

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus." "Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

(SPECULATIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE)

2. "Bhikkhus, there are some recluses and brahmins who speculate about the future and hold views about the future, who assert various doctrinal propositions concerning the future.

(I) Some assert thus: 'The self is percipient and unimpaired after death.'

(II) Some assert thus: 'The self is non-percipient and unimpaired after death.'

(III) Some assert thus: 'The self is neither percipient nor non-percipient and unimpaired after death.'

(IV) Or they describe the annihilation, destruction, and extermination of an existing being [at death].

(V) Or some assert Nibbāna here and now.

"Thus (a) they either describe an existing self that is unimpaired after death; (b) or they describe the annihilation, destruction, and extermination of an existing being [at death]; (c) or they assert Nibbāna here and now. Thus these [views] being five become three, and being three become five. This is the summary of the 'five and three.'

3. (I) “Therein, bhikkhus, those recluses and brahmins who describe the self as percipient and unimpaired after death describe such a self, percipient and unimpaired after death, to be either:

material;

or immaterial;

or both material and immaterial;

or neither material nor immaterial;

or percipient of unity;

or percipient of diversity;

or percipient of the limited;

or percipient of the immeasurable.

Or else, among those few who go beyond this, some make assertions about the consciousness-kasiṇa, immeasurable and imperturbable.

4. “The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, understands this thus: ‘Those good recluses and brahmins who describe the self as percipient and unimpaired after death describe such a self to be either material...or they describe it to be percipient of the immeasurable. Or else, some make assertions about the base of nothingness, immeasurable and imperturbable; [for them] “there is

nothing” is declared to be the purest, supreme, best, and unsurpassed of those perceptions □ whether perceptions of form or of the formless, of unity or diversity. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations.’ Having know ‘There is this,’ seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

5. (II) “Therein, bhikkhus, those recluses and brahmins who describe the self as non-percipient and unimpaired after death describe such a self, non-percipient and unimpaired after death, to be either:

material;

or immaterial;

or both material and immaterial;

or neither material nor immaterial.

6. “Therein, bhikkhus, these criticize those recluses and brahmins who describe the self as percipient and unimpaired after death. Why is that? Because they say: ‘Perception is a disease, perception is a tumor, perception is a dart; this is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, non-perception.’

7. “The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, understands this thus: ‘Those good recluses and brahmins who describe the self as non-percipient and unimpaired after death describe such a self, non-percipient and unimpaired after death, to be either material...or neither material nor immaterial. That any recluse or brahmin could say: “Apart from material form, apart from feeling, apart from perception, apart from formations, I shall describe the coming and going of consciousness, its passing away and reappearance, its growth, increase, and maturation” □ that is impossible. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations.’ Having known ‘There is this,’ seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

8. (III) “Therein, bhikkhus, those recluses and brahmins who describe the self as neither percipient nor non-percipient and unimpaired after death describe such a self, neither percipient nor non-percipient and unimpaired after death, to be either:

material;

or immaterial;

or both material and immaterial;

or neither material nor immaterial.

9. “Therein, bhikkhus, these criticize those good recluses and brahmins who describe the self as percipient and unimpaired after death, and they criticize those good recluses and brahmins who describe the self as non-percipient and unimpaired after death. Why is that? Because they say: ‘Perception is a disease, perception is a tumor, perception is a dart, and non-perception is stupefaction; this is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, neither-perception-nor-non-perception.’

10. “The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, understands this thus: ‘Those good recluses and brahmins who describe the self as neither percipient nor non-percipient and unimpaired after death describe such a self, neither percipient nor non-percipient and unimpaired after death, to be either material...or neither material nor immaterial. If any recluses or brahmins describe the entering upon this base to come about through a measure of formations regarding what is seen, heard, sensed, and cognized, that is declared to be a disaster for entering upon this base. For this base, it is declared, is not be attained as an attainment with formations; this base, it is declared, is to be attained as an attainment with a residue of formations. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations.’ Having known ‘There is this,’ seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

11. (IV) “Therein, bhikkhus, those recluses and brahmins who describe the annihilation, destruction, and extermination of an existing being [at death] criticize those good recluses and brahmins who describe the self as percipient and unimpaired after death, and they criticize

those good recluses and brahmins who describe the self as non-percipient and unimpaired after death, and they criticize those good recluses and brahmins who describe the self as neither percipient nor non-percipient and unimpaired after death. Why is that? All these good recluses and brahmins, rushing onwards, assert their attachment thus: 'We shall be thus after death, we shall be thus after death.' Just as a merchant going to market thinks: 'Through this, that will be mine; with this, I will get that'; so too, these good recluses and brahmins seem like merchants when they declare: 'We shall be thus after death, we shall be thus after death.'

12. "The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, understands this thus: 'Those good recluses and brahmins who describe the annihilation, destruction, and extermination of an existing being [at death], through fear of identity and disgust with identity, keep running and circling around that same identity. Just as a dog bound by a leash tied to a firm post or pillar keeps on running and circling around that same post or pillar; so too, these good recluses and brahmins, through fear of identity and disgust with identity, keep running and circling around that same identity. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations.' Having known 'There is this,' seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

13. "Bhikkhus, any recluses or brahmins who speculate about the future and hold views about the future, who assert various doctrinal propositions concerning the future, all assert these five bases or a certain one among them.

(SPECULATIONS ABOUT THE PAST)

14. "Bhikkhus, there are some recluses and brahmins who speculate about the past and hold views about the past, who assert various doctrinal propositions concerning the past.

(1) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(2) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are not eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(3) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are both eternal and not eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(4) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are neither eternal nor not eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(5) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are finite: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(6) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are infinite: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(7) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are both finite and infinite: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(8) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are neither finite nor infinite: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(9) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are percipient of unity: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(10) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are percipient of diversity: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(11) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are percipient of the limited: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(12) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world are percipient of the immeasurable: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(13) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world [experience] exclusively pleasure: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(14) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world [experience] exclusively pain: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(15) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world [experience] both pleasure and pain: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

(16) Some assert thus: 'The self and the world [experience] neither pleasure nor pain: only this is true, anything else is wrong.'

15. (1) "Therein, bhikkhus, as to those recluses and brahmins who hold such a doctrine and view as this: 'The self and the world are eternal: only this is true, anything else is wrong,' that apart from faith, apart from approval, apart from oral tradition, apart from reasoned cogitation, apart from reflective acceptance of a view, they will have any pure and clear personal knowledge of this □ that is impossible. Since they have no pure and clear personal knowledge, even the mere fragmentary knowledge that those good recluses and brahmins clarify [about their view] is declared to be clinging on their part. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations. Having known 'There is this,' seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

16. (2-16) "Therein, bhikkhus as to those recluses and brahmins who hold such a doctrine and view as this: 'The self and the world are not eternal...both eternal and not eternal...neither eternal nor not eternal...finite...infinite...both finite and infinite...neither finite nor infinite...percipient of unity...percipient of diversity...percipient of the limited...percipient of the immeasurable...[experience] exclusively pleasure...[experience] exclusively pain...[experience] both pleasure and pain...[experience] neither pleasure nor pain: only this is true, anything else is wrong,' that apart from faith, apart from approval, apart from oral tradition, apart from reasoned cogitation, apart from reflective acceptance of a view, they will have any pure and clear personal knowledge of this □ that is impossible. Since they have no pure and clear personal knowledge, even the mere fragmentary knowledge that those good recluses and brahmins clarify [about their view] is declared to be clinging on their part. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations. Having known 'There is this,' seeing the escape

from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

(NIBBĀNA HERE AND NOW)

17. (V) “Here, bhikkhus, some recluse or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and the future and through complete lack of resolve upon the fetters of sensual pleasure, enters upon and abides in the rapture of seclusion. He thinks: ‘This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, that I enter upon and abide in the rapture of seclusion.’ That rapture of seclusion ceases in him. With the cessation of the rapture of seclusion, grief arises, and with the cessation of grief, the rapture of seclusion arises. Just as the sunlight pervades the area that the shadow leaves, and the shadow pervades the area that the sunlight leaves, so too, with the cessation of the rapture of seclusion, grief arises, and with the cessation of grief, the rapture of seclusion arises.

18. “The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, understands this thus: ‘This good recluse or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and future...and with the cessation of grief, the rapture of seclusion arises. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations.’ Having known ‘There is this,’ seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

19. “Here, bhikkhus, some recluse or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and the future, through complete lack of resolve upon the fetters of sensual pleasure, and with the surmounting of the rapture of seclusion, enters upon and abides in unworldly pleasure. He thinks: ‘This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, that I enter upon and abide in unworldly pleasure.’ That unworldly pleasure ceases in him. With the cessation of unworldly pleasure, the rapture of seclusion arises, and with the cessation of the rapture of seclusion, unworldly pleasure arises. Just as the sunlight pervades the area that the shadow leaves, and the shadow pervades the area that the sunlight leaves, so too, with the cessation of unworldly pleasure, the rapture of seclusion arises, and with the cessation of the rapture of seclusion, unworldly pleasure arises.

20. “The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, understands this thus: ‘This good recluse or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and future...and with the cessation of the rapture of seclusion, unworldly pleasure arises. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations.’ Having known ‘There is this,’ seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

21. “Here, bhikkhus, some recluse or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and the future, through complete lack of resolve upon the fetters of sensual pleasure, and with the surmounting of the rapture of seclusion and unworldly pleasure, enters upon and abides in neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. He thinks: ‘This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, that I enter upon and abide in neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.’ That neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling ceases in him. With the cessation of neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, unworldly pleasure arises, and with the cessation of unworldly pleasure, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling arises. Just as the sunlight pervades the area that the shadow leaves, and the shadow pervades the area that the sunlight leaves, so too, with the cessation of neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, unworldly pleasure arises, and with the cessation of unworldly pleasure, neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling arises.

22. “The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, understands this thus: ‘This good recluse or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and future...and with the cessation of unworldly pleasure, neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling arises. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations.’ Having known ‘There is this,’ seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

23. “Here, bhikkhus, some recluse or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and the future, through complete lack of resolve upon the fetters of sensual pleasure, and with the surmounting of the rapture of seclusion, unworldly pleasure, and neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, regards himself thus: ‘I am at peace, I have attained Nibbāna, I am without clinging.’

24. “The Tathāgata, bhikkhus, understands this thus: ‘This good recluse or brahmin, with the relinquishing of views about the past and future...regards himself thus: “I am at peace, I have attained Nibbāna,

I am without clinging.” Certainly this venerable one asserts the way directed to Nibbāna. Yet this good recluse or brahmin still clings, clinging either to a view about the past or to a view about the future or to a fetter of sensual pleasure or to the rapture of seclusion or to unworldly pleasure or to neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. And when this venerable one regards himself thus: “

I am at peace,  
I have attained Nibbāna,  
I

am without clinging,” that too is declared to be clinging on the part of this good recluse or

brahmin. That is conditioned and gross, but there is cessation of formations.’ Having known ‘There is this,’ seeing the escape from that, the Tathāgata has gone beyond that.

25. “Bhikkhus, this supreme state of sublime peace has been discovered by the Tathāgata, that is, liberation through not clinging, by understanding as they actually are the origination, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of the six bases of contact. Bhikkhus, that is the supreme state of sublime peace discovered by the Tathāgata, that is, liberation through not clinging, by understanding as they actually are the origination, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of the six bases of contact.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

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Majjhima Nikāya 102

Part Three— The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipavāsaṅgāyana)

The Division at Devadaha (Devadahavagga)

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