

AN 8.30
Anuruddhamahāvītakka Sutta
“Anuruddha & the Thoughts of a Great Man”
Translated by Candana Bhikkhu

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Once, the Blessed One was staying at the Deer Park in the Bhesakalā forest, among the Sunsumāra Peaks in the land of the Bhaggas. It was during that time, that the Venerable Anuruddha was staying in the Eastern Bamboo Forest, in the land of the *Cetis*.

While in his seclusion, the following thought arose in the mind of the Ven. Anuruddha:

“1) This Dhamma is for one with few desires, and *not* for the one with many desires. 2) This Dhamma is for one content and satisfied, and *not* for one who is discontent or dissatisfied. 3) This Dhamma is for one who looks for seclusion, and *not* for one who delights in company or enjoys associating with others. 4) This Dhamma is for one who is diligent with aroused effort, and *not* for the lazy. 5) This Dhamma is for one established in continuous mindfulness, *not* for one lacking in mindfulness. 6) This Dhamma is for one who has the stability of heart, *not* for the distracted. 7) This Dhamma is for the wise, *not* for those lacking in wisdom.

Meanwhile, the Blessed One, knowing the thought that arose in the mind of the Venerable Anuruddha, as quickly as a strong man would extend out his bent arm or bend his extended arm, suddenly disappeared from the Deer Park in the Bhesakalā forest, from among the Sunsumāra Peaks in the land of the Bhaggas, as he reappeared before the Venerable Anuruddha, in the Eastern Bamboo Forest, in the land of the *Cetis*. Once there, the Blessed One sat on His prepared seat and the Venerable Anuruddha, after paying homage to the Teacher, sat to one side. And the Blessed One said this to the venerable Anuruddha:

“Sadhu, Sadhu Anuruddha! It is good that you are reflecting on these thoughts of a Great Man! Which are: ‘1) This Dhamma is for one with few desires, and *not* for the one with many desires. 2) This Dhamma is for one content and satisfied, and *not* for one who is discontent or dissatisfied. 3) This Dhamma is for one who looks for seclusion, and *not* for one who delights in company or enjoys associating with others. 4) This Dhamma is for one who is diligent with aroused effort, and *not* for the lazy. 5) This Dhamma is for one established in continuous mindfulness, *not* for one lacking in mindfulness. 6) This Dhamma is for one who has the stability of heart, *not* for the distracted. 7) This Dhamma is for the wise, *not* for those lacking in wisdom.’

“However, Anuruddha, you must also reflect on this eighth thought of a Great Man. That is, ‘This Dhamma is for the one who delights in the non-proliferation of thoughts, one who enjoys non-proliferation of ideas or concepts, and *not* for those who delight in the constant proliferation of thoughts, or the ones who enjoy the constant proliferation of ideas or concepts.’

“In this way, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, then for as long as you wish, by secluding the mind from sensual desires and unwholesome states of

mind, you will enter and abide in the First Jhāna, which brings with it joy and pleasure that is the result of seclusion, while the mind is still accompanied by thinking and pondering.

“Further, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, then for as long as you wish, by going beyond thinking and pondering, you will enter and abide in the Second Jhāna, with the heart internally stabilized and tranquil and brought to a single point, which brings with it joy and pleasure that is the result of concentration.

“Further, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, then for as long as you wish, while equanimity grows within the mind and the joy subsides, you will abide dispassionate but mindful and fully aware as you experience the soothing relaxation within the body. Thus, you will enter and abide in the Third Jhāna, of which the Noble Ones declare: ‘mindfully one abides equanimous, experiencing happiness throughout.’

“Further, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, then for as long as you wish, as you dispel your attachment to happiness and sadness, and having already gone beyond joy and pain, you will enter and abide in the Fourth Jhāna. Here, you will feel the freedom from whatever is pleasant and whatever is painful, while you experience the purifying effect that mindfulness has brought you, as you rest in equanimity.

“Further, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, and by merely intending it and without any difficulty you quickly attain these Four Jhānas, which constitute the Higher Mind, as they are pleasant resting waystations on the Path, then, while living in such a state of contentment, even your rag robe will become for you like a multicolored and richly decorated robe worn by a rich householder or his son; for your robe will be enough for you, as it satisfies your delight, giving you a sense of relief, comfort, and a pleasant abiding, as you enter into Nibbāna.

“Further, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, and by merely intending it and without any difficulty you quickly attain these Four Jhānas, which constitute the Higher Mind, as they are pleasant resting waystations on the Path, then while living in such a state of contentment, even the scraps of food you have for a meal will become for you like a richly flavored meal prepared for a rich householder or his son, together with fine rice and various grains, as well as various soups and curries; for your scraps of food will be enough for you, as it satisfies your delight, giving you a sense of relief, comfort, and a pleasant abiding, as you enter into Nibbāna.

“Further, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, and by merely intending it and without any difficulty you quickly attain these Four Jhānas, which constitute the Higher Mind, as they are pleasant resting waystations on the Path, then while living in such a state of contentment, even your dwelling that is the root of a tree will become for you like a richly gabled house suitable for a rich householder or his son, beautifully plastered, painted and decorated, with many doors and windows, with bolts and shutters to close and keep you protected from the elements outside; for your dwelling at the root of a tree will be enough for you, as it satisfies your delight, giving you a sense of relief, comfort, and a pleasant abiding, as you enter into Nibbāna.

“Further, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, and by merely intending it and without any difficulty you quickly attain these Four Jhānas, which constitute the Higher Mind, as they are pleasant resting waystations on the Path, then while living in such a state of contentment, even your bed and cushion, made up of straw and grass will become for you like a finely decorated bed and a couch suitable for a rich householder or his son, supported by a canopy above and a set of red bolsters at both ends, decked with blankets and exquisite pillows, all covered with antelope hide; for your bed and cushion made of straw and grass will be enough for you, as they satisfy your delight, giving you a sense of relief, comfort, and a pleasant abiding, as you enter into Nibbāna.

“Further, Anuruddha, whenever you reflect on these eight thoughts of a Great Man, and by merely intending it and without any difficulty you quickly attain these Four Jhānas, which constitute the Higher Mind, as they are pleasant resting waystations on the Path, then while living in such a state of contentment, even your medicine of putrid and fermented cow’s urine will become for you like various medicines prepared with fine quality purified ghee, butter, oil and honey suitable for a rich householder or his son; for your medicine of putrid and fermented cow’s urine will be enough for you, as it satisfies your delight, giving you a sense of relief, comfort, and a pleasant abiding, as you enter into Nibbāna.

“Therefore, Anuruddha, you should stay here among the Cetis, in the Eastern Bamboo Park, for your next Rain’s Retreat.”

“Yes, Bhante,” replied the Venerable Anuruddha.

And the Blessed One, having inspired, encouraged, and aroused the Venerable Anuruddha’s energy to continue on the Path, with diligent effort, as quickly as a strong man would extend out his bent arm or bend his extended arm, suddenly disappeared before the Venerable Anuruddha from the Eastern Bamboo Forest, in the land of the Cetis, and reappeared among the Sunsumāra Peaks in the land of the Bhaggas, at the Deer Park in the Bhesakalā forest.

Then, the Blessed One sat on His prepared seat, as He addressed the Bhikkhus, thus:

“Bhikkhus, there are these eight thoughts of a Great Man; listen to them as I list them for you and attend carefully.”

“Yes, Bhante,” replied the Bhikkhus.

“What are the eight thoughts of a Great Man, Bhikkhus?”

“1) This Dhamma is for one with few desires, and *not* for the one with many desires. 2) This Dhamma is for one content and satisfied, and *not* for one who is discontent or dissatisfied. 3) This Dhamma is for one who looks for seclusion, and *not* for one who delights in company or enjoys associating with others. 4) This Dhamma is for one who is diligent with aroused effort, and *not* for the lazy. 5) This Dhamma is for one established in continuous mindfulness, and *not* for one lacking in mindfulness. 6) This Dhamma is for one who has the stability of heart, *not* for the distracted. 7) This Dhamma is for the wise, *not* for those lacking in wisdom. 8) This Dhamma is

for the one who delights in the non-proliferation of thoughts, the one who enjoys non-proliferation of ideas or concepts, and *not* for those who delight in the constant proliferation of thoughts, or the ones who enjoy the constant proliferation of ideas or concepts.

“And what Bhikkhus, was meant by the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one with few desires, and *not* for the one with many desires?’ 1) Here, Bhikkhus, when the bhikkhu is of few desires, he does not trouble himself with the thought: “Oh, may others know that I am with few desires. 2) While being content and satisfied, he does not trouble himself with the thought: “Oh, may others know that I am content and satisfied. 3) While being comfortable with and looking for seclusion, he does not trouble himself with the thought: “Oh, may others know that I delight in seclusion. 4) In being diligent with aroused effort, he does not trouble himself with the thought: “Oh, may others know that I am diligent with aroused effort. 5) In being established in continuous mindfulness, he does not trouble himself with the thought: “Oh, may others know that I am established in continuous mindfulness. 6) While dwelling in the stability of the heart, he does not trouble himself with the thought: “Oh, may others know that I dwell in the stability of the heart. 7) In being wise, the Bhikkhu does not trouble himself with the thought: “Oh, may others know that I am wise. 8) While delighting in and enjoying the non-proliferation of concepts, he does not trouble himself with the thought: “Oh, may others know that I delight in and enjoy the non-proliferation of thoughts. Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what was meant with the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one with few desires, and *not* for the one with many desires.’”

“And what, Bhikkhus, was meant by the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one content and satisfied, and *not* for one who is discontent or dissatisfied?’ Here, the Bhikkhu is content and satisfied with whatever he may obtain, whether in the type of robes, scraps or morsels of food, dwellings, and any medical requisites that he receives when needed. Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what was meant with the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one content and satisfied, and *not* for one who is discontent or dissatisfied.’”

“And what, Bhikkhus, was meant by the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one who looks for seclusion, and *not* for one who delights in company or enjoys associating with others?’ Here, the secluded Bhikkhu may be approached by Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, male and female lay disciples, kings and their ministers, those of other sects and their disciples. But while surrounded by such visitors, the Bhikkhu’s mind naturally flows inwards, as it has the organic disposition to incline and be directed to seclusion; for his mind delights in constantly giving up, and withdrawing into and delighting in renunciation, while he speaks to them with the underlying intention of dismissing them, and sending them away, as soon as possible. Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what was meant with the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one who looks for seclusion, and *not* for one who delights in company or enjoys associating with others.’”

“And what, Bhikkhus, was meant by the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one who is diligent with aroused effort, and *not* for the lazy?’ Here, the Bhikkhu lives diligent and with aroused effort as he abandons unwholesome behaviors and develops wholesome ones, staying resolute and committed to his practice on the Path, while being firmly determined not to give up the main aim of doing and cultivating wholesome and good actions. Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what was

meant with the statement: “This Dhamma is for one who is diligent with aroused effort, *not* for the lazy.”

“And what, Bhikkhus, was meant by the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one established in continuous mindfulness, *not* for one lacking in mindfulness?’ Here, the Bhikkhu possesses and maintains awareness of himself and his thoughts in a continuous manner, always bearing in mind and recollecting things pondered upon, heard, done and said from long ago. Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what was meant with the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one established in continuous mindfulness, *not* for one lacking in mindfulness.’”

“And what, Bhikkhus, was meant by the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one who has the stability of heart, *not* for the distracted?’ Here, the Bhikkhu, by secluding the mind from sensual desires and unwholesome mental states, enters and abides in the First Jhāna, which brings with it joy and pleasure that is the result of seclusion, while the mind is still accompanied by thinking and pondering. Further, by going beyond thinking and pondering, the Bhikkhu enters and abides in the Second Jhāna, with the heart internally stabilized and tranquil, and brought to a single point, which brings with it joy and pleasure that is the result of concentration. Further, as equanimity grows within the mind and the joy subsides, he abides dispassionate but mindful and fully aware as he experiences the soothing relaxation within the body. Thus, he enters and abides in the Third Jhāna, of which the Noble Ones declare: ‘mindfully one abides equanimous, experiencing happiness throughout.’ Further, as he dispels his attachment to happiness and sadness, and having already gone beyond joy and pain, the Bhikkhu enters and abides in the Fourth Jhāna, whereby he feels the freedom from whatever is pleasant and whatever that is painful, as he experiences the purifying effect that mindfulness has brought him, while resting in equanimity. Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what was meant with the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for one who has the stability of heart, *not* for the distracted.’”

“And what, Bhikkhus, was meant by the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for the wise, *not* for those lacking in wisdom?’ Here, the Bhikkhu is wise, as he possesses the discernment to see the arising and vanishing of the five aggregates as they truly are and come to be, and this penetrative noble wisdom leads the Bhikkhu to the complete destruction of all suffering. Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what was meant with the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for the wise, *not* for those lacking in wisdom.’”

“And what Bhikkhus, was meant by the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for the one who delights in the non-proliferation of thoughts, one who enjoys non-proliferation of ideas or concepts, and *not* for those who delight in the constant proliferation of thoughts, or the ones who enjoy the constant proliferation of ideas or concepts?’ Here, the Bhikkhu’s mind is clear, calmly confident, and energized as it decidedly finds liberation through the ceasing of all proliferation. Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what was meant with the statement: ‘This Dhamma is for the one who delights in the non-proliferation of thoughts, one who enjoys non-proliferation of ideas or concepts, and *not* for those who delight in the constant proliferation of thoughts, or the ones who enjoy the constant proliferation of ideas or concepts.’”

Meanwhile, as instructed and while following the Teacher’s guidance, the Venerable Anuruddha spent the following Rains’ Retreat in the Eastern Bamboo Forest, among the Cetis. Then, the

Venerable Anuruddha, while living alone, secluded and withdrawn from the crowd, energetic, and diligently working while maintaining continuity of mindfulness throughout, before long, realized for himself, directly, with Unshakable Wisdom, and through his own efforts the Supreme Goal of the Holy Life, for the purpose of which Good Sons of families rightfully leave the household life and go forth, becoming homeless. And by entering upon it, he dwelled in that Unshakable Serenity of the Heart.

Right then, he knew for himself: “Birth is now finally destroyed! The Holy Life has been lived! Whatever work had to be done, has now been completed! There is no more return to any state of becoming! Thus, the Venerable Anuruddha became one of the Arahants, and right at that moment, he uttered these majestic verses:

*“The Supreme Teacher in the universe
Came to me, with his psychic powers, having seen my thoughts
Delighting in non-proliferation, Himself*

*The Teacher taught me, His own disciple, in non-proliferation.
Now, having learned his Dhamma,
I delight in having done his bidding,
For I have now attained the Three Knowledges,
And with it, I completed my duty in the Lord’s Dispensation.”*

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu