

MN 145
Punnovāda Sutta
“Advice to Venerable Punna”
Translated by Candana Bhikkhu

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I have personally heard this.

At one time, the Blessed One was living in the monastery offered by Anāthapiṇḍika, at Jeta’s Grove in the City of Sāvatti. Then when it was already evening, the Venerable Punna, having come out of his meditative seclusion, approached the Blessed One, paid his respect and then sat to one side, and said:

‘Bhante, it would be good, if the Blessed One would please teach me the Dhamma in brief. That way, once having listened to the words of the Tathāgata, I will go and live alone, secluded and withdrawn, and will dedicate myself with zeal, as I diligently practice with strong resolution and precision.’

“Well then, Punna, listen and pay close attention to what I shall say,” the Blessed One replied.

“Yes, Lord.”

“Punna, there are sights seen by the eyes that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu allows himself to be pulled into, delight in, or become satisfied by and cling to these sights, then excitement arises in his heart. Punna, I declare that the presence of excitement in the heart is itself the presence of suffering.

Similarly, there are sounds heard by the ears that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu allows himself to be pulled into, delight in, or become satisfied by and cling to these sounds, then excitement arises in his heart. Punna, I declare that the presence of excitement in the heart is itself the presence of suffering.

Similarly, there are odors smelled by the nose that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu allows himself to be pulled into, delight in, or become satisfied by and cling to these odors, then excitement arises in his heart. Punna, I declare that the presence of excitement in the heart is itself the presence of suffering.

Similarly, there are flavors tasted by the tongue that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu allows himself to be pulled into, delight in, or become satisfied by and cling to these flavors, then excitement arises in

his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the presence of excitement in the heart is itself the presence of suffering.

Similarly, there are tangibles touched by the body that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu allows himself to be pulled into, delight in, or become satisfied by and cling to these tangibles, then excitement arises in his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the presence of excitement in the heart is itself the presence of suffering.

Similarly, there are thoughts and ideas known by the mind that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu allows himself to be pulled into, delight in, or become satisfied by and cling to these thoughts, then excitement arises in his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the presence of excitement in the heart is itself the presence of suffering.

But Puṇṇa, there are sights seen by the eyes that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu *does not* allow himself to be pulled into, nor delight in, nor become satisfied by or cling to these sights, then excitement *does not* arise in his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the vanishing of excitement in the heart is itself the vanishing of suffering.

Similarly, there are sounds heard by the ears that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu *does not* allow himself to be pulled into, nor delight in, nor become satisfied by or cling to these sounds, then excitement *does not* arise in his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the vanishing of excitement in the heart is itself the vanishing of suffering.

Similarly, there are odors smelled by the nose that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu *does not* allow himself to be pulled into, nor delight in, nor become satisfied by or cling to these odors, then excitement *does not* arise in his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the vanishing of excitement in the heart is itself the vanishing of suffering.

Similarly, there are flavors tasted by the tongue that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu *does not* allow himself to be pulled into, nor delight in, nor become satisfied by or cling to these flavors, then excitement *does not* arise in his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the vanishing of excitement in the heart is itself the vanishing of suffering.

Similarly, there are tangibles touched by the body that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu *does not* allow himself to be pulled into, nor delight in, nor become satisfied by or cling to these tangibles, then excitement *does not* arise in his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the vanishing of excitement in the heart is itself the vanishing of suffering.

Similarly, there are thoughts and ideas known by the mind that are liked, preferred, and desired, that are enjoyable, attractive, pleasant, agreeable, and exciting. Now, if the Bhikkhu *does not* allow himself to be pulled into, nor delight in, nor become satisfied by or cling to these thoughts, then excitement *does not* arise in his heart. Puṇṇa, I declare that the vanishing of excitement in the heart is itself the vanishing of suffering.

Puṇṇa, now that I have taught you the Dhamma in brief, where will you go to dedicate yourself to diligent practice?”

“Bhante, now that I have been taught the Dhamma, in brief, by the Blessed One, I will go in the direction of the Sunāparanta region.”

“But Puṇṇa, the people of Sunāparanta are known to be uncultured and brutal in their ways. What will you do if they insult and abuse you?”

“Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to insult and abuse me, then I will think to myself: *‘Truly, these people of Sunāparanta are indeed polite and kind-hearted! For they restrain themselves from assaulting and physically harming me with their fists.’*”

“But Puṇṇa, if the people of Sunāparanta were to go ahead and assault and physically harm you with their fists, what will you do then?”

“Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to assault and physically harm me with their fists, then I will think to myself: *‘Truly, these people of Sunāparanta are indeed polite and kind-hearted! For they do not throw rocks and stones at me!’*”

“But Puṇṇa, if the people of Sunāparanta were to throw rocks and stones at you, *then* what will you do?”

“Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to throw rocks and stones at me, then I will think to myself: *‘Truly, these people of Sunāparanta are indeed polite and kind-hearted! For they do not come after me and beat me with clubs!’*”

“But Puṇṇa, if the people of Sunāparanta were to come after you and beat you with clubs, *then* what will you do?”

“Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to come after me and beat me with clubs, then I will think to myself: *‘Truly, these people of Sunāparanta are indeed polite and kind-hearted! For they do not attack and stab me with knives!’*”

“But Puṇṇa, if the people of Sunāparanta were to attack and stab you with knives, *then* what will you do?”

“Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to attack and stab me with knives, then I will think to myself: *‘Truly, these people of Sunāparanta are indeed polite and kind-hearted! For they have not taken my life with their sharp weapons!’*”

“But Puṇṇa, if the people of Sunāparanta do go ahead and take your life with their sharp weapons, then what will you do?”

“Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to take my life, then I will think to myself: *‘Truly, there have been disciples of the Blessed One who have sought to take their own life by the “blameless use of the knife,” in order to put an end to being stifled and disgusted with this body and the hampering they feel with life itself. But, here Blessed Lord, I would be gaining such an end for myself with the knife, at the hands of the people of Sunāparanta, without having sought or asked for it!*

“This is what I would do, Blessed Lord. This indeed is what I would think, O Blessed One.”

“Very good! Very Good, Puṇṇa! By possessing such self-restraint while being supported by the quiet contentment of the heart, you are *now* able to go to Sunāparanta. Now, Puṇṇa, you may do what you think is appropriate.”

Then, the Venerable Puṇṇa, being delighted in hearing the words of the Blessed One, got up from his seat, paid his respect to the Blessed One, and after circumambulating the Blessed One, by keeping Him to his right, he left.

Later, having put his dwelling in order and taking his alms bowl and outer robes, the Venerable Puṇṇa left in the direction of the Sunāparanta region, and after having wandered by stages, eventually he reached the city.

Wanting to establish himself in Sunāparanta, the Venerable Puṇṇa decided to spend the Rains Retreat there, during which time he was able to gather around him a large community of five hundred white robed male lay disciples, and five hundred white robed female lay disciples, supporting and anchoring them in the Dhamma, meanwhile he himself realized the Three Knowledges. Some time later, the Venerable Puṇṇa attained Final Nibbāna.

Then, many Bhikkhus went and approached the Blessed One, and after paying their respect, sat to one side, and said:

“Bhante, the clansman Puṇṇa who was instructed by the Blessed One on the Dhamma in brief, has died. What is his destination? Where is he now reborn?”

“Bhikkhus, the clansman Puṇṇa was wise. He stood on his own in the Dhamma. He did not trouble me with too many questions on the Dhamma. The clansman Puṇṇa has attained Final Nibbāna.”

This is what the Blessed One said, and those Bhikkhus delighted in the words spoken by the Blessed One.

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