

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. Then, when it was evening, the venerable Ānanda rose from meditation, went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, he sat down at one side and said to the Blessed One:

3. "Venerable sir, on one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Sakyan country where there is a town of the Sakyans named Nagaraka. There, venerable sir, I heard and learned this from the Blessed One's own lips: 'Now, Ānanda, I often abide in voidness.' Did I hear that correctly, venerable sir, did I learn that correctly, attend to that correctly, remember that correctly?"

"Certainly, Ānanda, you heard that correctly, learned that correctly, attended to that correctly, remembered that correctly. As formerly, Ānanda, so now too I often abide in voidness.

4. Ānanda, just as this Palace of Migāra's Mother is void of elephants, cattle, horses, and mares, void of gold and silver, void of the assembly of men and women, and there is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the Sangha of bhikkhus; so too, a bhikkhu – not attending to the perception of village, not attending to the perception of people – attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of forest. His mind enters into that perception of forest and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: 'Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of village, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of people, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of forest.' He understands: 'This field of perception is void of the perception of village; this field of perception is void of the perception of people. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of forest.' Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: 'This is present.' Thus, Ānanda, this is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness.

5. "Again, Ānanda, a bhikkhu – not attending to the perception of people, not attending to the perception of forest – attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of earth. His mind enters into that perception of earth and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. Just as

a bull's hide becomes free from folds when fully stretched with a hundred pegs; so too, a bhikkhu – not attending to any of the ridges and hollows of this earth, to the rivers and ravines, the tracts of stumps and thorns, the mountains and uneven places – attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of earth. His mind enters into that perception of earth and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: 'Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of people, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of forest, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of earth.' He understands: 'This field of perception is void of the perception of people; this field of perception is void of the perception of forest. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of earth.' Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: 'This is present.' Thus, Ānanda, this too is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness.

6. "Again, Ānanda, a bhikkhu – not attending to the perception of forest, not attending to the perception of earth – attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of infinite space. His mind enters into that perception of the base of infinite space and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: 'Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of forest, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of earth, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of infinite space.' He understands: 'This field of perception is void of the perception of forest; this field of perception is void of the perception of earth. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of infinite space.' Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: 'This is present.' Thus, Ānanda, this too is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness.

7. "Again, Ānanda, a bhikkhu – not attending to the perception of earth, not attending to the perception of the base of infinite space – attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of infinite consciousness. His mind enters into that perception of the base of infinite consciousness and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: 'Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of earth, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of the base of infinite space, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of infinite consciousness.' He understands: 'This field of perception is void of the perception of earth; this field of perception is void of the perception of the base of infinite space. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of infinite consciousness.' Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: 'This is present.' Thus, Ānanda, this too is his genuine, undistorted,

pure descent into voidness.

8. “Again, Ānanda, a bhikkhu – not attending to the perception of the base of infinite space, not attending to the perception of the base of infinite consciousness – attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of nothingness. His mind enters into that perception of the base of nothingness and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: ‘Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of the base of infinite space, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of the base of infinite consciousness, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of nothingness.’ He understands: ‘This field of perception is void of the perception of the base of infinite space; this field of perception is void of the perception of the base of infinite consciousness. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of nothingness.’ Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: ‘This is present.’ Thus, Ānanda, this too is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness.

9. “Again, Ānanda, a bhikkhu – not attending to the perception of the base of infinite consciousness, not attending to the perception of the base of nothingness – attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. His mind enters into that perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: ‘Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of the base of infinite consciousness, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of the base of nothingness, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.’ He understands: ‘This field of perception is void of the perception of the base of infinite consciousness; this field of perception is void of the perception of the base of nothingness. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.’ Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: ‘This is present.’ Thus, Ānanda, this too is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness.

10. “Again, Ānanda, a bhikkhu – not attending to the perception of the base of nothingness, not attending to the perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception – attends to the singleness dependent on the signless concentration of mind. His mind enters into that signless concentration of mind and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: ‘Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of the base of nothingness, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on

the perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, that connected with the six bases that are dependent on this body and conditioned by life.’ He understands: ‘This field of perception is void of the perception of the base of nothingness; this field of perception is void of the perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, that connected with the six bases that are dependent on this body and conditioned by life.’ Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: ‘This is present.’ Thus, Ānanda, this too is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness.

11. “Again, Ānanda, a bhikkhu – not attending to the perception of the base of nothingness, not attending to the perception of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception – attends to the singleness dependent on the signless concentration of mind. His mind enters into that signless concentration of mind and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: ‘This signless concentration of mind is conditioned and volitionally produced. But whatever is conditioned and volitionally produced is impermanent, subject to cessation.’ When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. 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.’

12. “He understands thus: ‘Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the taint of sensual desire, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the taint of being, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the taint of ignorance, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, that connected with the six bases that are dependent on this body and conditioned by life.’ He understands: ‘This field of perception is void of the taint of sensual desire; this field of perception is void of the taint of being; this field of perception is void of the taint of ignorance. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, that connected with the six bases that are dependent on this body and conditioned by life.’ Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: ‘This is present.’ Thus, Ānanda, this is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness, supreme and unsurpassed.

13. “Ānanda, whatever recluses and brahmins in the past entered upon and abided in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness, all entered upon and abided in this same pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness. Whatever recluses and brahmins in the future will enter upon and abide in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness, all will enter upon and abide in this same pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness. Whatever recluses and brahmins in the present enter upon and abide in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness, all enter upon and abide in this same pure,

supreme, unsurpassed voidness. Therefore, Ānanda, you should train thus: ‘We will enter upon and abide in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Ānanda was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

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Majjhima Nikāya 121

Part Three– The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipavāsaṅgahāyaka)

The Division on Voidness (Suññatavagga)

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