

(emptiness-concentration) corresponds to *suññatā-vihāra* (emptiness-abode),<sup>87</sup> and 上座禪住 (the meditative abode of the elders) corresponds to *mahāpurisa-vihāra* (abode of great men).<sup>88</sup> Thus, “emptiness-concentration” (SA 236) or “emptiness-abode” (MN 151) is portrayed in the two versions as a highly valued meditation state.

Regarding how one practises this meditation, the two versions share the following teachings (in summary):

A bhikṣu who wishes to abide in emptiness-concentration or the emptiness-abode should, when on the alms round, reflect thus: In regard to visible forms perceived by the eye [MN: also sounds perceived by the ear, etc.], do I have desire, longing, craving, or attachment [MN: excitement, desire, hatred, delusion, sensory reaction]? If he knows that he has these mental states, he should make an effort to get rid of them; if he knows that he does not have them, he should mindfully practise skilful states throughout the day.

Thus, the two versions indicate that emptiness-concentration or emptiness-abode is a state of mind that is empty of unskilful states such as desire and longing in connection with the sense spheres.

(4) SA 335 (no SN counterpart):<sup>89</sup>

I will teach you Dharma ... namely the Discourse on *Emptiness in its Ultimate Meaning* (第一義空經)<sup>90</sup> ... Bhikṣus, when the eye arises, *there is no place from which it comes; when it ceases, there is no place to which it goes*. Thus, the eye, being not real, arises; having arisen it ceases completely. It is a result of [previous] action (業報),<sup>91</sup> but there is *no doer* (無作者);<sup>92</sup> when these aggregates cease, other aggregates continue, except in *conventional Dharma* (俗數法 *sushu-fa*).<sup>93</sup> The same teachings apply also to the ear, nose, tongue, body,

87 EA 45. 6 (T 2, p. 773b-c) uses the same term 空三昧 as SA 236.

88 EA 45. 6 (T 2, p. 773b-c) indicates that 空三昧 is “the supreme *samādhi*” (第一三昧) and “the royal *samādhi*” (王三昧).

89 T 2, p. 92c (CSA i, p. 414; another counterpart is EA 37. 7: T 2, p. 713c). The Sanskrit of SA 335 has been reconstructed from the Chinese by Étienne LAMOTTE; see *Traité*, pp. 2135-2137, and “Trois Sūtra”, pp. 313-323.

90 LAMOTTE: *paramārtha-sūnyatā-sūtra*.

91 LAMOTTE: *karma-vipāka*.

92 LAMOTTE: *akartṛka* (= not-self).

93 LAMOTTE: *dharmasaṃketa*.

and mind, except in conventional Dharma. The conventional Dharma is: Because this exists, that exists; because this arises, that arises,<sup>94</sup> thus: Conditioned by ignorance are activities; conditioned by activities is consciousness, and so on ... and thus arises this whole mass of suffering. And again, *when this does not exist, that does not exist; when this ceases, that ceases*:<sup>95</sup> When ignorance ceases, activities cease; when activities cease, consciousness ceases, and so on ... and thus ceases this whole mass of suffering. Bhiksus, this is called the Discourse on the Nature of Emptiness in its Ultimate Meaning (第一義空法經 *diyiyi-kong-fajing*).

Thus, to see “emptiness in its ultimate meaning” is to see fully both (a) the nature of conditioned arising and ceasing (the so-called conventional Dharma), and (b) the six internal sense spheres neither coming from anywhere when arising nor going anywhere when ceasing; being not real in arising and ceasing; as results of action (fruits of previous karma), but without a doer (i.e. empty of self).

(5) A similar message is contained in SA 273 (no SN counterpart):<sup>96</sup>

... Bhiksus, just as two hands coming together produce sound, so, conditioned by eye and visible forms arises eye consciousness, and these three things together are contact. From contact arise feeling, perception, and volition. *All these phenomena are not-self, impermanent; they are without a permanent self, not eternal, not stable, changing.* Why is this so? Bhiksus, these have the nature of birth, ageing, death, ceasing, and rebirth. Bhiksus, *all compounded things (行)<sup>97</sup> are as an illusion, a flame, ceasing in an instant; being not real they come (arise) and go (cease).* Therefore, bhiksus, with regard to *all empty compounded things (空諸行)* you should know, rejoice in, and be mindful of this: *All empty compounded things are empty of [any] permanent, eternal, lasting, unchanging nature; [they are] not self and not belonging to self ... [So also for ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, with their corresponding objects, consciousness, contact, etc.]*

94 LAMOTTE: *asmin satīdaṃ bhavati, asyotpādād idam utpadyate.*

95 LAMOTTE: *asminn asatī idam na bhavati, asya nirodhād idam nirudhyate.*

96 T 2, p. 72c (CSA i, pp. 353-354).

97 Skt. *saṃskārāḥ*.