

MN26: Ariyapariyesanā - The Noble Search

I was able to convince the group of five bhikkhus.

(Rains retreat)

Then I sometimes instructed two bhikkhus while the other three went for alms, and the six of us lived on what those three bhikkhus brought back from their almsround.

Sometimes I instructed three bhikkhus while the other two went for alms, and the six of us lived on what those two bhikkhus brought back from their almsround.

(Tradition – the Vinaya Khandhaka – says that two by two they realized stream winning. Then when he felt that they were ready for the final step, the Buddha delivered the Anattalakkhaṇa sutta.)

Saṃyutta Nikāya 22:59

Chapter 22 on the Components of Existence (*Khandhas*):

The Characteristic of No Permanent Essence (*Anattā*)

(attā – self, soul, permanent essence)

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Buddha was dwelling at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There the Buddha addressed the group of five bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus!"

"Venerable sir!" those bhikkhus replied.

Not yours

The Buddha said this: "Bhikkhus, the body is not yours.

For if the body were yours, this body would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to control your body thus: 'Let my body be like this; let my body not be like that.' *(e.g. Let my body be healthy and strong; let it not age and get sick.)*

But because the body is not yours, this body leads to affliction, and it is not possible to control the body thus: 'Let my body be like this; let my body not be like that.'

Feeling tone is not yours.

For if feeling tone were yours, feeling tone would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to control your feeling tone thus: 'Let my feeling tone be like this; let my feeling tone not be like that.' *(e.g. Let me have pleasant feelings, not unpleasant feelings.)*

But because feeling tone is not yours, feeling tone leads to affliction, and it is not possible to control feeling tone thus: 'Let my feeling tone be like this; let my feeling tone not be like that.'

Perception is not yours.

For if perception were yours, perception would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to control your perception thus: 'Let my perception be like this; let my perception not be like that.'

But because perception is not yours, perception leads to affliction, and it is not possible to control perception thus: 'Let my perception be like this; let my perception not be like that.'

The will (and other mental activities) is not yours.

For if the will were yours, will would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to control your will thus: 'Let my will be like this; let my will not be like that.'

But because the will is not yours, will leads to affliction, and it is not possible to control the will thus: 'Let my will be like this; let my will not be like that.'

(*The six sense*) consciousnesses are not yours.

For if consciousness were yours, knowing would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to control your consciousness thus: 'Let my consciousness be like this; let my consciousness not be like that.'

But because consciousness is not yours, knowing leads to affliction, and it is not possible to control consciousness thus: 'Let my consciousness be like this; let my consciousness not be like that.'

Nicca, Anicca Discussion

*Pairs: permanent – impermanent; eternal – ephemeral;
certain, for sure – uncertain; dependable, reliable – unreliable;
lasting – fleeting; sustained – changing, continuous – interrupted;
stable – unstable, fluctuating; endure – disintegrate, vanish;
prolonged – brief; persist – disappear; stay the same – alter*

Question & Answer

"What do you think: does *rūpa* (i.e. bodies and material stuff) persist or disintegrate?"

"It disintegrates, venerable sir."

"Is what disintegrates suffering or happiness?"

"Suffering, venerable sir."

"Is what disintegrates, is suffering and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus:

'This is mine, this is me, this is my permanent essence'?"

"No, venerable sir."

"Is *vedanā* (feeling tone) lasting or fleeting?"

"Fleeting, venerable sir."

"Is what is fleeting suffering or happiness?"

"Suffering, venerable sir."

"Is what is fleeting, suffering and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus:

'This is mine, this is me, this is my permanent essence'?"

"No, venerable sir."

"Is *sañña* (perception) stable or does it fluctuate?"

"It fluctuates, venerable sir."

"Is what fluctuates suffering or happiness?"

"Suffering, venerable sir."

"Is what fluctuates, is suffering and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus:

'This is mine, this is me, this is my permanent essence'?"

"No, venerable sir."

“Does *saṅkhāra* (the will and other mental activity) stay the same or does it come, go and alter?”

“It alters, venerable sir.”

“Is what alters suffering or happiness?”

“Suffering, venerable sir.”

“Is what alters, is suffering and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus:

‘This is mine, this is me, this is my permanent essence’?”

“No, venerable sir.”

“Is *viññāṇa* (consciousness, knowing) constant or always changing?”

“Always changing, venerable sir.”

“Is what is always changing suffering or happiness?”

“Suffering, venerable sir.”

“Is what is inconstant, suffering and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus:

‘This is mine, this is me, this is my permanent essence’?”

“No, venerable sir.”

Conclusion

Therefore, any kind of bodies & material stuff whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, in here or out there, gross or subtle, coarse or refined, inferior or superior, far or near – all bodies & material stuff should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my permanent essence.’

Any kind of feeling tone whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, in here or out there, gross or subtle, coarse or refined, inferior or superior, far or near – all feeling tone should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my permanent essence.’

Any kind of perception whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, in here or out there, gross or subtle, coarse or refined, inferior or superior, far or near – all perception should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my permanent essence.’

Any kind of will and other mental activity whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, in here or out there, gross or subtle, coarse or refined, inferior or superior, far or near – all will (all doing) should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my permanent essence.’ (*There is no DOer.*)

Any kind of consciousness whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, in here or out there, gross or subtle, coarse or refined, inferior or superior, far or near – all consciousness (all knowing) should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my permanent essence.’ (*There is no KNOWer.*)

Nibbidā (discussion)

*causes one to turn away, go away, seek a way out
saṃsara’s ejection seat – Ajahn Brahm*

similes & examples:

Bodhisatta had nibbidā – disappointed with first 2 teachers & left

Bodhisatta's 5 companions in ascetic practices had nibbidā –

left him in disgust when he 'gave up his striving'

gratification, danger, escape triad:

seeing danger -> nibbidā -> seeking escape

shades of meaning:

disappointed, disillusioned, disenchanted

lose interest, disregard, disinterest

had enough, weary, tired

fed up, distaste, aversion

disgust, drawing back, shaking off

repulsed, pushed away

revulsion, revolted, vomit it up

Nibbidā

Seeing thus, the well-instructed noble disciple experiences distaste for bodies & material stuff, aversion (turning away) from feeling tone, revulsion towards perception, disgust with the will (doing), and is fed up with consciousness (knowing).

Experiencing distaste, aversion, revulsion, disgust, and being fed up, having had enough, one lets go of the five components of existence.

Through letting go the mind is liberated.

When it is liberated, there comes the knowledge: 'It is liberated.'

One understands, 'Rebirth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived,

what had to be done has been done, now there is no more renewed existence.'

That is what the Buddha said.

Elated, those bhikkhus delighted in the Buddha's teaching.

And while this discourse was being spoken, the minds of those five bhikkhus were liberated from the outflowings by letting go.

(āsavas: kāmāsavā, bhavāsavā, avijjāsavā)

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Then the group of five bhikkhus, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to rebirth,

having understood the danger in what is subject to rebirth,

seeking freedom from rebirth,

seeking the supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna,

attained freedom from rebirth,

attained the supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna;

being themselves subject to old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and impurity,

having understood the danger in what is subject to old age, sickness, death,

sorrow, and impurity,
seeking freedom from old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and impurity,
seeking the supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna,
attained freedom from old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and impurity,
attained the supreme security from bondage, Nibbāna.

The penetration by insight arose in them: 'This deliverance is unshakeable; this is the last rebirth; now there is no more renewed existence.'

(And so there were 6 arahants in the world!)