MN 143 — Anathapindikovada Sutta: Advice to A Dying Man

English translation by Andrew Olendzki.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: PARTIAL. Complete source excerpt preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure; source omits part of the canonical discourse.

Text

Translator's note: This systematic exploration of the phenomenal field of human experience is a powerful exercise in non-attachment. No need to wait until lying on your death bed to undertake it. Put aside an hour, find a quiet place, and try working through this map of the inner landscape, step by step.

On one occasion the householder Anathapindika was afflicted, suffering, and gravely ill. The venerable Sariputta dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went to the residence of Anathapindika with Ananda as his attendant. Having gone there, he sat down on a seat made ready and said to Anathapindika: "I hope you are getting well, I hope you are comfortable. I hope your painful feelings are subsiding and not increasing."

"Venerable Sariputta, I am not getting well, I am not comfortable. My painful feelings are increasing, not subsiding. Just as if a strong man were splitting my head open with a sharp sword, so too violent winds cut through my head. Just as if a strong man were tightening a tough leather strap around my head as a headband, so too there are violent pains in my

head. Just as if a skilled butcher or his apprentice were to carve up an ox's belly with a sharp butcher's knife, so too violent winds are carving up my belly. Just as if two strong men were to seize a weaker man by both arms and roast him over a pit of hot coals, so too there is a violent burning in my body. I am not getting well, I am not comfortable. My painful feelings are increasing, not subsiding."

"Then, householder, [said Sariputta,] you should train thus:

I will not cling to the eye; the ear; the nose; the tongue; the body; the mind and my consciousness

will not be dependent on the eye; the ear; the nose; the tongue; the body; the mind

I will not cling to forms; sounds; smells; tastes; touches; mind-objects and my consciousness

will not be dependent on forms; sounds; smells; tastes; touches; mind-objects

I will not cling to eye-consciousness; ear-consciousness; nose-consciousness; tongue-consciousness; body-consciousness; mind-consciousness and my consciousness

will not be dependent on eye-consciousness; ear-consciousness; nose-consciousness; tongue-consciousness; body-consciousness; mind-consciousness

I will not cling to eye-contact; ear-contact; nose-contact; tongue-contact; body-contact; mind-contact and my consciousness

will not be dependent on eye-contact; ear-contact; nose-contact; tongue-contact; body-contact; mind-contact

I will not cling to feeling born of eye-contact; feeling born of ear-contact; feeling born of nose-contact; feeling born of tongue-contact; feeling born of body-contact; feeling born of mind-contact and my consciousness

will not be dependent on feeling born of eye-contact; feeling born of ear-contact; feeling born of nose-contact; feeling born of tongue-contact; feeling born of body-contact; feeling born of mind-contact

I will not cling to the earth element; the water element; the fire element; the air element and my consciousness

will not be dependent on the earth element; the water element; the fire element; the air element

I will not cling to material form; feeling; perception; formations; consciousness and my consciousness

will not be dependent on material form; feeling; perception; formations; consciousness

I will not cling to the sphere of infinite space; the sphere of infinite consciousness; the sphere of nothingness; the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception and my consciousness

will not be dependent on infinite space; infinite consciousness; nothingness; neither perception nor non-perception

I will not cling to this world; the world beyond and my consciousness

will not be dependent on this world; the world beyond

I will not cling to what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought after, and examined by the mind and my consciousness

will not be dependent on what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought after, and examined by the mind

When this was said, Anathapindika wept and shed tears. Then Ananda asked him, "Are you foundering, householder, are you sinking?"

"I am not foundering, Ananda, I am not sinking. But although I have long waited upon the Teacher and bhikkhus worthy of esteem, never before have I heard such a talk on the Dhamma."

"Such talk on the Dhamma is not given to lay people clothed in white, but only to those who have gone forth."

"Well, then, Sariputta, let such talk on the Dhamma be given to lay people clothed in white. There are people with little dust in their eyes who are wasting away through not hearing such talk on the Dhamma. There will be those who will understand."

Then, after giving Anathapindika this advice, Sariputta and Ananda rose from their seats and departed.

Soon after they had left, the householder Anathapindika died and reappeared in the Tushita heaven.

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