MN 52 — Atthakanagara Sutta: To the Man from Atthakanagara

English translation by Thanissaro 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

I have heard that on one occasion Ven. Ananda was staying near Vesali at Veluvagamaka. Now on that occasion Dasama the householder from Atthakanagara had arrived at Pataliputta on some business. Then he went to a certain monk at Kukkata Monastery and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the monk, "Where is Ven. Ananda staying now? I'd like to see him."

"Householder, the Ven. Ananda is staying near Vesali at Veluvagamaka."

Then Dasama the householder from Atthakanagara, on completing his business at Pataliputta, went to Ven. Ananda at Veluvagamaka near Vesali. On arrival, having bowed down to him, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Ananda: "Venerable sir, is there a single quality declared by the Blessed One — the one who knows, the one who sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened — where the unreleased mind of a monk who dwells there heedful, ardent, & resolute becomes released, or his unended fermentations go to their total ending, or he attains the unexcelled security from the yoke that he had not attained before?"

"Yes, householder, there is..."

"And what is that one quality, venerable sir...?"

"There is the case, householder, where a monk, withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful qualities, enters & remains in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He reflects on this and discerns, 'This first jhana is fabricated & intended. Now whatever is fabricated & intended is inconstant & subject to cessation.' Staying right there, he reaches the ending of the mental fermentations. Or, if not, then — through this very Dhamma-passion, this Dhamma-delight, and from the total wasting away of the first five Fetters[1] — he is due to be reborn [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world.

"This, householder, is a single quality declared by the Blessed One — the one who knows, the one who sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened — where the unreleased mind of a monk who dwells there heedful, ardent, & resolute becomes released, or his unended fermentations go to their total ending, or he attains the unexcelled security from the yoke that he had not attained before.

[Similarly with the second, third, and fourth jhanas.]

"Then again, a monk keeps pervading the first direction[2] with an awareness imbued with good will, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, & all around, everywhere, in its entirety, he keeps pervading the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with good will — abundant, expansive, immeasurable, without hostility, without ill will. He reflects on this and discerns, 'This awareness-release through good will is fabricated & intended. Now whatever is fabricated & intended is inconstant & subject to cessation.' Staying right there, he reaches the ending of the mental fermentations. Or, if not, then — through this very Dhamma-passion, this Dhamma-delight, and from the total wasting away of the first five Fetters — he is due to be reborn [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world.

"This too, householder, is a single quality declared by the Blessed One — the one who knows, the one who sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened — where the unreleased mind of a monk who dwells there heedful, ardent, & resolute becomes released, or his unended fermentations go to their total ending, or he attains the unexcelled security from the yoke that he had not attained before.

[Similarly with awareness-release through compassion, through appreciation, & through equanimity.]

"Then again, a monk — with the complete transcending of perceptions of [physical] form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of diversity, [perceiving,] 'Infinite space' — enters & remains in the dimension of the

infinitude of space. He reflects on this and discerns, 'This attainment of the infinitude of space is fabricated & intended. Now whatever is fabricated & intended is inconstant & subject to cessation.' Staying right there, he reaches the ending of the mental fermentations. Or, if not, then — through this very Dhamma-passion, this Dhamma-delight, and from the total wasting away of the first five Fetters — he is due to be reborn [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world.

"This too, householder, is a single quality declared by the Blessed One — the one who knows, the one who sees, worthy & rightly self-awakened — where the unreleased mind of a monk who dwells there heedful, ardent, & resolute becomes released, or his unended fermentations go to their total ending, or he attains the unexcelled security from the yoke that he had not attained before.

[Similarly with the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness and the dimension of nothingness.]

When this was said, Dasama the householder from Atthakanagara said to Ven. Ananda, "Venerable Ananda, just as if a man seeking a single opening onto treasure were all at once to come upon eleven openings onto treasure, in the same way I — seeking a single doorway to the Deathless — have all at once come to hear of eleven doorways to the Deathless. And just as if a man whose house had eleven doors could take himself to safety by means of any one of those doors, in the same way I can take myself to safety by means of any one of these eleven doors to the Deathless. Venerable sir, when sectarians search for a teacher's fee for their teachers, why shouldn't I pay homage to Ven. Ananda?"

So Dasama the householder from Atthakanagara, having assembled the community of monks from Vesali and Pataliputta, with his own hands served & satisfied them with refined staple & non-staple foods. He presented a pair of cloths to each monk, and a triple robe to Ven. Ananda. And, for Ven. Ananda, he had a dwelling built worth five hundred [kahapanas].

Notes

1.

Self-identity views, grasping at precepts & practices, uncertainty, sensual passion, and irritation.

2.

The east.

See also: AN 9.36.