

15

(Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta

The (Ānanda) Discourse on the Dharma in Brief | S 35.86

Theme: On Ānanda's attaining arhathood

Translated by Piya Tan ©2017

1 Sutta notes and highlights

1.1 SUTTA NOTES

1.1.1 Commentary and Subcommentary

1.1.1.1 There is no traditional Commentary on this Sutta, except for advising us to understand the Sutta in the light of **the (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta** (S 22.83)—that is, the “advice to Ānanda” (*ānand'ovāda*) given in the Khandha Vagga of the Saṃyutta (SA 2:371).¹ The Commentary is basically telling us that the two suttas are closely connected.

1.1.1.2 The Subcommentary adds that while the subject of the discourse in the Khandha Vagga is the aggregates (*khandha*), here (in **the Saḷāyatana Vagga** of the Saṃyutta), it is focused on the sense-bases (*āyatana*).² From these brief but vital notes of the Commentary and its Subcommentary, we can safely surmise that while the (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta (S 22.83) gives a full account of Ānanda's attainment of **streamwinning**, the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta (S 35.86), as the title suggests, is only an abbreviated version of it. Both the Suttas seems to refer to the same event, that is, Ānanda's attaining of streamwinning.

1.1.1.3 Below, we will discuss another possible interpretation, that is, the likelihood that **the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta** (S 35.86) is actually the Buddha's last instructions to Ānanda, that is, the “brief teaching” for his reflection and practice for the attaining of arhathood. [1.2.3]

1.1.2 Sutta summary and structure

1.1.2.1 The (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta (S 35.86) reports Ānanda receiving from the Buddha teachings on **non-clinging** in terms of the 6 sense-faculties (*saḷāyatana*), beginning with **the eye**, whose nature is reflected in terms of the 3 characteristics of *impermanence* [§2], *unsatisfactoriness* [§3] and *non-self* [§4]. Then, **form** is treated in the same manner [§§5-7], followed by **eye-consciousness** [§§8-10]. This forms the 1st cycle of the 18 elements: the “**elements**” [1.2.1] here are the faculty of sight, *the eye*; its sense-object, *form*; and its consciousness, that is, visual consciousness, *seeing*.

1.1.2.2 The same cycle is repeated five more times, respectively, for *the ear, nose, tongue, body and mind*. It is vital that such a cycle is read or reflected on *in full* for its full spiritual effect, and as a basis for awakening. A mindful reflection of all the 6 cycles or, even just one of them, is a wholesome Dharma exercise, best done daily or periodically in this manner.

¹ *Tatiyaṃ khandhiya, vagge ānand'ovāde* [S 22.83] *vutta, nayan'eva veditabbaṃ* (SA 2:371). See **(Sotāpatti) Ānanda S** (S 22.83/3:105 f), SD 71.11.

² *Vutta, nayan'eva veditabbaṃ'ti khandhiya, vagge khandhavasena āgataṃ, idha āyatana, vassenāti ayam eva viseso* (SAṬ:Be 2:295).

1.1.2.3 At the end of the reading or reflection, when our mind is calm and clear, we may go on to meditate. Or, at the end of a good meditation, during the review period, we should reflect on any of the cycles or the full set of cycles of reflections on the sense-faculties. This is wholesome Dharma practice.³

1.1.2.4 At the end of the Sutta, the Sutta closes with the Buddha stating to Ānanda the path pericope [§59], closing the Sutta with the words: “There is no more of this state of being” [§63f]. Unlike in **the (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta** (S 22.83), where Ānanda declares his attaining streamwinning [1.2.2], **the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta** makes no mention of Ānanda attaining arhathood at all [1.2.3].

We have at least 3 possible scenarios for **the teaching of the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta**:

- (1) Ānanda asks for a teaching to go into solitary practice, after which he receives teachings from Puṇṇa Mantani,putta, and then gains streamwinning. [1.2.2]
- (2) After receiving the Buddha’s instructions, Ānanda goes into solitary practice, but nothing comes out of it.
- (3) As the Buddha lies on his deathbed, Ānanda requests for instructions to go into solitary practice, but is only able to do so after the Buddha’s passing; then, Ānanda attains arhathood.

Alternative (1) is unlikely because we do not have any record of a monk receiving such instructions *twice* for the same solitary retreat, especially when the instructions were given by the Buddha himself. Moreover, **the (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta** already records his streamwinning.

Alternative (2) is possible but unlikely because, again, we have no precedent for such an occurrence.

Finally, (3)—from the internal evidence of the Sutta itself—is the most likely scenario, although it is not recorded in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), SD 9. [1.2.3]

1.2 SUTTA HIGHLIGHTS

1.2.1 “Element”

1.2.1.1 Here, “**element**” (*dhātu*) refers basically to “a distinct sphere of experience.” A visible form, for example, is experientially distinct from an auditory object, from the visual organ, from visual consciousness, and so on. This psychological sense of *dhātu* has been defined and discussed elsewhere, which we should be familiar with to properly understand this Sutta.⁴

The key teaching given to Ānanda in **the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta** (S 35.86) is what I call the “3-cycle 18-element” pericope: each of *the 6 sense-faculties* (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) is presented with its respective *sense-object* and finally its *sense-consciousness*. Each faculty thus goes through 3 cycles: faculty, object and consciousness—giving us the 18 elements—all reflected as being *impermanent*.

1.2.1.2 Understanding their impermanence brings about revulsion (*nibbidā*),⁵ in the ready practitioner, towards these 18 elements—the body and mind as a whole. This, in turn, leads to freedom from craving, from suffering, and finally to arhathood itself.

³ A similar practice is described in **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7, which is guaranteed to lead to streamwinning in this life itself. The next two suttas in this **Okkanti Saṃyutta** (S 25), each centres on sense-objects, **(Anicca) Rūpa S** (S 25.2), and on consciousness, **(Anicca) Viññāna S** (S 25.3). The last of the 10 suttas in **S 25** centre on the 5 aggregates, **(Anicca) Khandha S** (S 25.10), SD 42.17.

⁴ SD 50.13 (2.3.1).

⁵ On revulsion, see **Nibbidā**, SD 20.1.

1.2.2 Ānanda's streamwinning

1.2.2.1 We have noted that the Commentaries and Subcommentaries seem to take that both the (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta (S 22.83) and the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta (S 35.86) refer to the same event, that is, Ānanda's streamwinning [1.1.1.2]. However, it is difficult to reconcile this conclusion with the fact that although the two Suttas have the same approach—the reflection on the 3 characteristics—they each actually use different doctrines. While the (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta basically uses the 5 aggregates, the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta uses the 18 elements (the 6 internal sense-faculties, the 6 external sense-objects, and their respective sense-consciousnesses).

The (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta records Ānanda's attaining streamwinning. Due to its use of a different set of doctrines, it is unlikely that the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta records the same event, that is, Ānanda's attainment of streamwinning.

To compound the problem, the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta uses what seems to an arhathood pericope but does not mention any attainment of arhathood at the end of the Sutta. Note that the closing line does not say, as in **the Saṅkhitta (Desita) Sutta** (A 8.63): "And that monk became one of the arhats."⁶ The underscored phrase mentions the person, usually by name, who has become an arhat, or those who have become arhats.

1.2.2.3 While **the (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta** (S 22.83) gives a full account of Ānanda's attaining of streamwinning based on the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k, khandha*)—form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness⁷—**the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta** (S 35.86) gives only an "abbreviated" (*saṅkhitta*) account of it, but bases itself on the 6 sense-bases (*saḷāyatana*)—the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind—the 6 sense-objects, and their respective consciousnesses: these form the 18 "elements" (*dhātu*) [1.2.1], as we have noted. This is actually a full sutta—such as **the Samugghāta Sappāya Sutta 2** (S 35.32)⁸—but with the word *saṅkhitta* ("in brief") in its title. [1.1.1.2]

1.2.2.4 The question that arises is: Why do the teachings in the two Suttas (S 22.83 and S 35.86) about the same event seem to differ in details?

A possible answer is that both the suttas are abbreviated in some way, **S 22.83** much less than **S 35.86**. We have a clue from **the Cūḷa Rāhuḷ'ovāda Sutta** (M 147,3-10), which uses the 5-cycle aggregate pericope, consisting of reflections on (1) the sense-faculty, (2) its sense-object, (3) its sense-consciousness, (4) its sense-contact, and (5) the other four aggregates—feeling, perception, formations and consciousness—that arise with sense-contact. [2.1.7]

An older version of **the (Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta** (S 22.83)—this could be a sutta that is now lost—that has *the 5-cycle aggregate pericope*, like the Cūḷa Rāhuḷ'ovāda Sutta. It is of this Sutta that **the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta** (S 35.86)—which applies the 5 aggregates—is abbreviated. It is possible that the Commentators were aware of this lost older Sutta.

This lost older text, as we have noted, reflects on each of the 6 sense-bases (*saḷāyatana*) in the light of the 5 aggregates. Another possibility is that Ānanda is first taught about the 6 sense-bases in some detail, and then, on another occasion, he is taught about the 5 aggregates in some detail. We have both these texts—so no text is lost.

⁶ A 8.63,23 (SD 46.6).

⁷ S 22.83/3:105 f (SD 71.11).

⁸ S 35.32/4:24-26 (SD 29.21).

1.2.3 Ānanda's arhathood

1.2.3.1 Ānanda served as the Buddha's personal attendant during the last 25 years of the Buddha's life. Throughout that time, he remained only a streamwinner, a saint of the very first stage of the noble path. In spite of his closeness to the Buddha—probably because of it—it was not until after the Buddha's passing that Ānanda was able to attain arhathood, the final liberation.⁹

However, though he was not an arhat, he had the 4 analytic skills (*paṭisambhidā*)¹⁰ of an arhat, being among the few who possessed such abilities while yet learners (*sekhā*), that is, saints who are not full-fledged arhats (VbhA 388). When Mahā Kassapa and other elders decided to hold the 1st council or recital (*saṅgīti*) to systematise the Dharma-Vinaya, that is, the Buddha's teaching and discipline, 500 monks, all arhats except for Ānanda, were chosen as delegates.

1.2.3.2 On this account, Ānanda was instructed by his colleagues to exert great effort to attain full liberation. When the council assembled, a seat was left vacant for him. It was not until late the previous night that, after a final supreme effort, Ānanda fully awakened.¹⁴⁶

It is said that he won the 6 superknowledges (*abhiññā*) while he was just inclining himself on his bed, his head hardly on the pillow, his feet hardly off the ground. He is therefore described as having gained arhathood in none of the conventional 4 postures (walking, standing, sitting, reclining).¹¹

When he appeared in the council, Mahā Kassapa welcomed him warmly and exulted thrice for joy.¹² The council appointed Ānanda to answer Mahā Kassapa's questions, and to assist with him in rehearsing the Dharma (while Upāli, in his turn, rehearsed the Vinaya).¹³

1.2.3.3 For some inexplicable reason, neither the suttas nor the Commentaries gives us any account of the arhathood of such a prominent disciple of the Buddha, though we have numerous accounts of how other great disciples became arhats. One clear reason for this is surely the fact that Ānanda did not attain arhathood *during* the Buddha's life-time, but did so *after* the Buddha's passing.

Perhaps, there was some record or memory of his awakening amongst some individual monk or group of monks. However, after the Buddha's passing, such monks probably retired to solitary forest lives, or lived in remote forest dwellings. In due course, with the deaths of those monks, the records and memories of Ānanda's arhathood were also forgotten.

1.2.3.4 However, we do have a clue of Ānanda's attaining of arharhood in the teachings of **the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta**. This Sutta comprises the 6-cycle 18-element pericope, that is, a stock passage containing a reflection of the 6 internal sense-faculties, their 6 external sense-objects, and their respective sense-consciousnesses—together they are called the "18 elements." The number "6 cycles" refers to those beginning with each of the 6 internal sense-faculties, that is, the eye cycle, the ear cycle, the nose cycle, the tongue cycle, the body cycle and the mind cycle. [2.1.4]

⁹ Buddhaghosa gives a long account of Ānanda's struggle for awakening (DA 1:9 f).

¹⁰ VbhA 388. The 4 analytic skills (*paṭisambhidā*) are those of (1) meanings (*attha paṭisambhidā*); (2) dharma [causes and conditions] (*dhmma, paṭisambhidā*); (3) language (*nirutti, paṭisambhidā*); and (4) ready wit (*paṭibhāṇa, -paṭisambhidā*): SD 28.4 (4); SD 41.6 (2.2).

¹¹ V 2:286; VA 1:12; KhpA 96.

¹² **Buddhaghosa** says that, according to the Majjhima reciters, Ānanda, coming through the earth, appeared on his seat while the others looked on (VA 1:12; DA 1:10 f; KhpA 95 f). Others say that he came through the air. According to **Dhammapāla**, it was a great brahma from Suddhāvāsa who announced his attainment of arhathood to the council (ThaA 3:116). It is likely that all these accounts reflect different aspects of the same event.

¹³ This is traditionally said to be the 1st council, held at the Satta,paṇṇī cave outside Rājagaha, 3 months after the Buddha's passing. A detailed account is found in ch 11 of the Culla,vagga of the Vinaya (V 2:284-293)

1.2.3.5 Here are key reasons why **the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta** is very likely to be the Buddha’s final instructions to the elder Ānanda for his solitary practice for the attaining of arhathood. These reasons should not be taken singly but understood as a whole.

- (1) For one of the most prominent disciples of the Buddha, it is perplexing that there is no sutta that records his arhathood, as is common in the cases of other great disciples.
- (2) The contents of the (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta contains **the “6-cycle 18-element” pericope** or cycle [2.0] which is one of the formulas describing the process of arhathood.
- (3) The Sutta does not mention Ānanda’s arhathood because it is a record of his “final instruction” from the Buddha, not of his solitary practice and its fruit. As a rule, when one of the prominent disciples receives a “brief teaching,” goes into solitary retreat, and gains arhathood, they would then report back to the Buddha. In this case, since the Buddha has passed away, and Ānanda appears the next day to attend the 1st council (which is recorded elsewhere) [1.2.3.2], there appears to be no conclusion to this Sutta.

2 The cycles of elements

2.0 The 18-element pericope

The (Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta (S 35.86) teaching consists of **“the 6-cycle 18-element” pericope**—the 18 “elements” are the 6 internal sense-faculties, the 6 external sense-objects, and their respective sense-consciousnesses—which has been explained [1.2.1]. A **pericope** is a stock passage or “cycle” of features that records a state or event that often occurs in the suttas, that is important enough to be repeated and remembered, especially for our mindfulness practice.

Here, we will look at a few pericopes related to **the “elements”**—the sense-bases and their various “elements” [1.2.1]—and their applications with various teachings, especially the 3 characteristics.

These are application of the reflections on impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self. This leads to the “revulsion” (nibbidā) formula, that is, to *revulsion* towards the sense-bases, elements or aggregates, which, with the abandoning of craving and suffering, leads to **arhathood**.

2.1 The bases/elements pericopes

2.1.1 The 6-cycle characteristic pericope. This is the most elementary of the bases/elements pericopes. Each of the 6 sense-bases (and their elements) is reflected as being *impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self*.

This pericope is found in the following suttas:

Phass’āyatana Sutta 3	S 35.73/4:45	SD 108.19
(Aññātara Bhikkhu) Gilāna Sutta 1	S 35.74/4:46 f	SD 70.8
(Aññātara Bhikkhu) Gilāna Sutta 2	S 35.75/4:48	SD 108.20

2.1.2 The 6-cycle clinging pericope. This is very similar to the 6-cycle characteristic pericope [2.1.1] except that it applies either the 6 sense-bases or the 5 aggregates. It can, for example, begin with “When there is the eye, bhikshus, by clinging to the eye, pleasure and pain arise internally,” then follows the reflection on impermanence, and the rest right down to arhathood—as in **the (Saḷāyatana) Upādāta Sutta** (S 35.105). Or, it can begin with the 5 aggregates: “When there is form, bhikshus, by clinging to form, pleasure and pain arise internally”—as in **the (Khandha) Ajjhatika Sutta** (S 22.149).

This pericope seems to be found only in these 2 suttas:

(Saḷ-āyatana) Upādāya Sutta	S 35.105/4:85 f	SD 108.21
(Khandha) Ajjhattika Sutta	S 22.149/3:180 f	SD 97.18

In the **(Saḷ-āyatana) Upādāya Sutta** (S 35.105), clinging (*upādāya*) is applied to each of the 6 sense-bases. In the **(Khandha) Ajjhattika Sutta** (S 22.149), clinging is applied to each of the 5 aggregates as a personal or “internal” (*ajjhataka*) experience.

2.1.3 The 6-cycle conceit pericope. This is very similar to the 6-cycle clinging pericope [2.1.2] except that it begins with “When there is the eye, bhikkhus, by clinging to the eye, by adhering to the eye, the thought occurs: ‘I am better,’ ‘I am equal [as good as],’ ‘I am worse,’” then follows the reflection on impermanence, and the rest right down to arhathood.

This pericope seems to be found only in the following:

Seyyo’ham-asmi Sutta	S 35.108/4:88	SD 108.22
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2.1.4 The 6-cycle 18-element pericope. This is the main teaching of the **(Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta** (S 35.86). It first lists the sense-faculty, and in the same passage, follows up with its sense-object and then its sense-consciousness, as in these 6 cycles:

1 st cycle:	“Is the eye ... ?	Is form ... ?	Is eye-consciousness	<u>permanent or impermanent?</u> ”
2 nd cycle:	“Is the ear ... ?	Is sound ... ?	Is ear-consciousness	<u>permanent or impermanent?</u> ”
3 rd cycle:	“Is the nose ... ?	Is smell ... ?	Is nose-consciousness	<u>permanent or impermanent?</u> ”
4 th cycle:	“Is the tongue ... ?	Is taste ... ?	Is tongue-consciousness	<u>permanent or impermanent?</u> ”
5 th cycle:	“Is the body ... ?	Is touch ... ?	Is body-consciousness	<u>permanent or impermanent?</u> ”
6 th cycle:	“Is the mind ... ?	Is thought ... ?	Is mind-consciousness	<u>permanent or impermanent?</u> ”

This pericope is found in the following sutta:

Samugghāta Sappāya Sutta 2	S 35.32/4:24-26	SD 29.21
(Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta	S 35.86/4:54	SD 50.15

2.1.5 The 3-cycle 18-element pericope follows these 3 cycles: respectively, the sense-faculty, the sense-object and the sense-consciousness, and is found in the suttas in the following cycles:

1 st cycle:	“Is the eye ... ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind	permanent or impermanent? ... ”
2 nd cycle:	“Are forms ... etc ...	permanent or impermanent? ... ”
3 rd cycle:	“Is eye-consciousness ... etc ...	permanent or impermanent? ... ”

This pericope is found in the following sutta:

Nandak’ovāda Sutta	M 146,6-8/3:271-273	SD 66.12
Cha Phass’āyatana Sutta 3	S 35.73/4:44	SD 88.12

2.1.6 The 5-cycle aggregate pericope

2.1.6.1 This pericope or cycle consists of reflections on the 5 aggregates—feeling, perception, formations and consciousness—in the light of the 3 characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self). Hence, it is also called the aggregate-characteristic pericope.

This cycle is found in the following suttas:

Cūḷa Rāhul’ovāda Sutta	M 147,3-10/3:278	SD 70.7
(Sotāpatti) Ānanda Sutta	S 22.83/3:105 introduced by “clinging cycle”	SD 52.4
Sabb’upādāna Pariyādāna Sutta 2	S 35.62/4:33 f	SD 93.18
(Anattā) Bāhiya Sutta	S 35.89/4:63	SD 93.14
Rāhul’ovāda Sutta	S 35.121/4:106	SD 93.6
Nibbāna Sappāya Paṭipāda Sutta	S 35.150/4:135	SD 93.19
Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta	S 22.59/4:66-68	SD 1.2

2.1.6.2 The last example—that of **the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** is special as it combines 3 cycles:

- (1) the 5-aggregate non-self pericope: the non-self nature of the 5 aggregates;
- (2) the aggregate-characteristic pericope: the 3 characteristics of the 5 aggregates;
- (3) the non-self totality pericope: non-self as the underlying principle of all states.

2.1.7 The 5-cycle contact pericope is similar to the 5-cycle aggregate pericope [2.1.7] except that instead of the four-aggregate it has the “triangle of experience”—that is, contact arising from the meeting of sense-faculty, sense-object and sense-consciousness—as famously formulated in **the Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta** (M 18).¹⁴

This pericope occurs in the following suttas:

Sabb’upādāna Pariññā Sutta	S 35.60/4:33	SD 6.17
Sabb’upādāna Pariyādāna Sutta 1	S 35.61/4:33	SD 93.17

2.1.8 The 6-cycle time pericopes are a set of reflections of impermanence directed at the 6 sense-bases of the past, the future and the present. This is then followed by the *nibbidā* formula [2.0], right up to arhathood.

These pericopes are found in the following suttas:

Ajjhatt’ātītānicca Sutta	S 35.186/4:151	the past, internal	SD 93.20
Ajjhattānāgatānicca Sutta	S 35.187/4:151	the future, internal	SD 52.9
Ajjhatta,paccuppannānicca Sutta	S 35.188/4:151	the present, internal	SD 93.21

There is a total of 32 suttas—**S 35.189-221**—that apply the 6 sense-bases, internal and external, in each of the 3 periods of time in terms of each of the 3 characteristics.

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¹⁴ **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18,16) SD 6.14; also **Mahā Hatthi,padôpama S** (M 28,27-38) SD 6.16.

(Ānanda) Saṅkhitta Dhamma Sutta

The (Ānanda) Discourse on Dharma in Brief

S 35.86

1 Sitting down at one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One:
 “Bhante, it would be good if the Blessed One would give me a teaching in brief.
 Having heard such a teaching from the Blessed One, I might dwelt alone, aloof, diligent, exertive and resolute.”¹⁵

Reflection on the 18 elements¹⁶

1. THE EYE

- 2 “What do you think, Ānanda, is **the eye** permanent or impermanent?”
 “Impermanent, bhante.”¹⁷
- 3 “Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”
 “Suffering, bhante.”
- 4 “Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as:
 ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”¹⁸
 “Not at all, bhante.”
- 5 Is **form** permanent or impermanent?”
 “Impermanent, bhante.”
- 6 “Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”
 “Suffering, bhante.”
- 7 “Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as:
 ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”
 “Not at all, bhante.”
- 8 Is **eye-consciousness** permanent or impermanent?”
 “Impermanent, bhante.”
- 9 “Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”
 “Suffering, bhante.”
- 10 “Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as:

¹⁵ On this special *saṅkhitta, dhamma* pericope, see SD 51.16 (4.1.1.3).

¹⁶ Technically, this is a “6-cycle 18-element pericope”: see (2.1).

¹⁷ This line [§2] refers to **the characteristic** (or principle) of impermanence (*anicca*). Then, follows “suffering” or “unsatisfactoriness” [§3]. Finally, there is “non-self” (*anattā*) [§4]. This cycle of the 3 characteristics operate for each of the “elements” (internal sense-faculty, external object and their respective consciousnesses).

¹⁸ This sentence refers to the 3 graspings (*ti, vidha gāha*): (1) “This is mine” (*etam mama*) arises from craving (*taṇhā*); (2) “This I am” (*eso ham’asmi*) arises from conceit (*māna*); (3) “This is my self” (*eso me attā*) arises from self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*): see SD 19.1 (1.2). Any of these 3 brings about mental proliferation (*papañca*). On their opp: *n’etari mama, n’eso ’ham asmi, na mēso attā ti*, applied to the 5 aggregates, see **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59,12-16), SD 1.2. On the nature of the 3 graspings, see respectively: **I: The nature of identity**, SD 19.1; **Me: The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a & **Mine: The nature of craving**, SD 19.3.

‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self?’

“Not at all, bhante.”

2. THE EAR

11 “What do you think, Ānanda, is **the ear** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

12 “Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

13 “Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as:

‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self?’

“Not at all, bhante.”

14 Is **sound** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

15 “Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

16 “Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as:

‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self?’

“Not at all, bhante.”

17 Is **ear-consciousness** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

18 “Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

19 “Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as:

‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self?’

“Not at all, bhante.”

3. THE NOSE

20 “What do you think, Ānanda, is **the nose** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

21 “Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

22 “Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as:

‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self?’

“Not at all, bhante.”

23 Is **smell** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

24 “Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”

“Suffering, bhante.”

25 “Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as:

‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self?’

“Not at all, bhante.”

26 Is **nose-consciousness** permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, bhante."

27 "Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?"

"Suffering, bhante."

28 "Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

"Not at all, bhante."

4. THE TONGUE

29 "What do you think, Ānanda, is **the tongue** permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, bhante."

30 "Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?"

"Suffering, bhante."

31 "Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

"Not at all, bhante."

32 Is **taste** permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, bhante."

33 "Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?"

"Suffering, bhante."

34 "Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

"Not at all, bhante."

35 Is **tongue-consciousness** permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, bhante."

36 "Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?"

"Suffering, bhante."

37 "Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

"Not at all, bhante."

5. THE BODY

38 "What do you think, Ānanda, is **the body** permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, bhante."

39 "Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?"

"Suffering, bhante."

40 "Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

"Not at all, bhante."

41 Is **touch** permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, bhante."

42 "Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?"

“Suffering, bhante.”

43 *“Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”*

“Not at all, bhante.”

44 *Is **body-consciousness** permanent or impermanent?”*

“Impermanent, bhante.”

45 *“Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”*

“Suffering, bhante.”

46 *“Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”*

“Not at all, bhante.”

6. THE MIND

47 *“What do you think, Ānanda, is **the mind** permanent or impermanent?”*

“Impermanent, bhante.”

48 *“Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”*

“Suffering, bhante.”

49 *“Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”*

“Not at all, bhante.”

50 *Is **thought** permanent or impermanent?”*

“Impermanent, bhante.”

51 *“Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”*

“Suffering, bhante.”

52 *“Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”*

“Not at all, bhante.”

53 *Is **mind-consciousness** permanent or impermanent?”*

“Impermanent, bhante.”

54 *“Now, what is impermanent: is it suffering or pleasurable?”*

“Suffering, bhante.”

55 *“Now, is that which is impermanent, suffering, subject to change fit to be seen as: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self’?”*

“Not at all, bhante.”

ARHATHOOD

The path and fruit

56 Seeing thus, Ānanda, the tutored noble disciple

is revulsed at

is revulsed at

is revulsed at

the eye;

form, too;

eye-consciousness, too;

is revulsed at eye-contact, too;

He is revulsed at whatever feeling that arises with eye-contact as condition—
whether pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

57 He is revulsed at **the ear;**
is revulsed at sound, too;
is revulsed at ear-consciousness, too;
is revulsed at ear-contact, too;

He is revulsed at whatever feeling that arises with ear-contact as condition—
whether pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

58 He is revulsed at **the nose;**
is revulsed at smell, too;
is revulsed at nose-consciousness, too;
is revulsed at nose-contact, too;

He is revulsed at whatever feeling that arises with nose-contact as condition—
whether pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

59 He is revulsed at **the tongue;**
is revulsed at taste, too;
is revulsed at tongue-consciousness, too;
is revulsed at tongue-contact, too;

He is revulsed at whatever feeling that arises with tongue-contact as condition—
whether pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

60 He is revulsed at **the body;**
is revulsed at touch, too;
is revulsed at body-consciousness, too;
is revulsed at body-contact, too;

He is revulsed at whatever feeling that arises with body-contact as condition—
whether pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

61 He is revulsed at **the mind;**
is revulsed at thought, too;
is revulsed at mind-consciousness, too;
is revulsed at mind-contact, too;

He is revulsed at whatever feeling that arises with mind-contact as condition—
whether pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

62 LIBERATION: REVIEW KNOWLEDGE

Revulsed,	he is dispassionate;	<i>nibbindaṃ virajjati</i>
dispassionate,	he is freed;	<i>virāgā vimuccati</i>
freed,	there arises the knowledge, 'Free!' ¹⁹	<i>vimuttasmiṃ vimuttam iti ñāṇaṃ hoti</i>

¹⁹ *Vimuttasmiṃ vimuttam iti ñāṇaṃ hoti*, or “When free, there is the knowledge, it (the mind) is free.” Note that the self is not addressed here.

63 THE PATH PERICOPE²⁰

He understands:

‘Destroyed is birth.

The holy life has been lived.

What needs to be done has been done.

There is no more of this state of being.²¹”*khīṇā jāti**vusitaṃ brahma,cariyaṃ**katam karaṇīyaṃ**nâparam itthattāyā’ti pajānātīti*

— evaṃ —

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²⁰ “The path pericope” is “the essential or *abbhaññāsi* arhathood pericope” [SD 47.1 (3.2.2.3)] without its last line announcing the subject’s arhathood. The path pericope simply signifies the person’s attaining of the noble path (*magga*), ie, the fruition (*phala*) of awakening, short of arhathood. For other arhathood stock passages, see DEB: arahatta pericopes.

²¹ “**There is no more of this state of being,**” in the case of an arhat, refers to the end of rebirth. Here, however, in the case of a streamwinner, it means that one is “no longer bound for the lower world” (*avinipāta,dhamma*)—ie, one will never create any karma or suffer from fruition of past karma leading to rebirth in the hells, the animal birth, the preta realm, the asura world or any unwholesome human state. See **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1,6), SD 16.7.