the sixth direction.

(7) Through the utter transcending of the sphere of nothingness, one enters and dwells in the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.<sup>56</sup>

This is the seventh direction.

(8) Through the utter transcending of the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, one enters and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling.<sup>57</sup>

This is the eighth direction.

Bhikṣhus, a person to be tamed, guided by the Tathagata, the worthy, fully self-awakened one, roams these eight directions.

**27** It is said that, of the teachers of training, he is ‘the peerless guide of persons to be tamed.’ Thus it is said in this connection.”

The Blessed One said this. Joyfully, the monks approved of the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>53</sup> *Sabbaso rūpa,saññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭigha,saññānaṃ atthaṅgamā nānatta,saññānaṃ amanasikārā ‘ananto ākāso’ti ākāśānaṃ ‘āyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

<sup>54</sup> *Sabbaso ākāśānaṃ ‘āyatanaṃ samatikkamma ‘anantaṃ viññāṇaṃ’ti viññāṇaṃ ‘āyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

<sup>55</sup> *Sabbaso viññāṇaṃ ‘āyatanaṃ samatikkamma ‘n’atthi kiñcī’ti ākiñcaññ’āyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

<sup>56</sup> *Sabbaso ākiñcaññ’āyatanaṃ samatikkamma ‘n’eva,saññā,nāsaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

<sup>57</sup> *Sabbaso ‘n’eva,saññā,nāsaññā ‘āyatanaṃ samatikkamma saññā,vedayita,nirodhaṃ upasampajja viharati.* “The cessation of perception and feeling,” **saññā,vedayita nirodha**. This anomalous state, fully described in **Visuddhi-magga** (Vism 23.16-52702-709), is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight where all mental states temporarily shut down (Vism 23.43/707 f): see **Sappurisa S** (M 113) = SD 23.7 Intro (2).