MN 143 — MN 143 The Exhortation to Anāthapiṇḍika | Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

The Exhortation to Anāthapiṇḍika

Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta (MN 143)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. And on that occasion Anāthapiṇḍika the householder was diseased, in pain, severely ill. Then Anāthapiṇḍika the householder said to one of his men, "Come, my good man. Go to the Blessed One and, on arrival, pay homage to his feet with your head in my name and say 'Lord, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder is diseased, in pain, severely ill. He pays homage with his head to the Blessed One's feet.' Then go to Ven. Sāriputta and, on arrival, pay homage to his feet with your head in my name and say 'Venerable sir, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder is diseased, in pain, severely ill. He pays

homage with his head to your feet.' Then say: 'It would be good if Ven. Sāriputta would visit Anāthapiṇḍika's home, out of sympathy for him.'"

Responding, "As you say, lord," to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, the man went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said, "Lord, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder is diseased, in pain, severely ill. He pays homage with his head to the Blessed One's feet." Then he went to Ven. Sāriputta and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said, "Venerable sir, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder is diseased, in pain, severely ill. He pays homage with his head to your feet." Then he said, "It would be good if Ven. Sāriputta would visit Anāthapiṇḍika's home, out of sympathy for him."

Then Ven. Sāriputta—having adjusted his lower robe and taking his bowl & outer robe—went to the home of Anāthapiṇḍika the householder with Ven. Ānanda as his attendant. On arrival, he sat down on a seat made ready and said to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder: "I hope you are getting better, householder. I hope you are comfortable. I hope that your pains are lessening and not increasing. I hope that there are signs of their lessening, and not of their increasing."

[Anāthapiṇḍika:] "I am not getting better, venerable sir. I am not comfortable. My extreme pains are increasing, not lessening. There are signs of their increasing, and not of their lessening. Extreme forces slice through my head, just as if a strong man were slicing my head open with a sharp sword.... Extreme pains have arisen in my head, just as if a strong man were tightening a turban made of tough leather straps around my head.... Extreme forces carve up my stomach cavity, just as if a butcher or his apprentice were to carve up the stomach cavity of an ox.... There is an extreme burning in my body, just as if two strong men, grabbing a weaker man by the arms, were to roast and broil him over a pit of hot embers. I am not getting better, venerable sir. I am not comfortable. My extreme pains are increasing, not lessening. There are signs of their increasing, and not of their lessening."

[Ven. Sāriputta:] "Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: 'I won't cling to the eye; my consciousness will not be dependent on the eye.' That's how you should train yourself. 'I won't cling to the ear... nose... tongue... body; my consciousness will not be dependent on the body.' ... 'I won't cling to the intellect; my consciousness will not be dependent on the intellect.' That's how you should train yourself.

"Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: 'I won't cling to forms... sounds... smells... tastes... tactile sensations; my consciousness will not be dependent on tactile sensations.' ... 'I won't cling to ideas; my consciousness will not be dependent on ideas.' That's how you should train yourself.

"Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: 'I won't cling to eye-consciousness... ear-consciousness... nose-consciousness... tongue-consciousness... body-consciousness; my consciousness will not be dependent on body-consciousness.' ... 'I won't cling to intellect-consciousness; my consciousness will not be dependent on intellect-consciousness.' That's how you should train yourself.

“Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: ‘I won’t cling to contact at the eye… contact at the ear… contact at the nose… contact at the tongue… contact at the body; my consciousness will not be dependent on contact at the body.’ … ‘I won’t cling to contact at the intellect; my consciousness will not be dependent on contact at the intellect.’ That’s how you should train yourself.

“Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: ‘I won’t cling to feeling born of contact at the eye… feeling born of contact at the ear… feeling born of contact at the nose… feeling born of contact at the tongue… feeling born of contact at the body; my consciousness will not be dependent on feeling born of contact at the body.’ … ‘I won’t cling to feeling born of contact at the intellect; my consciousness will not be dependent on feeling born of contact at the intellect.’ That’s how you should train yourself.

“Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: ‘I won’t cling to the earth property… liquid property… fire property… wind property… space property; my consciousness will not be dependent on the space property.’ … ‘I won’t cling to the consciousness property; my consciousness will not be dependent on the consciousness property.’ That’s how you should train yourself.

“Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: ‘I won’t cling to form… feeling… perception… fabrications; my consciousness will not be dependent on fabrications.’ … ‘I won’t cling to consciousness; my consciousness will not be dependent on consciousness.’ That’s how you should train yourself.

“Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: ‘I won’t cling to the dimension of the infinitude of space… the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness… the dimension of nothingness; my consciousness will not be dependent on the dimension of nothingness.’ … ‘I won’t cling to the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception; my consciousness will not be dependent on the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.’ That’s how you should train yourself.

“Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: ‘I won’t cling to this world; my consciousness will not be dependent on this world… I won’t cling to the world beyond; my consciousness will not be dependent on the world beyond.’ That’s how you should train yourself.

“Then, householder, you should train yourself in this way: ‘I won’t cling to what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect; my consciousness will not be dependent on that.’ That’s how you should train yourself.”

When this was said, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder wept and shed tears. Ven. Ānanda said to him, “Are you sinking, householder? Are you foundering?”

“No, venerable sir. I’m not sinking, nor am I foundering. It’s just that for a long time I have attended to the Teacher, and to the monks who inspire my heart, but never before have I heard a talk on the Dhamma like this.”

“This sort of talk on the Dhamma, householder, is not given to lay people clad in white. This sort of talk on the Dhamma is given to those gone forth.”

“In that case, Ven. Sāriputta, please let this sort of talk on the Dhamma be given to lay people clad in white. There are clansmen with little dust in their eyes who are wasting away through not hearing (this) Dhamma. There will be those who will understand it.”

Then Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Ānanda, having given this instruction to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, got up from their seats and left. Then, not long after they left, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder died and reappeared in the Tusita heaven. Then Anāthapiṇḍika the deva’s son, in the far extreme of the night, his extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta’s Grove, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, stood to one side. As he was standing there, he addressed the Blessed One with this verse:

This blessed Jeta’s Grove,

home to the community of seers,

where there dwells the Dhamma King:

the source of rapture for me.

Action, clear-knowing, & mental qualities,1

virtue, the highest (way of) life:

Through this are mortals purified,

not through clan or wealth.

Thus the wise,

seeing their own benefit,

investigating the Dhamma appropriately,

should purify themselves right there.

As for Sāriputta:

Any monk who has gone beyond,

at best can only equal him

in discernment, virtue, & calm.

That is what Anāthapiṇḍika the deva’s son said. The Teacher approved. Then Anāthapiṇḍika the deva’s son, (knowing,) “The Teacher has approved of me,” bowed down to him, circled him three times, keeping him to his right, and then disappeared right there.

Then when the night had past, The Blessed One addressed the monks: "Last night, monks, a certain deva's son in the far extreme of the night, his extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta's Grove, came to me and, on arrival, having bowed down to me, stood to one side. As he was standing there, he addressed me with this verse:

This blessed Jeta's Grove,

home to the community of seers,

where there dwells the Dhamma King:

the source of rapture for me.

Action, clear-knowing, & mental qualities,1

virtue, the highest (way of) life:

Through this are mortals purified,

not through clan or wealth.

Thus the wise,

seeing their own benefit,

investigating the Dhamma appropriately,

should purify themselves right there.

As for Sāriputta:

Any monk who has gone beyond,

at best can only equal him

in discernment, virtue, & calm.

"That is what the deva's son said. And (thinking,) 'The Teacher has approved of me,' he bowed down to me, circled me three times, and then disappeared right there."

When this was said, Ven. Ānanda said to the Blessed One, "Lord, that must have been Anāthapiṇḍika the deva's son. Anāthapiṇḍika the householder had supreme confidence in Ven. Sāriputta."

"Very good, Ānanda. Very good, to the extent that you have deduced what can be arrived at through logic. That was Anāthapiṇḍika the deva's son, and no one else."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Ānanda delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Note

1. The Thai edition, which I have followed here, reads dhammā: mental qualities. Other editions read dhammo: the Dhamma. The Commentary maintains that this refers to the mental qualities conducive to concentration.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 97; MN 138; SN 2:19; SN 10:8; SN 12:38; SN 12:64; SN 22:54; SN 22:88; SN 41:10; SN 55:54; AN 4:184; AN 6:16; AN 7:58; AN 11:10; Ud 8:1; Sn 5:4