

The discourse goes on to say that as each of the six internal sense spheres is impermanent, so it is suffering; and being suffering, it is not-self. And seeing this, one becomes disgusted with each of the six internal sense spheres; being disgusted, one does not delight in it; not delighting, one attains liberation (解脫) and liberation-knowledge and vision (解脫知見).

Thus, “empty” as used here (SA 273) refers mainly to absence of self, to self being not real, as seen in the coming (arising) and going (ceasing) of the sense spheres and derived phenomena. This teaching is similar to that of the Discourse on Emptiness in its Ultimate Meaning (SA 335) discussed above. The present discourse (SA 273) is identified by Yin Shun as a “text chanted in the Sarvāstivādin tradition”.<sup>98</sup>

The findings of this section may be summarised as follows:

Seeing the *sense spheres* and related phenomena as “impermanent, suffering, and not-self” is a common teaching in the two versions, whereas seeing them as “impermanent, suffering, empty, and not-self” is frequent only in SA. However, the item “empty” or “emptiness”, though it particularly characterises SA, does appear also in a few Pāli counterparts. Here, the notion of emptiness usually means that the sense spheres and related phenomena are empty of permanence, or empty of *self*. A seemingly different meaning is that the mind is empty of unskillful states in connection with the sense spheres.

#### 4. Practices involving the sense spheres

Closely connected with the notion of the *sense spheres* are teachings concerning body-and-mind in everyday practice. These teachings will now be examined in seven groups:

##### (1) Three practices

SN 35. 198 and SN 35. 120 (no SA counterparts) describe in very similar manner a set of three practices. SN 35. 198 will be quoted here. It has the Buddha saying thus:<sup>99</sup>

Bhikṣus, possessed of three things a bhikṣu dwells full of pleasure and happiness (sukhasomanassabahulo) in this very life, and has a basis for the destruction of the influxes (āsavānaṃ khayāya). What three? He is *one who guards the sense-doors* (indriyesu guttadvāro), is

98 CSA i, p. 355, note 1: 撫掌喻經 (Hand-clapping Simile Sūtra).

99 SN iv, pp. 175-177 (see also SN iv, pp. 103-105: SN 35. 120).

*moderate in eating* (bhojane mattaññu), and is *devoted to wakefulness* (jāgariyam anuyutto).

And how, bhiksus, is a bhiksu *one who guards the sense-doors*?

Herein a bhiksu, *seeing a visible object with the eye does not grasp at its outward appearance* (na`nimittagāhī) *nor at its secondary features* (nānuyvañjanaggāhī). Since covetousness (abhijjhā), distress (domanassā), those evil unskillful states (pāpakā-akusalā-dhammā), might attack one who remains with *the eye faculty unrestrained*, he applies himself to restraint (saṃvarāya) protects (rakkhati) *the eye faculty*, applies restraint (saṃvaram) *of the eye faculty*. Hearing a sound with the ear ... smelling a scent with the nose ... tasting a savour with the tongue ... touching tangibles with the body ... cognising (viññāya) a mental object with the mind ... Bhiksus, just so, a bhiksu practises for guarding (ārakkhāya), restraint (saṃyamāya), taming (damāya), and calming (upasamāya) *of the six faculties* (channam indriyānam). Thus, bhiksus, is a bhiksu one who guards the sense-doors.

And how, bhiksus, is a bhiksu *moderate in eating*?

Herein, bhiksus, a bhiksu takes food with proper care, not for fun, indulgence, not for personal charm and adornment, but for maintenance and sustenance of the body, to overcome its pangs, to aid the practice of the noble conduct. ... That, bhiksus, is how a bhiksu is moderate in eating.

And how, bhiksus, is a bhiksu *devoted to wakefulness*?

Herein, bhiksus, a bhiksu during the day, by walking up and down and sitting, purifies his mind (cittam) of hindering mental states (āvaraṇiyehi dhammehi). In the first watch of the night by walking up and down and sitting he purifies his mind of hindering mental states. In the middle watch of the night he lies down on his right side like a lion, placing one foot on the other, mindful and aware, fixing his mind intently on the thought of rising. In the last watch of the night, having risen, by walking up and down and sitting, he purifies his mind of hindering mental states. Thus, bhiksus, is a bhiksu devoted to wakefulness.

Of the three practices described here (SN 35. 198, similar to SN 35. 120) the first, *guarding the sense-doors*, is specifically based on the six internal sense spheres and derived phenomena. The others are more general.

(2) Four practices

The same three practices, plus a fourth are described in SA 275. This discourse has its Pāli counterpart not in SN but in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, namely AN 8. 9.<sup>100</sup> In both versions the Buddha says that the bhikṣu Nanda is able to practise the noble life with fullness and purity because:

- i. he is one who has guarded or closed sense-doors (防護/關閉根門)
- ii. he is moderate in drinking and eating (飲食知量)
- iii. he is devoted to practice in the first and last watches of the night (初夜後夜精勤修習)
- iv. he is possessed of right mindfulness and right comprehension (正念正智成就)<sup>101</sup>

The fourth practice is described thus:<sup>102</sup>

Looking to the eastern quarter, the good clansman Nanda, who is possessed of one-pointed mind and right mindfulness, remains stable and observing. The same applies for looking to the southern, western, and northern quarters. So observing, worldly covetousness (貪), distress (憂), those evil unskillful states (惡不善法) do not flow into his mind. He retains right mindfulness, does not let scattered mind occur, and knows (覺): the arising (起), enduring (住), and ceasing (滅) of all feelings (受); the arising, enduring, and ceasing of all perceptions (想); and the arising, enduring, and ceasing of all reflections (覺).<sup>103</sup>

The addition of this fourth item is the only significant difference between the content of this discourse (SA 275 = AN 8. 9) and the ones considered above (SN 35. 198, SN 35. 120).

100 T 2, p. 73a-c (CSA i, pp. 356-358). AN iv, pp. 166-168.

101 In the counterpart AN iv, p. 166: satisampajañña samannāgato.

102 T 2, p. 73b (CSA i, p. 357). A similar teaching is also found in the counterpart: AN iv, pp. 166, 168.

103 Skt. vitarka.