

Sussūsā Sutta

The Discourse on the Desire to Listen

[How to benefit from the Dharma with certainty]
(Aṅguttara Nikāya 6.88/3:437)

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 three **Sammatta Niyāma Suttas** (A 5.151-153/3:174-176) and **the Āṇi Sutta** (S 20.7/2:266 f).

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The Discourse on the Desire to Listen

(A 6.88/3:437)

Ineffective listening

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

- 2** (1) He has no desire to listen to the Teaching and Discipline taught by the Tathāgata.
- (2) He does not listen attentively.¹
- (3) He applies not his mind to final knowledge [that leads to liberation].²
- (4) He holds on to what is not profitable [to spiritual development].³
- (5) He neglects⁴ what is profitable [to spiritual development].
- (6) He is not endowed with mental receptivity⁵ that goes with the grain [true reality].⁶

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

Effective listening

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

- 4** (1) He desires to listen to the Teaching and Discipline taught by the Tathāgata.
- (2) He listens attentively.
- (3) He applies his mind to final knowledge [that leads to liberation].
- (4) He holds on to what is profitable [to spiritual development].
- (5) He lets go of⁷ what is not profitable [to spiritual development].

¹ *Na sotam odahati*, lit “he does not direct his ear.”

² *Na aññā, cittaṃ upaṭṭhāpeti*. Cf V 1:10 (*sotam odahimsu aññam upaṭṭhāpesuṃ*), S 2:267 (*na aññam upaṭṭhāpessanti*) & CPD: aññā-citta.

³ Comy: *anattan ti avadḍhim* (what is not profitable means what does not develop) (AA 3:414).

⁴ “He neglects,” *riñcati*, also “he lets go of.” See [4(5)] below.

⁵ “Mental receptivity,” *khantī*: see **Aniccā S** (a 6.98) = SD 12.13 Introd (2).

⁶ *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 Introd (2).

(6) He is endowed with mental receptivity that goes with the grain [true reality].

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

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⁷ “He lets go of,” *riñcati*. See [2(5)] above.