AN 11.12 — AN 11:12 To Mahānāma (1) | Mahānāma Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

To Mahānāma (1)

Mahānāma Sutta (AN 11:12)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Park. Now at that time many monks were at work making robes for the Blessed One, (thinking,) "When the robes are finished, at the end of the three months (of the Rains retreat), the Blessed One will set out wandering." Mahānāma the Sakyan heard that many monks were at work making robes for the Blessed One, (thinking,) "When the robes are finished, at the end of the three months, the Blessed One will set out wandering." So he approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "I have heard

that many monks are at work making robes for the Blessed One, (thinking,) 'When the robes are finished, at the end of the three months, the Blessed One will set out wandering.' For those of us living by means of various dwelling places (for the mind), by means of which dwelling place should we live?"

"Excellent, Mahānāma, excellent! It is fitting for clansmen like you to approach the Tathāgata and ask, 'For those of us living by means of various dwelling places (for the mind), by means of which dwelling place should we live?'

"One who is aroused to practice is one of conviction, not without conviction. One aroused to practice is one with persistence aroused, not lazy. One aroused to practice is one of established mindfulness, not muddled mindfulness. One aroused to practice is centered in concentration, not uncentered. One aroused to practice is discerning, not undiscerning.

"Established in these five qualities, you should further develop six qualities:

[1] "There is the case where you recollect the Tathāgata: 'Indeed, the Blessed One is worthy & rightly self-awakened, consummate in clear-knowing & conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the cosmos, unexcelled trainer of people fit to be tamed, teacher of devas & human beings, awakened, blessed.' At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the Tathāgata, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the Tathāgata. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma,1 gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.

"Of one who does this, Mahānāma, it is said: 'Among those who are out of tune, the disciple of the noble ones dwells in tune; among those who are malicious, he dwells without malice; having attained the stream of Dhamma, he develops the recollection of the Buddha.'

[2] "Then there is the case where you recollect the Dhamma: 'The Dhamma is well taught by the Blessed One, to be seen here & now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be experienced by the observant for themselves.' At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the Dhamma, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the Dhamma. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.

"Of one who does this, Mahānāma, it is said: 'Among those who are out of tune, the disciple of the noble ones dwells in tune; among those who are malicious, he dwells without malice; having attained the stream of Dhamma, he develops the recollection of the

Dhamma.'

[3] "Then there is the case where you recollect the Saṅgha: 'The Saṅgha of the Blessed One's disciples who have practiced well... who have practiced straight-forwardly... who have practiced methodically... who have practiced masterfully—in other words, the four types (of noble disciples) when taken as pairs, the eight when taken as individual types—they are the Saṅgha of the Blessed One's disciples: deserving of gifts, deserving of hospitality, deserving of offerings, deserving of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.' At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the Saṅgha, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the Saṅgha. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.

"Of one who does this, Mahānāma, it is said: 'Among those who are out of tune, the disciple of the noble ones dwells in tune; among those who are malicious, he dwells without malice; having attained the stream of Dhamma, he develops the recollection of the Saṅgha.'

[4] "Then there is the case where you recollect your own virtues: '(They are) untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the observant, ungrasped at, conducive to concentration.' At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting virtue, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on virtue. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.

"Of one who does this, Mahānāma, it is said: 'Among those who are out of tune, the disciple of the noble ones dwells in tune; among those who are malicious, he dwells without malice; having attained the stream of Dhamma, he develops the recollection of virtue.'

[5] "Then there is the case where you recollect your own generosity: 'It is a gain, a great gain for me, that—among people overcome with the stain of possessiveness—I live at home, my awareness cleansed of the stain of possessiveness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in being magnanimous, responsive to requests, delighting in the distribution of alms.' At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting generosity, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on generosity. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed

experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.

“Of one who does this, Mahānāma, it is said: ‘Among those who are out of tune, the disciple of the noble ones dwells in tune; among those who are malicious, he dwells without malice; having attained the stream of Dhamma, he develops the recollection of generosity.’

[6] “Then you should recollect the devas: “There are the Devas of the Four Great Kings, the Devas of the Thirty-three, the Devas of the Hours, the Contented Devas, the Devas who delight in creation, the Devas [Muses?] who wield power over the creations of others, the Devas of Brahmā’s Retinue, the devas beyond them. Whatever conviction they were endowed with, so that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of conviction is present in me as well. Whatever virtue they were endowed with, so that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of virtue is present in me as well. Whatever learning they were endowed with, so that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of learning is present in me as well. Whatever generosity they were endowed with, so that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of generosity is present in me as well. Whatever discernment they were endowed with, so that—when falling away from this life—they re-arose there, the same sort of discernment is present in me as well. At any time when a disciple of the noble ones is recollecting the conviction, virtue, learning, generosity, and discernment found both in himself and the devas, his mind is not overcome with passion, not overcome with aversion, not overcome with delusion. His mind heads straight, based on the (qualities of the) devas. And when the mind is headed straight, the disciple of the noble ones gains a sense of the goal, gains a sense of the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. In one who is joyful, rapture arises. In one whose mind is enraptured, the body grows calm. One whose body is calmed experiences ease. In one at ease, the mind becomes concentrated.

“Of one who does this, Mahānāma, it is said: ‘Among those who are out of tune, the disciple of the noble ones dwells in tune; among those who are malicious, he dwells without malice; having attained the stream of Dhamma, he develops the recollection of the devas.’”

Note

1. See AN 7:64.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 6:2; SN 11:3; SN 55:21–22; SN 55:54; AN 3:71; AN 10:92; Khp 6; Iti 90