AN 3.13 — Āsaṁsa Sutta (Expectations)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

13. Āsaṁsa Sutta (Expectations) Bhikkhus, there are these three types of individuals found in existence. What three?

The first is a person without any expectations about the world. Another is a person who is gripped with expectation. And finally, the third is a person who has moved beyond all expectations.

And who, Bhikkhus, is the person without any expectations about the world?

Here, a person is born in a poor family, a family of untouchables, cart builders, flower collectors, basket weavers, bamboo workers, and hunters, without much resources or food, surviving on very little, eking out a living with much difficulty. This person, who being physically unattractive, unappealing, unseemly, suffering from illness, lame, disabled, blind, and incapacitated, is unable to gain food, drink, or lodging, scents, garlands, unguents, and oil lamps.

Being in that state, when such a person hears that a certain Khattiya warrior king has been anointed, he does not fret thinking to himself:

“O, when will I be next to be anointed as king?”

Such is a person who lives without any expectations.

And who, Bhikkhus is the person gripped with expectation?

Here, the crown-prince, the son of a head-anointed Khattiya warrior king, the next in line to become anointed as the next ruler, is assured of his future. In hearing that the Khattiyas have anointed a certain warrior king in a neighboring kingdom, he frets as he thinks to himself:

“O, when will I be next in becoming head-anointed myself, as a Khattiya warrior king?”

Such is a person gripped with expectation.

And who, Bhikkhus, is the person who has moved beyond all expectations?

Here, a head-anointed Khattiya warrior king, while hearing that a certain Khattiya has been anointed as a king somewhere, he does not worry or consider:

“O, when will the Khattiyas anoint me as a warrior king too?”

And why is that?

It is because his past expectation for becoming anointed has disappeared the moment he became a head-anointed Khattiya warrior king.

Such is a person who has moved beyond all expectations.

Bhikkhus, these are therefore the three types of individuals found in existence.

In the same manner, Bhikkhus, there are these three types of Bhikkhus found existing within the Saṅgha. What three?

The Bhikkhu without expectations, the one gripped with expectation, and finally the one who has moved beyond all expectations.

And who, Bhikkhus, is that Bhikkhu without any expectations?

Here, a bhikkhu is impure in his heart, non-virtuous and suspect in behavior, immoral and therefore not a true recluse, though pretending to be one; secretive in his actions, dishonest,

unscrupulous, inwardly perverted, engaging in non-celibate acts, although claiming to be celibate, hence being corrupt.

Now, this bhikkhu, on hearing that through the destruction of his contaminants, a certain Bhikkhu, in this very life, with his own direct knowledge, has attained the Unshakeable Freedom of the heart, having realized Liberation through Wisdom, which he now abides and dwells in, does not reflect to himself:

“O, when will it be my turn to attain the destruction of the contaminants, in this very life, through my own direct knowledge! When will I also attain the Unshakeable Freedom of the heart, by realizing Liberation through Wisdom, which I will then abide and dwell in?”

And why is that?

Because such is a bhikkhu without any expectations.

And who, Bhikkhus, is that Bhikkhu who is gripped with expectation?

Here, a Bhikkhu lives a pure and virtuous life, and is of wholesome conduct.

Then, on hearing that a certain Bhikkhu, through the destruction of his contaminants, in this very life, and through his own direct knowledge, has attained the Unshakeable Freedom of the heart, having realized Liberation through Wisdom, which he abides and dwells in, he reflects to himself:

“O, when will it be my turn to attain the destruction of the contaminants, in this very life, through my own direct knowledge! When will I also attain the Unshakeable Freedom of the heart, by realizing Liberation through Wisdom, which I will then abide and dwell in?”

Such is a Bhikkhu gripped with expectation.

And who, Bhikkhus, is the Bhikkhu who has moved beyond all expectations?

Here, a Bhikkhu is an Arahant, one with contaminants utterly destroyed.

In hearing that a certain Bhikkhu, with the destruction of his contaminants, in this very life, and through his own direct knowledge has attained the Unshakeable Freedom of heart, by realizing Liberation through Wisdom, which he now abides and dwells in, it does not occur to him:

“O, when will it be my turn to attain the destruction of the contaminants, in this very life, through my own direct knowledge! When will I also attain the Unshakeable Freedom of the heart, by realizing Liberation through Wisdom, which I will then abide and dwell in?” And why is that?

It is because his past expectation of liberation has disappeared the very moment he experienced Liberation.

Such is a Bhikkhu who has moved beyond all expectations.

These, Bhikkhus, are the three types of Bhikkhus found existing within the Saṅgha.