AN 3.30 — Avakujja Sutta (The Inverted Water Pot)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

30. Avakujja Sutta (The Inverted Water Pot) Bhikkhus, there are these three types of beings found in existence. What three? The one with blocked wisdom; the one with scattered wisdom; and the one with vast wisdom.

And who, Bhikkhus, is the one with blocked wisdom?

Here, someone often goes to the monastery to listen to The Dhamma taught by the Bhikkhus. The Bhikkhus generously teach him The Dhamma that is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, and beautiful in the end, along with its correct meaning and phrasing. But despite having thus revealed to him The Holy Life that is perfect and complete, while sitting there, this person does not pay attention to The Dhamma being taught, whether in its beginning, its middle, or end. Also, after having left his seat and moving about, he still does not pay attention to what was shared with him, for he does not contemplate the beginning, the middle, or the end of The Dhamma taught to him earlier.

It is just as if a water pot had been inverted and thus turned upside down, as a result of which the water poured down on it would simply flow over and run off, leaving the water pot’s cavity entirely empty, dry, and untouched.

In the same way, someone often goes to the monastery to listen to The Dhamma taught by the Bhikkhus. The Bhikkhus generously teach him The Dhamma that is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, and beautiful in the end, along with its correct meaning and phrasing. But despite having thus revealed to him The Holy Life that is perfect and complete, while sitting there, this person does not pay attention to The Dhamma being taught, whether in its beginning, its middle, or end. Also, after having left his seat and moving about, he still does not pay attention to what was shared with him, for he does not contemplate the beginning, the middle, or the end of The Dhamma taught to him earlier.

Such is the one with blocked wisdom.

And who, Bhikkhus, is the one with scattered wisdom?

Here, someone often goes to the monastery to listen to The Dhamma taught by the Bhikkhus. The Bhikkhus generously teach him The Dhamma that is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, and beautiful in the end, along with its correct meaning and phrasing. Then, on having thus revealed to him The Holy Life that is perfect and complete, while sitting there, this person attends carefully as he pays attention to The Dhamma being taught, whether in its beginning, its middle, or its end. However, after having left his seat and moving about, he does not pay attention to what was shared with him, for he does not contemplate the beginning, the middle, or the end of The Dhamma taught to him earlier.

It is just as if a person with a variety of grains tossed into his lap, such as rice grains, sesame seeds, and jujubes, were to move suddenly and without care, scattering them all about him as a result, and thus wasting away those precious grains he had received.

In the same way, someone often goes to the monastery to listen to The Dhamma taught by the Bhikkhus. The Bhikkhus generously teach him The Dhamma that is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, and beautiful in the end, along with its correct meaning and phrasing. Then, on having thus revealed to him The Holy Life that is perfect and complete, while sitting there, this person attends carefully as he pays attention to The Dhamma being taught, whether in its beginning, its middle, or end. However, after having left his seat and moving about, he does not pay attention to what was shared with him, for he does not contemplate the beginning, the middle, or the end of The Dhamma taught to him earlier.

Such is the one with scattered wisdom.

And who, Bhikkhus, is the one with vast wisdom?

Here, someone often goes to the monastery to listen to The Dhamma taught by the Bhikkhus. The Bhikkhus generously teach him The Dhamma that is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, and beautiful in the end, along with its correct meaning and phrasing. Then, on having thus revealed to him The Holy Life that is perfect and complete, while sitting there, this person attends carefully as he pays attention to The Dhamma being taught, whether in its beginning, its middle, or end. Later, after having left his seat and moving about, he again pays attention to what was shared with him, as he keeps contemplating the beginning, the middle, or the end of The Dhamma taught to him earlier.

It is just as if a water pot had been placed upright, and water is poured down into it, filling it up, and drenching the water pot without letting any of it run off or go to waste.

In the same way, someone often goes to the monastery to listen to The Dhamma taught by the Bhikkhus. The Bhikkhus generously teach him The Dhamma that is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle, and beautiful in the end, along with its correct meaning and phrasing.

Then, on having thus revealed to him The Holy Life that is perfect and complete, while sitting there, this person attends carefully as he pays attention to The Dhamma being taught, whether in its beginning, its middle, or end. Later, after having left his seat and moving about, he again pays attention to what was shared with him, as he keeps contemplating the beginning, the middle, or the end of The Dhamma taught to him earlier.

Such is the one with vast wisdom.

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

‘The one with blocked wisdom, stupid and undiscerning, Is often found visiting the Bhikkhus and hearing them teach The Dhamma to him. But, from such a talk, this person misses out in grasping the meaning Whether from its beginning, its middle, or even its end.

‘Being better than the former, the one with scattered wisdom Also goes visiting the Bhikkhus and hearing them teach The Dhamma. While sitting during such a talk, he grasps the meaning from its beginning, middle, or end. But, after leaving his seat, the wisdom grasped Leaves him as well, as he forgets what was learned.

‘Being the best of the three, the one with vast wisdom Also goes visiting the Bhikkhus to hear them teach The Dhamma. While sitting during such a talk, he grasps the meaning from its beginning, middle, and end. And on leaving his seat, his mind remains undivided, Retaining what was heard, as he practices what he learned, In accordance with The Dhamma, putting an end to all suffering.’