

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattḥī in the Eastern Park, in the Palace of Migāra’s Mother.

2. On that occasion — on the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, on the full-moon night — the Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the Sangha of bhikkhus.

3. Then a certain bhikkhu rose from his seat, arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, and extending his hands in reverential salutation towards the Blessed One, said to him: “Venerable sir, I would ask the Blessed One about a certain point, if the Blessed One would grant me an answer to my question.” — “Sit on your own seat, bhikkhu, and ask what you like.” So the bhikkhu sat on his own seat and said to the Blessed One:

- 4. “Are these not, venerable sir, the five aggregates affected by clinging; that is, the material form aggregate affected by clinging, the feeling aggregate affected by clinging, the perception aggregate affected by clinging, the formations aggregate affected by clinging, and the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging?”

- “These, bhikkhus, are the five aggregates affected by clinging; that is, the material form aggregate affected by clinging...and the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging.”

- Saying, “Good, venerable sir,” the bhikkhu delighted and rejoiced in the Blessed One’s words. Then he asked him a further question:

- 5. “But, venerable sir, in what are these five aggregates affected by clinging rooted?”

- “These five aggregates affected by clinging are rooted in desire, bhikkhu.”

- 6. “Venerable sir, is that clinging the same as these five aggregates affected by clinging, or is

the clinging something apart from the five aggregates affected by clinging?”

“Bhikkhu, that clinging is neither the same as these five aggregates affected by clinging, nor is the clinging something apart from the five aggregates affected by clinging. It is the desire and lust in regard to the five aggregates affected by clinging that is the clinging there.”

7. “But, venerable sir, can there be diversity in the desire and lust regarding these five aggregates affected by clinging?”

“There can be, bhikkhu,” the Blessed One said. “Here, bhikkhu, someone thinks thus: ‘May my material form be thus in the future; may my feelings be thus in the future; may my perceptions be thus in the future; may my formations be thus in the future; may my consciousness be thus in the future.’ Thus there is diversity in the desire and lust regarding these five aggregates affected by clinging.”

8. “But, venerable sir, in what way does the term ‘aggregates’ apply to the aggregates?”

“Bhikkhu, any kind of material form whatever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — this is the material form aggregate. Any kind of feeling whatever...far or near — this is the feeling aggregate. Any kind of perception whatever...far or near — this is the perception aggregate. Any kind of formations whatever...far or near — this is the formations aggregate. Any kind of consciousness whatever...far or near — this is the consciousness aggregate. It is in this way, bhikkhu, that the term ‘aggregate’ applies to the aggregates.”

9. “What is the cause and condition, venerable sir, for the manifestation of the material form aggregate? What is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the feeling aggregate...the perception aggregate...the formations aggregate...the consciousness aggregate?”

“The four great elements, bhikkhu, are the cause and condition for the manifestation of the material form aggregate. Contact is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the feeling aggregate. Contact is the cause and the condition for the manifestation of the perception

aggregate. Contact is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the formations aggregate. Mentality-materiality is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the consciousness aggregate.”

10. “Venerable sir, how does identity view come to be?”

“Here, bhikkhu, an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, regards material form as self, or self as possessed of material form, or material form as in self, or self as in material form. He regards feeling as self...perception as self...formations as self...consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how identity view comes to be.”

11. “But, venerable sir, how does identity view not come to be?”

“Here, bhikkhu, a well-taught noble disciple, who has regard for noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, who has regard for true men and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, does not regard material form as self, or self as possessed of material form, or material form as in self, or self as in material form. He does not regard feeling as self...perception as self...formations as self...consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how identity view does not come to be.”

12. “What, venerable sir, is the gratification, what is the danger, and what is the escape in the case of material form? What is the gratification, what is the danger, and what is the escape in the case of feeling...in the case of perception...in the case of formations...in the case of consciousness?”

“The pleasure and joy, bhikkhu, that arise in dependence on material form — this is the gratification in the case of material form. Material form is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change — this is the danger in the case of material form. The removal of desire and lust, the abandonment of desire and lust for material form — this is the escape in the case of material form.

“The pleasure and joy that arise in dependence on feeling...in dependence on perception...in dependence on formations...in dependence on consciousness □ this is the gratification in the case of consciousness. Consciousness is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change □ this is the danger in the case of consciousness. The removal of desire and lust, the abandonment of desire and lust for consciousness □ this is the escape in the case of consciousness.”

13. “Venerable sir, how does one know, how does one see, so that in regard to this body with its consciousness and all external signs, there is no I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit?”

“Bhikkhu, any kind of material form whatever, whether past or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near □ one sees all material form as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ Any kind of feeling whatever...Any kind of perception whatever...Any kind of formations whatever...Any kind of consciousness whatever...one sees all consciousness as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ It is when one knows and sees thus that in regard to this body with its consciousness and all external signs there is no I-making, mine-making, or underlying tendency to conceit.”

14. Then, in the mind of a certain bhikkhu this thought arose: “So, it seems, material form is not self, feeling is not self, perception is not self, formations are not self, consciousness is not self. What self, then, will actions done by the not-self affect?”

Then the Blessed One, knowing in his mind the thought in the mind of that bhikkhu, addressed the bhikkhus thus: “It is possible, bhikkhus, that some misguided man here, obtuse and ignorant, with his mind dominated by craving, might think that he can outstrip the Teacher’s Dispensation thus: ‘So, it seems, material form is not self...consciousness is not self. What self, then, will actions done by the not-self affect?’ Now, bhikkhus, you have been trained by me through interrogation on various occasions in regard to various things.

15. “Bhikkhus, what do you think? Is material form permanent or impermanent? □
“Impermanent, venerable sir.” □ “Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?” □ “Suffering, venerable sir.” □ “Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’?” □ “No, venerable sir.”

“Bhikkhus, what do you think: Is feeling...perception...formations... consciousness permanent or impermanent?” □ “Impermanent, venerable sir.” □ “Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?” □ “Suffering, venerable sir.” □ “Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’?” □ “No, venerable sir.”

16. “Therefore, bhikkhus, any kind of material form whatever, whether past, future, or present...all material form should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ Any kind of feeling whatever...Any kind of perception whatever...Any kind of formations whatever...Any kind of consciousness whatever...all consciousness should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’”

17. “Seeing thus, a well-taught noble disciple becomes disenchanted with material form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with formations, disenchanted with consciousness.

18. “Being disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’ He understands: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words. Now while this discourse was being spoken, through not clinging the minds of sixty bhikkhus were liberated from the taints.

Majjhima Nikāya 109

Part Three– The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipaṇḍāsapāṭi)

The Division at Devadaha (Devadahavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

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