

MN 143
Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta
“Advice to Anāthapiṇḍika”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

Copyright © Bhikkhu Candana 2022

I have personally heard this.

At one time, the Blessed One was living at the monastery donated by Anāthapiṇḍika at Jeta's Grove, in the City of Sāvattṭhi. It was at that time, when the householder Anāthapiṇḍika, having become seriously ill, was now suffering, and experiencing much pain.

Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika addressed one of his attendants and said: “Good man, go and approach the Blessed One and, after paying homage to the Blessed One in my name with your head at his feet, inform Him of the following, “Bhante, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is now seriously ill.” Also, go and approach the Venerable Sāriputta, and after paying homage to the Venerable Sāriputta in my name with your head at his feet, inform him also of the following, “Bhante, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is now seriously ill,” while you add the request: “Bhante, it would be good if the Venerable Sāriputta would approach the householder Anāthapiṇḍika’s home, out of compassion.”

By saying, “Yes, Master,” the attendant left to go and see the Blessed One and did as instructed: he went and paid homage at the feet of the Blessed One in the name of his master, Anāthapiṇḍika, while informing the Blessed One of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika’s serious illness. Then, he approached the Venerable Sāriputta and, after paying homage to him, he sat to one side and said: “Bhante, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is now seriously ill,” as he added the request: “Bhante, it would be good if the Venerable Sāriputta would approach the householder Anāthapiṇḍika’s home, out of compassion.”

With his silence, the Venerable Sāriputta accepted the request, as he quickly put on his robes, and by taking his alms bowl and outer robe with him, together with the Venerable Ānanda, as the second Bhikkhu, he approached the home of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika.

Having sat down on the prepared seats, the Venerable Sāriputta inquired: “Householder, I hope you’re keeping well. How are you feeling now? Are you feeling better? Are the painful feelings you’re experiencing getting less or more severe? I hope it is the ending of the painful feelings that you are noticing, not their increase.”

“Bhante Sāriputta, I’m not keeping well at all. I’m not feeling better, and instead I am experiencing much suffering, as the painful feelings are getting far worse. Bhante, it is the increase of the painful feelings that I’m noticing, not their decrease.

“Bhante Sāriputta, my situation is unbearable, and I am not doing well at all. My pain is increasing and intensifying. The pain is not nearing its end, and it keeps persisting. Bhante, the

pain I am experiencing in my head is so severe that it feels just as if a strong man was cleaving the top of my head with the edge of a sharp sword. In the same way, Bhante, my head feels like it is being sliced by the dry and violent internal winds. Bhante, I can't bear the pain.

“Bhante Sāriputta, my situation is unbearable, and I am not doing well at all. My pain is increasing and intensifying. The pain is not nearing its end, as it keeps persisting. Bhante, the pain I am experiencing is so severe that it feels just as if a strong man was continuously tightening a leather strap that is wrapped around my head. In the same way, Bhante, my head feels like it is about to explode by the dry and violent internal winds. Bhante, I can't bear the pain.

“Bhante Sāriputta, my situation is unbearable, and I am not doing well at all. My pain is increasing and intensifying. The pain is not nearing its end, as it keeps persisting. Bhante, the pain I am experiencing is so severe that it feels just as if a skilled butcher or his apprentice were to cut open my gut with his meat cleaver. In the same way, Bhante, my gut feels like it is being cut open by the dry and violent internal winds. Bhante, I can't bear the pain.

“Bhante Sāriputta, my situation is unbearable, and I am not doing well at all. My pain is increasing and intensifying. The pain is not nearing its end, as it is still strong and persisting. Bhante, the pain I am experiencing is so severe that it feels just as if two strong men had grabbed hold of a weaker person by his limbs and started roasting and grilling him over a pit of burning charcoal. In the same way, Bhante, my body is burning with hot fever. Bhante, I can't bear the pain.

“Bhante, my situation is unbearable, and I am not doing well at all. My pain is increasing and intensifying. The pain is not nearing its end, as it keeps persisting.”

“Then, householder, you must now train yourself in this manner: ‘I will not cling to anything that is seen by the eye, and I will not settle on anything brought in by eye consciousness. I will not cling to anything that is heard by the ear, and I will not settle on anything brought in by ear consciousness. I will not cling to anything that is smelled by the nose, and I will not settle on anything brought in by nose consciousness. I will not cling to anything that is tasted by the tongue, and I will not settle on anything brought in by tongue consciousness. I will not cling to anything that is touched by the body, and I will not settle on anything brought in by body consciousness. And I will not cling to anything that is cognized by the mind, and I will not settle on anything brought in by mind consciousness. In this manner, householder, you must train yourself.

“Furthermore, householder, you must train yourself continuously, in this manner: ‘I will neither cling to visible forms, nor dwell on or lean into visible forms. I will neither cling to audible sounds, nor dwell on or lean into audible sounds. I will neither cling to odors, nor dwell on or lean into odors. I will neither cling to flavors, nor dwell on or lean into flavors. I will neither cling to tactile objects, nor dwell on or lean into tactile objects. And I will neither cling to concepts and mental objects, nor dwell on or lean into concepts and mental objects. In this manner, householder, you must train yourself.

“Furthermore, householder, you must train yourself continuously, in this manner: ‘I will not grab on to eye-consciousness, with no leftover thoughts to be clinging to eye-consciousness. I will not grab on to ear-consciousness, with no leftover thoughts to be clinging to ear-consciousness. I will not grab on to nose-consciousness, with no leftover thoughts to be clinging to nose-consciousness. I will not grab on to tongue-consciousness, with no leftover thoughts to be clinging to tongue-consciousness. I will not grab on to body-consciousness, with no leftover thoughts to be clinging to body-consciousness. I will not grab on to mind-consciousness, with no leftover thoughts to be clinging to mind-consciousness.’ In this manner, householder, you must train yourself.

“Furthermore, householder, you must train yourself continuously, in this manner: ‘I will not grab on to any contact made by the eye, nor dwell on any thoughts as a result of that eye contact. I will not grab on to any contact made by the ear, nor dwell on any thoughts as a result of that ear contact. I will not grab on to any contact made by the nose, nor dwell on any thoughts as a result of that nose contact. I will not grab on to any contact made by the tongue, nor dwell on any thoughts as a result of that tongue contact. I will not grab on to any contact made by the body, nor dwell on any thoughts as a result of that body contact. I will not grab on to any contact made by the mind, nor dwell on any thoughts as a result of that mind contact.’ In this manner, householder, you must train yourself.

“Furthermore, householder, you must train yourself continuously, in this manner: ‘I will not grab on to any feelings born of eye contact, nor cling to any state resulting from that eye contact. I will not grab on to any feelings born of ear contact, nor cling to any state resulting from that ear contact. I will not grab on to any feelings born of nose contact, nor cling to any state resulting from that nose contact. I will not grab on to any feelings born of tongue contact, nor cling to any state resulting from that tongue contact. I will not grab on to any feelings born of body contact, nor cling to any state resulting from that body contact. I will not grab on to any feelings born of mind contact, nor cling to any state resulting from that mind contact.’ In this manner, householder, you must train yourself.

“Furthermore, householder, you must train yourself continuously, in this manner: ‘I will not grab on to the earth element, nor be attached to any state pertaining to the earth element. I will not grab on to the water element, nor be attached to any state pertaining to the water element. I will not grab on to the fire element, nor be attached to any state pertaining to the fire element. I will not grab on to the air element, nor be attached to any state pertaining to the air element. I will not grab on to the space element, nor be attached to any state pertaining to the space element. I will not grab on to the consciousness element, nor be attached to any state pertaining to the consciousness element.’ In this manner, householder, you must train yourself.

“Furthermore, householder, you must train yourself continuously, in this manner: ‘I will not grab on to matter, nor dwell or lean on matter. I will not grab on to feelings, nor dwell or lean on feelings. I will not grab on to memories and mental associations, nor dwell or lean on memories and mental associations. I will not grab on to habitual tendencies, nor dwell or lean on habitual tendencies. I will not grab on to sense awareness, nor dwell or lean on sense awareness.’ In this manner, householder, you must train yourself.

“Furthermore, householder, you must train yourself continuously, in this manner: ‘I will not grab on to the realm of infinite space, nor be fixated upon the realm of infinite space. I will not grab on to the realm of infinitely spreading consciousness, nor be fixated upon the realm of infinitely spreading consciousness. I will not grab on to the realm of nothingness, nor be fixated upon the realm of nothingness. I will not grab on to the realm of neither perception nor non-perception, nor be fixated upon the realm of neither perception nor non-perception.’ In this manner, householder, you must train yourself.

“Furthermore, householder, you must train yourself continuously in this manner: ‘I will not grab on to this world, nor entertain thoughts pertaining to this world. Similarly, I will not grab on to any other world, nor entertain thoughts pertaining to any other world.

“Also, householder, you must train yourself continuously in this manner: ‘I will not grab on to anything that is seen, heard, sensed, or known through any of the six senses, nor entertain any states of mind that are the results of pondering, pursuing, and exploring through discursive thinking.’ It is in this manner, householder, that you *must* train yourself!”

On hearing these words, tears began streaming down the householder Anāthapiṇḍika’s face, for he was now delighted beyond any measure, crying tears of joy.

The Venerable Ānanda, noticing this, asked him:

“Householder, are you clinging fast to what is familiar, or are you fading into despair?”
Bhante Ānanda, I’m neither clinging fast to what is familiar nor am I fading into despair. But now I realize that, despite the fact that I have honored, paid respects to and served the Great Teacher and the Bhikkhus for a long time, yet I have never before heard a Dhamma Talk such as this!”

Then the Venerable Sāriputta said:

“Householder, a Dhamma Talk such as this is not given to a lay person in white clothes. Rather, only those who have gone forth are taught in this manner.”

“But Bhante Sāriputta, discourses like this should be given to lay persons in white clothes. For there are indeed clansmen, who have but a little dust in their eyes, with just a few defilements left in their hearts, who will most certainly lose such a great opportunity as a result of not hearing such a Dhamma Talk! But, by hearing it, there will be many who understand the Dhamma. Let the Venerable Sāriputta, therefore, from now on offer such Dhamma Talks to lay people, in white clothes, as well.”

Then, after having encouragingly spoken to, inspired, roused, and lightened the householder Anāthapiṇḍika’s heart with this enlivening Talk on the Dhamma, the Venerable Sāriputta arose from his seat, along with the Venerable Ānanda, and they both left.

Soon after they had left, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika died, and immediately reappeared among the Devas of the Tusita heaven, the realm of the Happy Ones.

Then Anāthapiṇḍika, now the glorious Son of the Devas, late that night, while illuminating the entire Jeta's Grove with a resplendent light, approached the Blessed One, worshipped Him, stood to one side and said to the Blessed One:

*“This indeed is the lovely Jeta's Grove
the Home of the Sangha of the Noble Ones,
Adorned by the King of the Dhamma Himself,
This itself fills my heart with so much joy!*

*Beings considerate of death,
Purify themselves through their bodily actions,
With knowledge of the Dhamma,
Along with virtuous behavior and wholesome living,
Not by the authority of their clan,
Nor by how much wealth they possess.*

*It is for this reason that the wise person,
On recognizing what is indeed good for them,
Carefully examines and applies the Dhamma into his own life,
Thus, purifying his life completely.*

*In this way, of all those Bhikkhus who have crossed over
The ones like Sāriputta,
Possessing wisdom, virtues, and true contentment,
Are indeed, the foremost.”*

Having spoken these verses, Anāthapiṇḍika, now the Son of the Devas, waited for the Blessed One's approval. And knowing that the Teacher had approved of his words with His silence, Anāthapiṇḍika paid homage to the Blessed One and, after circumambulating and keeping the Teacher to his right, he vanished from there.

In the morning, the Blessed One addressed the Bhikkhus and said:

“Late last night, Bhikkhus, a glorious Son of the Devas, while illuminating the entire Jeta's Grove with a resplendent light, approached and worshipped me, stood to one side and said:

*“This indeed is the lovely Jeta's Grove
the Home of the Sangha of the Noble Ones,
Adorned by the King of the Dhamma Himself,
This itself fills my heart with so much joy!*

*Beings considerate of death,
Purify themselves through their bodily actions,
With knowledge of the Dhamma,
Along with virtuous behavior and wholesome living,*

*Not by the authority of their clan,
Nor by how much wealth they possess.*

*It is for this reason that the wise person,
On recognizing what is indeed good for them,
Carefully examines and applies the Dhamma into his own life,
Thus, purifying his life completely.*

*In this way, of all those Bhikkhus who have crossed over
The ones like Sāriputta,
Possessing wisdom, virtues, and true contentment,
Are indeed, the foremost.”*

“Having spoken these verses, Bhikkhus, that Son of the Devas, waited for my approval. And knowing that the Teacher had approved of his words with my silence, that Deva paid homage to me, and after circumambulating and keeping the Teacher to his right, he vanished from there.”

On hearing these words from the Blessed One, the Venerable Ānanda suddenly exclaimed:

“Bhante, could that Deva have been Anāthapiṇḍika, now the Son of the Devas? After all, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika truly loved and respected the Venerable Sāriputta!”

“Very good, Ānanda, you are correct! You have reached that conclusion by relying on your deductive reasoning, and not much else.
For indeed, that Deva is none other than Anāthapiṇḍika, now the Son of the Devas.”

That is what the Blessed One said, and the Venerable Ānanda was delighted in The Blessed One’s words.

Sadhu

Sadhu

Sadhu