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## Sussūsā Sutta

WT: **Sussūsati Sutta**, The Discourse on the Desire to Listen | **A 6.88/3:437**  
 Theme: How to benefit from the Dharma with certainty  
 Translated & 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 three **Sammatta Niyāma Suttas** (A 5.151-153)<sup>1</sup> and the **Āṇi Sutta** (S 20.7).<sup>2</sup>

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## Sussūsā Sutta

## The Discourse on the Desire to Listen

A 6.88

Ineffective 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**

- (1) He has no desire to listen to the Teaching and Discipline taught by the Tathāgata.
- (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> 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 (*sotaṃ odahiṃsu aññāṃ upaṭṭhāpesuṃ*), S 2:267 (*na aññāṃ upaṭṭhāpessanti*) & CPD: aññā-citta.

<sup>5</sup> Comy: *anattān ti avaḍḍhiṃ* (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).

## Effective listening

- 2 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

- (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 of<sup>9</sup> what is not profitable (to spiritual development).
- (6) He is endowed with mental receptivity that goes with the grain [true reality].

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.