

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

Advice to Venerable Channa (Channovaadasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One lived in the squirrels' sanctuary in the bamboo grove in Rajagaha. At that time, venerable Sariputta, venerable Mahacunda and venerable Channa lived on the Gijjha peak. At that time venerable Channa was seriously ill. Venerable Sariputta getting up from his seclusion in the evening approached venerable Mahacunda and said. 'Friend, Chunda, let's approach venerable Channa to inquire about his health.' Venerable Mahacunda accepting venerable Sariputta's suggestion, both approached venerable Channa. After exchanging friendly greetings with venerable Channa they sat on a side and venerable Sariputta said. 'Friend, Channa, 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?'

'Friend, 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. Friend, Sariputta, my top hurts a lot. I feel as though a strong man was giving me a headdress with a strong headband. 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. Friend, 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. Friend, Sariputta, there is a lot of 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. Friend, Sariputta, I will take a weapon to end life.'

‘Friend, Channa, do not take a weapon, do survive. We desire that you survive. If venerable Channa does not get suitable nourishment, I will find them for venerable Channa. If venerable Channa does not get suitable medical requisites, I will find them for venerable Channa.. If venerable Channa does not have a suitable attendant, I will attend to venerable Channa. Friend, Channa, do not take a weapon, do survive. We desire that you survive.

‘Friend, Sariputta, it is not that I’m in want of suitable nourishment, or suitable medical requisites, or a suitable attendant, yet my duties by the Teacher are done long ago, with pleasure and not with displeasure.

Friend, Sariputta, for a disciple who has done his duties by the Teacher pleasantly, there is nothing wrong if he takes a weapon to end life, remember it as that.’

‘Friend Channa, I will ask a certain question if venerable Channa would volunteer to explain.’

‘Friend, Sariputta, ask, I will explain.’

‘Friend, Channa, is your reflection, eye, eye-consciousness, and things cognizable by eye consciousness, are me, I’m in them, they are self? Is your reflection, ear, ear-consciousness, and things cognizable by ear -consciousness, are me, I’m in them and they are self? Is your reflection, nose, nose-consciousness, and things cognizable by nose-consciousness, are me, I’m in them, they are self? Is your reflection, tongue, tongue-consciousness, and things cognizable by tongue-consciousness, are me, I’m in them, they are self? Is your reflection, body, body-consciousness, and things cognizable by body-consciousness, are me, I’m in them, they are self? Is your reflection, mind, mind-consciousness, and things cognizable by mind-consciousness, are me, I’m in them, they are self?

‘Friend, Sariputta, eye, eye-consciousness, and things cognizable by eye consciousness, are not me, I’m not in them, they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, ear, ear-consciousness, and things cognizable by ear -consciousness, are not me, I’m not in them, they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, nose, nose-consciousness, and things cognizable by nose-consciousness, are not me, I’m not in them, they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, tongue, tongue-consciousness, and things cognizable by tongue-consciousness, are not me, I’m not in them, they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, body, body-consciousness, and things cognizable by body-consciousness, are not me, I’m not in them, they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, mind, mind-consciousness, and things cognizable by mind-consciousness, are not me, I’m not in them, they are not self.’

‘Friend, Channa, seeing what in the eye, eye-consciousness and things cognizable by eye-consciousness do you realize, eye, eye-consciousness and things cognizable by eye consciousness are not me, I’m not in them and they are not self? ‘Friend, Channa, seeing what in the ear, ear-consciousness and things cognizable by ear-consciousness do you realize, ear, ear-consciousness and things cognizable by ear consciousness are not me, I’m not in them and they are not self? ‘Friend, Channa, seeing what in the nose nose-consciousness and things cognizable by nose-consciousness do you realize, nose, nose-consciousness and things cognizable by nose consciousness are not me, I’m not in them and they are not self? ‘Friend, Channa, seeing what in taste, taste-consciousness and things cognizable by taste-consciousness do you realize, taste, taste-consciousness and things cognizable by taste-consciousness are not me, I’m not in them and they are not self? ‘Friend, Channa, seeing what in the body, body-consciousness and things cognizable by body-consciousness do you realize, body, body-consciousness and things cognizable by body-consciousness are not me, I’m not in them and they are not self? ‘Friend, Channa, seeing what in the mind, mind-consciousness and things cognizable by mind-consciousness do you realize, mind, mind-consciousness and things cognizable by mind-consciousness are not me, I’m not in them and they are not self?’

‘Friend, Sariputta seeing the cessation of the eye, eye-consciousness and things cognizable by eye-consciousness I realized, eye, eye-consciousness and things cognizable by eye consciousness are

not me, I'm not in them and they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, seeing the cessation of ear, ear-consciousness and things cognizable by ear-consciousness I realized, ear, ear-consciousness and things cognizable by ear consciousness are not me, I'm not in them and they are not self. Friend, Sariputta seeing cessation of the nose, nose-consciousness and things cognizable by nose-consciousness, I realized, nose, nose-consciousness and things cognizable by nose consciousness are not me, I'm not in them and they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, seeing the cessation of taste, taste-consciousness and things cognizable by taste-consciousness I realized, taste, taste-consciousness and things cognizable by taste-consciousness are not me, I'm not in them and they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, seeing the cessation of the body, body-consciousness and things cognizable by body-consciousness I realized, body, body-consciousness and things cognizable by body-consciousness are not me, I'm not in them and they are not self. Friend, Sariputta, seeing the cessation of the mind, mind-consciousness and things cognizable by mind-consciousness I realized, mind, mind-consciousness and things cognizable by mind-consciousness are not me, I'm not in them and they are not self'

Then venerable Mahacunda said to venerable Channa. 'Friend, Channa, constant attention should be given to this too in the dispensation of the Blessed One. To the settled there is change, to the not settled there is no change. (*1) When there is no change, there is delight. (*2) When there is delight, there is no inclination. (*3) When there is no inclination, there is no coming and going. (*4) When there is no coming and going, there is no disappearing and appearing (*5)When there is no disappearing and appearing, there is no here or there, or in between. (*6) That is the end of unpleasantness.

Venerable Sariputta and venerable Mahcunda having advised venerable Channa, in this manner got up from their seats and went away. Soon after they had gone venerable Channa took a weapon and put an end to his life. Then venerable Sariputta approached the Blessed One, worshipped, sat on a side and said.'Venerable sir, venerable Channa has put an end to his life, what are his movements after death?'

‘Sariputta, wasn’t the faultlessness of the bhikkhu Channa declared in your presence?’

‘Venerable sir, in Pabbajira, the village of the Vajjii’s, the families of venerable Channa’s friends, well-wishers and earlier relations live.’

‘Sariputta, there may be the families of venerable Channa’s friends, well-wishers and earlier relatives, I say, there is no fault to that extent. Sariputta, if someone gives up this body and seizes another, I say it is a fault. In the bhikkhu that fault is not apparent. Bhikkhu Channa took his life faultlessly.’

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

Notes.

1. To the settled there is change, to the not settled there is no change. ‘nissitassa calita.m, anissitassa calita.m na’tthi’ When the bhikkhu develops his mind, there are various stages in which the mind makes settlements. When such a settlement is made, there is change, when no such settlement is made, there is no change. The Blessed One’s Teaching is that the bhikkhu should not be settled anywhere. It is the Teaching of the mind’s extinction.

2. When there is no change, there is delight. ‘calite asati passaddhi’ A change is a change in feelings, as a result of a contact at one or the other of the doors of mental contact. When there is no such change, there is delight. Delight is a special feature necessary for the development of the mind, so that it may not deviate from the correct path.

3. When there is delight there is no inclination. 'passaddhiyaa sati, nati na hoti.' Inclination is to be bent to this and that. The delighted one enjoys the path, and does not deviate from it. He becomes so sure of the path, that a teacher is not necessary for him any more.

4. When there is no inclination, there is no coming and going. 'natiyaa asati aagatigati na hoti.' The coming and going is a persistent feature of the mind. Always coming to its place of interest. The mind's nature of persistently returning to a point is the factor, which paves someone's rebirth in some place.

5. When there is no coming and going, there is no disappearing and appearing. 'aagatigatiyaa asati cutuupapaato na hoti' When the mind's nature of coming and going is not evident, the disappearing and appearing does not happen.

6. When there is no disappearing and appearing, there is no here or there or in between. 'cutuupapaate asati n'eva idha na hura.m na ubhaya.m antarena.' When the mind does not disappear and appear, and when it is neither in between, it is the end of unpleasantness

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