

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

To Angulimala (Angulimaalasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One was living in the monastery offered by Anathapindika in Jeta's grove in Savatthi. At that time in King Pasenadi Kosala's kingdom there was a robber named Angulimala. He was fierce, with bloody hands, engaged in killing living things without mercy. At that time he destroyed complete villages, complete hamlets and even the state. He killed humans to wear a garland of fingers. Then the Blessed One put on robes in the morning, taking bowl and robes entered Savatthi for alms. Going the alms round and returning from the alms round and after the meal was over, arranged the dwelling and taking bowl and robes, followed up the path to where Angulimala was. Cowherds, farmers and travellers seeing the Blessed One following up the path leading to where Angulimala was staying said. 'Recluse do not fall to that path, there lives a robber named Angulimala, a fierce one with bloody hands, engaged in killing living things, without mercy. He has destroyed complete villages, complete hamlets and even states. He kills humans to wear a garland of fingers. O! recluse, even a band of ten, twenty, thirty forty, or even fifty people going along this path were killed by this robber Angulimala. When this was said the Blessed One went on, silently.

For the second time they said it and the Blessed One went on, silently and for the third time they said it and the Blessed One went on, silently.

The robber Angulimala saw the Blessed One coming in the distance and it occurred to him: Indeed it is wonderful, people come along this path in bands of ten, or twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty, they all got into my hands, this recluse comes all alone, without another, may be he thinks to overcome me. What if I kill this recluse? Then the robber Angulimala took out his sword and armour and fixed his bow and arrow and followed close behind Blessed One. The Blessed One performed such a psychic intention, that the robber Angulimala pursuing the Blessed One with all his strength

would not reach the Blessed One. Then it occurred to the robber Angulimala: It is indeed wonderful, earlier, I could overtake a running elephant, a running horse, a moving chariot, here running with all my strength, I cannot reach up to this recluse. He stopped and called to the Blessed One. ‘Stop! Recluse stop!’

‘Angulimala, I have stopped. ‘Stop you too!’ The Blessed One said.

Then it occurred to the robber Angulimala: These recluses, the sons of the Sakyas talk the truth and are established in the truth: Yet while walking why did he say, I have stopped and Angulimala you too stop! What if I ask about it from the recluse?’ Then the robber Angulimala said this verse to the Blessed One.

‘While going the recluse says ‘I have stopped,’ when I have stopped, he says I have not stopped.

Recluse, explain this to me, how have you stopped and I have not stopped.

Angulimala I have stopped for good, giving up punishing living things.

You are not restrained towards living things, therefore I have stopped and you have not.

After a long time did we meet a great sage in the great forest,

I will throw away demerit for good, hearing your words enjoined with the Teaching.

Then and there the robber threw away his weapons into the depths of the forest

Fell at the feet of the Blessed One and begged for the going forth,

The Blessed One, the sage with compassion, for the whole world,

Gave him the going forth saying. ‘Come O! bhikkhu!’ that was his going forth

Then the Blessed One with venerable Angulimala as the second monk went through the streets of Savatthi and arrived at the monastery offered by Anathapindika in Jeta’s grove. At that time at the

entrance to the palace of king Pasenadi of Kosala was assembled a large gathering, making much noise: Lord, there is a robber Angulimala, in the kingdom. He is fierce, with bloody hands, has no compassion for living things, destroys, hamlets, villages and states. He killing humans collects fingers to wear as a garland round his neck. Lord he should be punished.

Then king Pasenadi of Kosala left his palace with about five hundred riders on horse back and approached the monastery. Went as far as could be reached in that conveyance and approached the Blessed One, on foot. Approaching the Blessed One worshipped and sat on a side. Then the Blessed One said thus to king Pasenadi of Kosala 'Great king, has king Seniya Bimbisara of Magadha arisen against you, or has the Licchavis of Vesali arisen against you?' 'No, venerable sir, neither king Seniya Bimbisara of Magadha has arisen against me, nor the Licchavis of vesali have arisen against me. Yet there is a robber in my kingdom, by the name Angulimala, fierce, bloody handed, without compassion for living things. He destroys hamlets, villages and states killing humans to collect fingers to wear a garland round his neck..Venerable sir, I cannot punish him.'

'Great king, if you see, Angulimala, with shaved head and beard, donning yellow clothes, gone forth homeless, abstaining from, destroying life, taking the not given, telling lies, partaking one meal a day, and virtuous. What would you do to him?'

'Venerable sir, I will get up from my seat on his arrival, prepare him a seat, invite him, arrange to provide the four requisites of life, robes, morsel food, dwellings and requisites when ill and provide him righteous protection. Yet venerable sir, how could such virtues come to evil doers, like him?'

At that time venerable Angulimala was seated close to the Blessed One, and the Blessed One stretched his right and said, to king Pasenadi of Kosala: Great king that is Angulimala.

Then king Pasenadi of Kosala was shivering with fear and his hairs stood on end. Then the Blessed One knowing that king Pasenadi of Kosala was shivering with fear and that his hairs were standing

on end, said thus: Great king, do not fear, there is nothing to fear now. Then all that fear vanished from the king and approached venerable Angulimala and said. ‘Venerable sir, are you Angulimala?’

‘Yes, great king, I’m Angulimaala.’

‘Of what clan is the venerable one’s father and of what clan is the venerable one’s mother?’

‘Great king, my father is Gagga and my mother Mantani’

‘Venerable sir, venerable Gaggamantaniputta, take pleasure in the Dispensation, I will provide with the four requisites of life such as robes, morsel food dwellings and requisites when ill. At that time venerable Angulimala was a dependent on morsel food, a forest dweller, a rag robe wearer and confined to three robes. So venerable Angulimala said to king Pasenadi of Kosala.’Useless great king, my three robes are complete.’

Then king Pasenadi of Kosala approached the Blessed One worshipped, sat on a side and said. ‘Indeed, it is wonderful, how you tame, those that have to be tamed, how you appease those that are not appeased, how you make the not extinguished to extinguish. How you tame those that could not be tamed with stick or weapon, without stick or weapon. Now we have much work to do, we would go. Then king Pasenadi of Kosala getting up from his seat, worshipped and circumambulated the Blessed One, and went away.’

Then venerable Angulimala putting on robes in the morning and taking bowl and robes entered Savatthi for alms. When going the alms round in Savatthi in due order, saw a certain woman with the pains of childbirth, then it occurred to him, indeed beings are defiled. Then after the alms round and after the meal was over, venerable Angulimala approached the Blessed One worshipped, sat on

a side and said to the Blessed One: ‘Venerable sir, when I was going for alms in due order, I saw a certain woman suffering from the pains of childbirth and it occurred to me: Indeed beings are defiled.’

‘Then Angulimala go to Savatthi, approach that woman and tell her. ‘Sister, since my birth I have not destroyed a living thing knowingly, by that truth may you be well and may the one to be born be well.’

‘Venerable sir, won’t it be a lie told with awareness, I have destroyed many living things with awareness.’

Then Angulimala go to Savatthi and approach that woman and tell her. ‘Sister, since I was born in the noble birth I have not destroyed a living thing knowingly, by that truth may you be well and may the one to be born be well.’

Then venerable Angulimala agreed went to Savatthi approached that woman and told her. ‘Sister, since I was born in the noble birth I have not destroyed a living thing knowingly, by that truth may you be well and may the one to be born be well.’ Then she got well and the child was also well. Then Angulimala withdrawn from the crowd, secluded and diligent for dispelling abode and before long for whatever reason sons of clansmen rightfully leave the household and become homeless, that noble end of the holy life he here and now knowing realised and abode. He knew, birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived, what should be done is done. There is nothing more to wish.

Then venerable Angulimala putting on robes in the morning and taking bowl and robes went the alms round in Savatthi. Then if a clod was thrown at anybody else, it hit venerable Angulimala. If a stick was thrown at anybody else, it hit venerable Angulimala. If a stone was thrown, it hit venerable Angulimala. Venerable Angulimala would come to the Blessed One with a split head and blood dripping, with the bowl broken and with robes torn. The Blessed One seeing venerable Angulimala approaching in the distance would say: Brahmin, endure that, on account of the results of your

actions you would have been reaping results for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years in hell. Brahmin, bear the results of your actions here and now.

Venerable Angulimala experienced the pleasantness of release in his seclusion, and then these verses occurred to him:

‘The negligent one became diligent, and illuminates the world like the moon freed from clouds.

When his merit covers up the demerit, he illuminates the world like the moon freed from clouds.

.The young bhikkhu yoked to the Dispensation of the Blessed One illuminates the world like the moon freed from clouds.

My enemies, listen to the Teaching, be yoked to the Dispensation of the Blessed One.

My enemies, associate with friends who show the appeasing Teaching

My enemies, with patience and aversion dispelled, listen to the Teaching and live according to the Teaching,

Do not hurt me or anybody else for any reason, attain to the highest appeasement and protect the firm and the infirm

Irrigators lead water, fletchers bend arrows, the carpenter bends wood and the wise tame the self.

Some are tamed with a stick, or hook or whip, I was tamed without a stick or weapon, by a such like one.

Earlier when I was a hurter, my name was non-hurter, now am true to my name I do not hurt anyone.

Earlier I was a robber known as Angulimala, and was carried away by the surge of the refuge in the enlightenment.

Earlier I was known as Angulimala with bloody hands, look at the refuge the leader of being is destroyed

Having done many actions leading to birth in hell, touched by the results of actions, I partake food without a debt.

Fools are yoked to negligence, the wise protect diligence as the highest wealth.

Do not be yoked to negligence, and sensual pleasures, concentrate diligently to attain pleasantness.

Go to increase, not to decrease, this is good advice, reach the highest of the analytical knowledges.

Go to increase, not to decrease, this is good advice of mine, I have attained the

Three knowledges and done the dispensation of the Enlightened One.

End of the Angulimala Sutta.

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