

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

Advise to Anaathapindika (Anathapindikovada Suttam)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in Anathapindika's monastery in Jeta's grove in Savatthi. The householder Anathapindika was seriously ill and suffering badly at that time. He addressed a certain man and said. 'Good man approach the Blessed One, worship the Blessed One for my sake with your head at his feet, and tell. "Venerable sir, the householder Anathapindika is seriously ill. Also approach venerable Sariputta worship venerable Sariputta for my sake with your head at his feet and tell. Venerable sir, the householder Anathapindika is seriously ill, it is good if venerable Sariputta would approach the householder Anathapindika's house out of compassion."

That man agreeing, approached the Blessed One, worshipped the Blessed One, sat on a side and said. "Venerable sir, the householder Anathapindika is seriously ill and he worships the Blessed One with his head at the feet of the Blessed One. Then he approached venerable Saariputta, worshipped him, sat on a side and said. "Venerable sir, the householder Anathapindika is seriously ill, he worships venerable Saariputta with his head at the feet of venerable Sariputta and also says, it is good if venerable Sariputta would approach the householder Anathapindika's house out of compassion."

Venerable Sariputta accepted the message silently, put on his robes and taking bowl and robes, and accompanied by venerable Ananda as the second recluse, approached the house of Anathapindika. Sitting on the prepared seats venerable Sariputta said. 'Householder, how are you feeling? Would you survive? Are the unpleasant feelings decreasing or increasing? Do the feelings show the increasing end or the decreasing end?

Good sir, Sariputta, I do not feel well, will not survive. My unpleasant feelings are severe and increasing, not decreasing. The unpleasant feelings are increasing until the end. Good sir, Sariputta, my top hurts a lot. I feel as though a strong man was giving me a headdress with a strong cloth. I do not feel well and will not survive. My unpleasant feelings are severe and increasing, not decreasing. The unpleasant feelings are increasing until the end. Good sir, Sariputta, my belly hurts a lot as though a lot of air was turning about in my belly. I feel as though a clever butcher or his apprentice was carving my belly with a sharp butcher's knife I do not feel well and will not survive. My unpleasant feelings are severe and increasing, not decreasing. The unpleasant feelings are increasing until the end. Good sir, Sariputta, there is a lot burning in my body. I feel as though two strong men taking me by my hands and feet are pulling me to a pit of burning embers and are scorching and burning me. I do not feel well and will not survive. My unpleasant feelings are severe and increasing, not decreasing. The unpleasant feelings are increasing until the end.

Householder, if that is so, you should train thus. I will not cling to the eye, will not be settled in eye consciousness. I will not cling to the ear, will not be settled in ear consciousness. I will not cling to the nose, will not be settled in nose consciousness. I will not cling to the tongue, will not be settled in tongue consciousness. I will not cling to the body, will not be settled in body consciousness. I will not cling to the mind, will not be settled in mind consciousness.

Therefore householder, you should train thus. I will not cling to forms, and be settled in forms. I will not cling to sounds, and be settled in sounds. I will not cling to scents, and be settled in scents. I will not cling to tastes, and be settled in tastes. I will not cling to touches, and be settled in touches. I will not cling to ideas, and be settled in ideas.

Therefore householder, you should train thus I will not cling to eye-consciousness, following thoughts clinging to eye-consciousness. I will not cling to ear-consciousness, following thoughts clinging to ear-consciousness. I will not cling to nose-consciousness, following thoughts clinging to nose-consciousness.

I will not cling to taste-consciousness, following thoughts clinging to taste-consciousness. I will not cling to body-consciousness, following thoughts clinging to body-consciousness. I will not cling to mind-consciousness, following thoughts clinging to mind-consciousness.

Therefore householder, you should train thus, I will not cling to eye contact and follow thoughts settled in eye contact. I will not cling to ear contact and follow thoughts settled in ear contact. I will not cling to nose contact and follow thoughts settled in nose contact I will not cling to taste contact and follow thoughts settled in taste contact. I will not cling to body contact and follow thoughts settled in body contact. I will not cling to mind contact and follow thoughts settled in mind contact.

Therefore householder, you should train thus, I will not cling to feelings born of eye contact, and follow thoughts settling in eye contact. I will not cling to feelings born of ear contact, and follow thoughts settling in ear contact. I will not cling to feelings born of nose contact, and follow thoughts settling in nose contact I will not cling to feelings born of taste contact, and follow thoughts settling in taste contact. I will not cling to feelings born of body contact, and follow thoughts settling in body contact. I will not cling to feelings born of mind contact, and follow thoughts settling in mind contact

Therefore householder, you should train thus, I will not cling to the earth element, and be settled in it. I will not cling to the water element, and be settled in it. I will not cling to the fire element, and be settled in it. I will not cling to the air element, and be settled in it. I will not cling to the space element, and be settled in it. I will not cling to the consciousness element, and be settled in it.

Therefore householder, you should train thus, I will not cling to matter, and follow thoughts settled in matter. I will not cling to feelings, and follow thoughts settled in feelings. I will not cling to perceptions and follow thoughts settled in feelings.. I will not cling to determinations, and follow thoughts settled in determinations.. I will not cling to consciousness, and follow thoughts settled in consciousness. .

Therefore householder, you should train thus, I will not cling to the sphere of space or entertain thoughts of the sphere of space. I will not cling to the sphere of consciousness or entertain thoughts of the sphere of consciousness. I will not cling to the sphere of nothingness or entertain thoughts of the sphere of nothingness. I will not cling to the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception or entertain thoughts of that sphere.

Therefore householder, you should train thus, I will not cling to this world, or entertain thoughts of this world. I will not cling to the other world, or entertain thoughts of the other world.

Therefore householder, you should train, I will not cling to anything seen, heard, known through the scents or pursued discursively thinking.

Hearing this the householder Anathapindika cried loudly and tears streamed down. Then venerable Ananda asked ‘Householder, do you stick fast or sink?’ (*1)

‘Good sir Ananda, not that I stick fast or sink. Yet, I have associated the Teacher and bhikkhus who develop the mind, but have not heard such a discourse before this.’

Then venerable Sariputta said. ‘Householder, a discourse like this is not given to a lay person wearing white clothes.’

‘Good sir, Sariputta, discourses like this should be given to lay persons wearing white clothes. There are clansmen, with few defiling things who deteriorate owing not hearing this sort of discourse. Hearing these they would know the Teaching.’

Then, venerable Sariputta and venerable Ananda having advised the householder Anathapindika got up from their seats and went away. Soon after they had gone the householder Anathapindika died

and was born with the happy ones. (*2) Then Anathapindika, the son of gods, when the night was waning, illuminating Jeta's grove completely with a resplendent light, approached the Blessed One, worshipped and stood on a side and said to the Blessed One.

'This pleasant Jeta's grove the home of sages in the Community
Adorned by the king of the Teaching arouses delight in me.
Beings that have death are purified by actions, knowledge
And a righteous, virtuous livelihood, but not by clan or wealth.
Therefore a wise one, seeing his own good,
Discriminating the Teaching, purifies himself
Of the bhikkhus, crossed over, the ones like Sariputta,
In wisdom, virtues and appeasement are the foremost.'

Saying this, Anathapindika, the son of the gods waited for the Blessed One's approval. Knowing the Teacher approves my words, worshipped the Blessed One and went round him with his right towards the Teacher and disappeared from there. Next day the Blessed One, addressed the bhikkhus. 'Bhikkhus, a certain son of the gods when the night was waning, illuminating Jeta's grove completely with a resplendent light, approached me worshipped and stood on a side and said.

'This pleasant Jeta's grove the home of sages in the Community
Adorned by the king of the Teaching arouses delight in me.
Beings that have death are purified by actions, knowledge
And a righteous, virtuous livelihood, but not by clan or wealth.
Therefore a wise one, seeing his own good,
Discriminating the Teaching, purifies himself
Of the bhikkhus, crossed over, the ones like Sariputta,

In wisdom, virtues and appeasement are the foremost.’

Saying this, that son of the gods waited for my approval. Knowing that I approved his words, worshipped and went round me with his right towards me and disappeared from there.

Hearing this venerable Ananda said. ‘Venerable sir, is that Anathapindika, the son of the gods? The householder, Anathapindika was made happy by venerable Sariputta.’

‘Good! Ananda, you are right. You have attained that much, which could be attained through reasoning.

He is no other, but Anathapindika the son of the gods’.

The Blessed One said thus and venerable Ananda delighted in the words of the Blessed One.

Notes.

1. Householder, do you stick fast or sink.’oliiyasi kho tva.m, gahapati, sa.msiidasi kho tva.m gahapati’ To stick fast is to crave for this world and to sink is to give up hopes. If either of these happened it is loss for the householder. Neither of them happened.

2. The happy ones.’tusita.m kaaya.m’ This is a group of gods who are always happy.