MN 147 — MN 147 The Shorter Exhortation to Rāhula | Cūḷa Rāhulovāda Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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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 Shorter Exhortation to Rāhula

Cūḷa Rāhulovāda Sutta (MN 147)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then, as he was alone in seclusion, this line of thinking arose in the Blessed One’s awareness: “The mental qualities that ripen in release have ripened in Rāhula. What if I were to lead Rāhula further to the ending of the effluents?”

Then the Blessed One, early in the morning—having adjusted his lower robe and taking his bowl & outer robe—went into Sāvatthī for alms. Having gone for alms in Sāvatthī, after the meal, returning from his alms round, he said to Ven. Rāhula, “Fetch your sitting cloth,

Rāhula. We will go to the Grove of the Blind to spend the day."

Responding, "As you say, lord," to the Blessed One, Ven. Rāhula, carrying his sitting cloth, followed behind the Blessed One. Now at that time, many thousands of devas were following behind the Blessed One, (thinking,) "Today the Blessed One will lead Ven. Rāhula further to the ending of the effluents."

Then the Blessed One, having plunged into the Grove of the Blind, sat down on a seat made ready at the foot of a tree. Ven. Rāhula, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side.

As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to him, "What do you think, Rāhula? Is the eye constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"What do you think? Are forms constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

"And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: 'This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am'?"

"No, lord."

"What do you think? Is consciousness at the eye constant or inconstant?"

"Inconstant, lord."

"And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?"

"Stressful, lord."

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Is contact at the eye constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye as a mode of feeling, a mode of perception, a mode of fabrication, or a mode of consciousness:1 Is it constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the ear constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord” …

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the nose constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord” …

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the tongue constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord” …

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the body constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord” …

“What do you think, Rāhula? Is the intellect constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Are ideas constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Is consciousness at the intellect constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Is contact at the intellect constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“What do you think? Whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect as a mode of feeling, a mode of perception, a mode of fabrication, or a mode of consciousness: Is it constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.”

“And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.”

“And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am’?”

“No, lord.”

“Seeing thus, Rāhula, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with the eye, disenchanted with forms, disenchanted with consciousness at the eye, disenchanted with contact at the eye. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye as a mode of feeling, a mode of perception, a mode of fabrication, or a mode of consciousness: With that, too, he grows disenchanted.

“He grows disenchanted with the ear….

“He grows disenchanted with the nose….

“He grows disenchanted with the tongue….

“He grows disenchanted with the body….

“He grows disenchanted with the intellect, disenchanted with ideas, disenchanted with consciousness at the intellect, disenchanted with contact at the intellect. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect as a mode of feeling, a mode of perception, a mode of fabrication, or a mode of consciousness: With that, too, he grows disenchanted. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Rāhula delighted in the Blessed One’s words. And while this explanation was being given, Ven. Rāhula’s mind, through lack of clinging/sustenance, was released from effluents. And to those many thousands of devas

there arose the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.”

Note

1. The Buddha’s basic approach in this discourse is to take a line of questioning that he usually applies to the five aggregates (see SN 22:59) and to apply it to the framework of the six sense media as given in SN 35:28. This phrase, however, is the one point where this sutta deviates from that framework. The corresponding phrase in SN 35:28 focuses exclusively on feelings. The passage here—vedanāgataṁ, saññāgataṁ, saṅkhārāgataṁ, viññāṇagataṁ—focuses on all four mental aggregates. For another example of translating –gataṁ as “mode,” see the phrase “mode of perception” (saññāgataṁ) in MN 121. For another example of a teaching that combines the two frameworks of five aggregates and six sense media, see MN 28.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 61; MN 62; Thag 4:8