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## Sussūsā Sutta

WT: **Sussūsati Sutta**, The Discourse on the Desire to Listen | **A 6.88**

Theme: How to benefit from the Dharma with certainty

Translated &amp; annotated by Piya Tan ©2003

Introduction

This short sutta should be studied in connection with other teachings concerned with the effective way of listening to the teaching. Such suttas include the 3 **Sammatta Niyāma Suttas** (A 5.151-153)<sup>1</sup> and the **Āṇi Sutta** (S 20.7).<sup>2</sup> The term *sussūsā* has been analyzed in SD 54.3d (3.3).

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## Sussūsā Sutta

## The Discourse on the Desire to Listen

A 6.88

Superficial listening

1 Bhikshus, one accomplished in 6 ways even when listening to the true Dharma is unable to plunge into the certainty of wholesome states. What are the six?

## 2 THE 6 INEFFECTIVE WAYS OF LISTENING

When the Dharma-Vinaya declared by the Tathagata is being taught,

- (1) he has no desire to listen;
- (2) he does not listen attentively;<sup>3</sup>
- (3) he applies not his mind to final knowledge (that leads to liberation);<sup>4</sup>
- (4) he holds on to what is not profitable (to spiritual development);<sup>5</sup>
- (5) he neglects<sup>6</sup> [abandons] what is profitable (to spiritual development);
- (6) he is not endowed with mental receptivity<sup>7</sup> that goes with the grain [conforms with true reality].<sup>8</sup>

Bhikshus, one accomplished in these 6 ways even when listening to the true Dharma is unable to plunge into the certainty of wholesome states.

<sup>1</sup> **Sammatta Niyāma S 1-3** (A 5.151-153/3:174-176), SD 4.2-4.

<sup>2</sup> **Āṇi Sutta** (S 20.7/2:266 f), SD 11.13.

<sup>3</sup> *Na sotam odahati*, lit “he does not direct his ear.”

<sup>4</sup> *Na aññā, cittaṃ upaṭṭhāpeti*. Cf V 1:10 (*sotam odahimsu aññam upaṭṭhāpesum*), S 2:267 (*na aññam upaṭṭhāpesanti*) & CPD: aññā-citta.

<sup>5</sup> Comy: *anattan ti avadḍhim* (what is not profitable means what does not develop) (AA 3:414).

<sup>6</sup> “He neglects,” *riñcati*, also “he lets go of.”

<sup>7</sup> “Mental receptivity,” *khanti*: see **Aniccā S** (A 6.98/3:411 f), SD 12.13 (2).

<sup>8</sup> *Anulomikāya khantiyā samannāgato hoti*. which is here freely tr: lit “endowed with the preference that conforms with reality.” See **Aniccā S** (a 6.98), SD 12.13 (2).

## Deep listening

**3** Bhikshus, one accomplished in 6 ways when listening to the true Dharma is able to plunge into the certainty of wholesome states. What are the six?

### **4 THE 6 EFFECTIVE WAYS OF LISTENING**

When the Dharma-Vinaya declared by the Tathagata is being taught,

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|---|---|
| (1) he wishes to listen;  | <i>sussūsati</i>                              |
| (2) he listens attentively;   | <i>sotaṃ odahatti</i>                         |
| (3) he applies his mind to final knowledge (that leads to liberation);                                | <i>aññā, cittaṃ upaṭṭhapeti</i>               |
| (4) he holds on to what is profitable (to spiritual development);                                     | <i>atthaṃ gaṇhati</i>                         |
| (5) he lets go of <sup>9</sup> what is not profitable (to spiritual development);                     | <i>anattaṃ riñcati</i>                        |
| (6) he is endowed with mental receptivity that goes with the grain [that conforms with true reality]. | <i>anulomikāya khantiyā saman-nāgato hoti</i> |

Bhikshus, one accomplished in these 6 ways when listening to the true Dharma is able to plunge into the certainty of wholesome states.

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<sup>9</sup> “He lets go of,” *riñcati*. See [2(5)] above.