MN 17 — MN 17 Forest Hinterlands | Vanapattha Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Forest Hinterlands

Vanapattha Sutta (MN 17)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. There he addressed the monks, “Monks!”

“Yes, lord,” the monks responded to him.

“Monks, I will teach you the forest-hinterland sequence. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak.”

“As you say, lord,” the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said: “Monks, there is the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain forest hinterland. As he is living in dependence on that forest hinterland, his unestablished mindfulness doesn’t become established, his unconcentrated mind doesn’t become concentrated, his unended effluents don’t come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn’t attained. And the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained with difficulty.

“He should reflect on that: ‘I live in dependence on this forest hinterland. As I am living in dependence on this forest hinterland, my unestablished mindfulness doesn’t become established, my unconcentrated mind doesn’t become concentrated, my unended effluents don’t come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn’t attained. And the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained with difficulty.’ That monk should leave that forest hinterland that very day or that very night. He shouldn’t stay there.

“Then there’s the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain forest hinterland. As he is living in dependence on that forest hinterland, his unestablished mindfulness doesn’t become established, his unconcentrated mind doesn’t become concentrated, his unended effluents don’t come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn’t attained. But the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained without difficulty.

“He should reflect on that: ‘I live in dependence on this forest hinterland. As I am living in dependence on this forest hinterland, my unestablished mindfulness doesn’t become established, my unconcentrated mind doesn’t become concentrated, my unended effluents don’t come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn’t attained. But the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained without difficulty.

“‘Now, it’s not the case that I went forth from home into the homeless life for the sake of robes. It’s not the case that I went forth from home into the homeless life for the sake of almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick. On top of that, my unestablished mindfulness doesn’t become established, my unconcentrated mind doesn’t become concentrated, my unended effluents don’t come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn’t attained.’ That monk, calculating this, should leave that forest hinterland. He shouldn’t stay there.

“Then there’s the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain forest hinterland. As he is living in dependence on that forest hinterland, his unestablished mindfulness becomes established, his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated, his unended effluents come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained. But the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained with difficulty.

“He should reflect on that: ‘I live in dependence on this forest hinterland. As I am living in dependence on this forest hinterland, my unestablished mindfulness has become established, my unconcentrated mind has become concentrated, my unended effluents have come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained. But the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained with difficulty.

“‘Now, it’s not the case that I went forth from home into the homeless life for the sake of robes. It’s not the case that I went forth from home into the homeless life for the sake of almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick. On top of that, my unestablished mindfulness has become established, my unconcentrated mind has become concentrated, my unended effluents have come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained.’ That monk, calculating this, should stay in that forest hinterland. He shouldn’t leave.

“Then there’s the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain forest hinterland. As he is living in dependence on that forest hinterland, his unestablished mindfulness becomes established, his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated, his unended effluents come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained. And the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained without difficulty.

“He should reflect on that: ‘I live in dependence on this forest hinterland. As I am living in dependence on this forest hinterland, my unestablished mindfulness has become established, my unconcentrated mind has become concentrated, my unended effluents have come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained. And the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained without difficulty.’ That monk should stay in that forest hinterland for life. He shouldn’t leave.

“Then there’s the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain village … a certain town … a certain city … a certain countryside …

“Then there’s the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain individual. As he is living in dependence on that individual, his unestablished mindfulness doesn’t become established, his unconcentrated mind doesn’t become concentrated, his unended effluents don’t come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn’t attained. And the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained with difficulty.

“He should reflect on that: ‘I live in dependence on this individual. As I am living in dependence on this individual, my unestablished mindfulness doesn’t become established, my unconcentrated mind doesn’t become concentrated, my unended effluents don’t come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn’t attained. And the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained with difficulty.’ That monk may leave that individual

that very day or that very night without taking leave. He shouldn't continue following him.

"Then there's the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain individual. As he is living in dependence on that individual, his unestablished mindfulness doesn't become established, his unconcentrated mind doesn't become concentrated, his unended effluents don't come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn't attained. But the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained without difficulty.

"He should reflect on that: 'I live in dependence on this individual. As I am living in dependence on this individual, my unestablished mindfulness doesn't become established, my unconcentrated mind doesn't become concentrated, my unended effluents don't come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn't attained. But the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained without difficulty.

"'Now, it's not the case that I went forth from home into the homeless life for the sake of robes. It's not the case that I went forth from home into the homeless life for the sake of almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick. On top of that, my unestablished mindfulness doesn't become established, my unconcentrated mind doesn't become concentrated, my unended effluents don't come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke isn't attained.' That monk, calculating this, may leave that individual without taking leave. He shouldn't continue following him.

"Then there's the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain individual. As he is living in dependence on that individual, his unestablished mindfulness becomes established, his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated, his unended effluents come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained. But the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained with difficulty.

"He should reflect on that: 'I live in dependence on this individual. As I am living in dependence on this individual, my unestablished mindfulness has become established, my unconcentrated mind has become concentrated, my unended effluents have come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained. But the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained with difficulty.

"'Now, it's not the case that I went forth from home into the homeless life for the sake of robes. It's not the case that I went forth from home into the homeless life for the sake of almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick. On top of that, my unestablished mindfulness has become established, my unconcentrated mind has become concentrated, my unended effluents have come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained.' That monk, calculating this, should continue following that individual. He shouldn't leave.

“Then there’s the case where a monk lives in dependence on a certain individual. As he is living in dependence on that individual, his unestablished mindfulness becomes established, his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated, his unended effluents come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained. And the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained without difficulty.

“He should reflect on that: ‘I live in dependence on this individual. As I am living in dependence on this individual, my unestablished mindfulness has become established, my unconcentrated mind has become concentrated, my unended effluents have come to an end, the unattained safety from the yoke is attained. And the requisites of life that should be obtained by one gone forth—robes, almsfood, lodging, or medicinal requisites used for curing the sick—are obtained without difficulty.’ That monk should stay with that individual for life. He shouldn’t leave, even if driven away.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 16:5; AN 4:28; AN 5:30; AN 6:42; AN 8:103; AN 10:99; Iti 100; Thag 18