MN 111 — One by One

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Text

Middle Discourses 111

One by One

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Sāriputta is astute, mendicants. He has great wisdom, widespread wisdom, laughing wisdom, swift wisdom, sharp wisdom, and penetrating wisdom. For a fortnight he practiced discernment of phenomena one by one. And this is how he did it.

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, he entered and remained in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. And he distinguished the phenomena of the first absorption one by one: placing and keeping and rapture and bliss and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, he entered and remained in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.

And he distinguished the phenomena of the second absorption one by one: internal confidence and rapture and bliss and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, he entered and remained in the third absorption, where he meditated with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.’

And he distinguished the phenomena of the third absorption one by one: bliss and mindfulness and awareness and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: ‘So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.’ Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: ‘There is an escape beyond.’ Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, he entered and remained in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

And he distinguished the phenomena of the fourth absorption one by one: equanimity and neutral feeling and mental unconcern due to tranquility and pure mindfulness and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: ‘So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.’ Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, his mind without boundaries. He understood: ‘There is an escape beyond.’ Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

Furthermore, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite’, he entered and remained in the dimension of infinite space.

And he distinguished the phenomena of the dimension of infinite space one by one: the perception of the dimension of infinite space and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: ‘So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.’ Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: ‘There is an escape beyond.’ Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

Furthermore, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is infinite’, he entered and remained in the dimension of infinite consciousness.

And he distinguished the phenomena of the dimension of infinite consciousness one by one: the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness and unification of mind;

contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, his mind free of limits. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

Furthermore, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', he entered and remained in the dimension of nothingness.

And he distinguished the phenomena of the dimension of nothingness one by one: the perception of the dimension of nothingness and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

Furthermore, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, he entered and remained in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

And he emerged from that attainment with mindfulness. Then he contemplated the phenomena of that attainment that had passed, ceased, and perished: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, his mind without boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

Furthermore, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, he entered and remained in the cessation of perception and feeling. And, having seen with wisdom, his defilements came to an end.

And he emerged from that attainment with mindfulness. Then he contemplated the phenomena of that attainment that had passed, ceased, and perished: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is no escape beyond.' By cultivating that he confirmed that there is not.

And if there's anyone of whom it may be rightly said that they have attained mastery and perfection in noble ethics, immersion, wisdom, and freedom, it's Sāriputta.

And if there's anyone of whom it may be rightly said that they're the Buddha's bosom son, born from his mouth, born of the teaching, created by the teaching, heir in the teaching, not in things of the flesh, it's Sāriputta.

Sāriputta rightly keeps rolling the supreme Wheel of Dhamma that was rolled forth by the Realized One.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.