

Samyukta Āgama

474. Gradual Subsiding

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Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was abiding in Rājagṛha in the Kalandaka Bamboo Garden. At that time, Venerable Ānanda was alone in a solitary place, contemplating in dhyāna, and thinking, “The Bhagavān has spoken of three types of sensations: sensations of pleasure, sensations of pain, and sensations of neither pleasure nor pain. Moreover, all of these sensations are spoken of as suffering. What does this mean?”

After thinking this, he arose from dhyāna and went to the place of the Bhagavān. Bowing at his feet, he stood to one side and addressed the Buddha, saying, “Bhagavān, I was alone at a solitary place, in dhyāna thinking, “The Bhagavān has spoken of three types of sensations: sensations of pleasure, sensations of pain, and sensations of neither pleasure nor pain. Moreover, all of these sensations are spoken of as suffering. What does this mean?” The Buddha said to Ānanda, “The reason I say this is because they are all conditioned and impermanent. Because all are conditioned dharmas subject to change, these sensations are in each case spoken of as suffering. Moreover, Ānanda, I say that because these conditions are gradually extinguished, because these conditions gradually subside, that all sensations are entirely suffering.”

Ānanda addressed the Buddha, saying, “How, Bhagavān, are sensations gradually extinguished?” The Buddha spoke to Ānanda, saying, “[1] When in the First Dhyāna, words and speech are extinguished. [2] When in the Second Dhyāna, vitarka and vicāra are extinguished. [3] When in the Third Dhyāna, mental joy is extinguished. [4] When in the Fourth Dhyāna, inhalation and exhalation are extinguished. [5] When in the realm of infinite space, the appearance of form is extinguished. [6] When in the realm of infinite consciousness, the appearance of the realm of infinite space is extinguished. [7] When in the realm of nothingness, the realm of infinite consciousness is extinguished. [8] When in the realm of neither perception nor non-perception, the realm of nothingness is extinguished. [9] With the extinction of perceptions and sensations, then perceptions and sensations have been extinguished. This is called the gradual extinction of conditions.”

Ānanda addressed the Buddha, saying, “Bhagavān, how do the various conditions

gradually subside?” The Buddha spoke to Ānanda, saying, “[1] When in the First Dhyāna, words and speech subside. [2] When in the Second Dhyāna, vitarka and vicāra subside. [3] When in the Third Dhyāna, mental joy subsides. [4] When in the Fourth Dhyāna, inhalation and exhalation subside. [5] When in the realm of infinite space, the appearance of form subsides. [6] When in the realm of infinite consciousness, the appearance of the realm of infinite space subsides. [7] When in the realm of nothingness, the realm of infinite consciousness subsides. [8] When in the realm of neither perception nor non-perception, the realm of nothingness subsides. [9] With the extinction of perceptions and sensations, then perceptions and sensations have subsided. This is called the gradual subsiding of conditions.” Ānanda addressed the Buddha, saying, “Bhagavān, this is called the gradual subsiding of conditions.”

The Buddha spoke to Ānanda, saying, “There is also the supreme subsiding, the extraordinary subsiding, the foremost subsiding, the highest subsiding.” Ānanda addressed the Buddha, saying, “What is the supreme subsiding, extraordinary subsiding, foremost subsiding, the highest subsiding, unsurpassed by other subsidings?” The Buddha said to Ānanda, “Toward craving and desires, the mind is dispassionate and liberated. Toward anger and delusion, the mind is dispassionate and liberated. This is what is called the supreme subsiding, extraordinary subsiding, foremost subsiding, the highest subsiding, unsurpassed by other subsidings.”

After the Buddha had spoken this sūtra, then Venerable Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said, and blissfully practiced in accordance.