MN 62 — Maha-Rahulovada Sutta: The Greater Exhortation to Rahula

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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Source revision: sha256:7c411108530c04aafcca0ac43267ed12227cbb2653320e8ae0bb686e566bb783

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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 the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Monastery. Then the Blessed One, early in the morning, put on his robes and, carrying his bowl and outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms. And Ven. Rahula, early in the morning, put on his robes and, carrying his bowl and outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms following right behind the Blessed One.[1] Then the Blessed One, looking back at Rahula, addressed him: "Rahula, any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every form is to be seen as it actually is with right discernment as: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.'"

"Just form, O Blessed One? Just form, O One Well-gone?"

"Form, Rahula, & feeling & perception & fabrications & consciousness."

Then the thought occurred to Ven. Rahula, "Who, having been exhorted face-to-face by the Blessed One, would go into the town for alms today?" So he turned back and sat down at the foot of a tree, folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, & setting

mindfulness to the fore.

Ven. Sariputta saw Ven. Rahula sitting at the foot of a tree, his legs folded crosswise, his body held erect, & with mindfulness set to the fore. On seeing him, he said to him, "Rahula, develop the meditation[2] of mindfulness of in-&-out breathing. The meditation of mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit."

Then Ven. Rahula, emerging from his seclusion in the late afternoon, went to the Blessed One and, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to him, "How, lord, is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing to be developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit?"

"Rahula, {any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every form is to be seen as it actually is with right discernment as: 'This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.' There are these five properties, Rahula. Which five? The earth property, the water property, the fire property, the wind property, & the space property.

"And what is the earth property? The earth property can be either internal or external. What is the internal earth property?}[3] Anything internal, within oneself, that's hard, solid, & sustained [by craving]: head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, contents of the stomach, feces, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's hard, solid, and sustained: This is called the internal earth property. Now both the internal earth property & the external earth property are simply earth property. And that should be seen as it actually is present with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is present with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the earth property and makes the earth property fade from the mind.

"And what is the water property? The water property may be either internal or external. What is the internal water property? Anything internal, belonging to oneself, that's water, watery, & sustained: bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, oil, saliva, mucus, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's water, watery, & sustained: This is called the internal water property. Now both the internal water property & the external water property are simply water property. And that should be seen as it actually is present with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is present with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the water property and makes the water property fade from the mind.

"And what is the fire property? The fire property may be either internal or external. What is the internal fire property? Anything internal, belonging to oneself, that's fire, fiery, & sustained: that by which [the body] is warmed, aged, & consumed with fever; and that by which what is eaten, drunk, chewed, & savored gets properly digested; or anything else internal, within oneself, that's fire, fiery, & sustained: This is called the internal fire

property. Now both the internal fire property & the external fire property are simply fire property. And that should be seen as it actually is present with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is present with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the fire property and makes the fire property fade from the mind.

"And what is the wind property? The wind property may be either internal or external. What is the internal wind property? Anything internal, belonging to oneself, that's wind, windy, & sustained: up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the stomach, winds in the intestines, winds that course through the body, in-and-out breathing, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's wind, windy, & sustained: This is called the internal wind property. Now both the internal wind property & the external wind property are simply wind property. And that should be seen as it actually is present with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is present with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the wind property and makes the wind property fade from the mind.

"And what is the space property? The space property may be either internal or external. What is the internal space property? Anything internal, belonging to oneself, that's space, spatial, & sustained: the holes of the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the [passage] whereby what is eaten, drunk, consumed, & tasted gets swallowed, and where it collects, and whereby it is excreted from below, or anything else internal, within oneself, that's space, spatial, & sustained: This is called the internal space property. Now both the internal space property & the external space property are simply space property. And that should be seen as it actually is present with right discernment: 'This is not mine, this is not me, this is not my self.' When one sees it thus as it actually is present with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the space property and makes the space property fade from the mind.

"Rahula, develop the meditation in tune with earth. For when you are developing the meditation in tune with earth, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind. Just as when people throw what is clean or unclean on the earth — feces, urine, saliva, pus, or blood — the earth is not horrified, humiliated, or disgusted by it; in the same way, when you are developing the meditation in tune with earth, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind.

"Develop the meditation in tune with water. For when you are developing the meditation in tune with water, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind. Just as when people wash what is clean or unclean in water — feces, urine, saliva, pus, or blood — the water is not horrified, humiliated, or disgusted by it; in the same way, when you are developing the meditation in tune with water, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind.

"Develop the meditation in tune with fire. For when you are developing the meditation in tune with fire, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay

in charge of your mind. Just as when fire burns what is clean or unclean — feces, urine, saliva, pus, or blood — it is not horrified, humiliated, or disgusted by it; in the same way, when you are developing the meditation in tune with fire, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind.

"Develop the meditation in tune with wind. For when you are developing the meditation in tune with wind, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind. Just as when wind blows what is clean or unclean — feces, urine, saliva, pus, or blood — it is not horrified, humiliated, or disgusted by it; in the same way, when you are developing the meditation in tune with wind, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind.

"Develop the meditation in tune with space. For when you are developing the meditation in tune with space, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind. Just as space is not established anywhere, in the same way, when you are developing the meditation in tune with space, agreeable & disagreeable sensory impressions that have arisen will not stay in charge of your mind.

"Develop the meditation of good will. For when you are developing the meditation of good will, ill-will will be abandoned.

"Develop the meditation of compassion. For when you are developing the meditation of compassion, cruelty will be abandoned.

"Develop the meditation of appreciation. For when you are developing the meditation of appreciation, resentment will be abandoned.

"Develop the meditation of equanimity. For when you are developing the meditation of equanimity, irritation will be abandoned.

"Develop the meditation of the unattractive. For when you are developing the meditation of the unattractive, passion will be abandoned.

"Develop the meditation of the perception of inconstancy. For when you are developing the meditation of the perception of inconstancy, the conceit 'I am' will be abandoned.

"Develop the meditation of mindfulness of in-&-out breathing. Mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, when developed & pursued, is of great fruit, of great benefit.

"And how, Rahula, is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit?

"There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore.[4] Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

"[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' [3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' [4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'

"[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.' [6] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.' [7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.' [8] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.'

"[9] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.' [10] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in satisfying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out satisfying the mind.' [11] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in steadying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out steadying the mind.' [12] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in releasing the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out releasing the mind.'

"[13] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.' [14] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion.'[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.' [15] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.' [16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'

"This, Rahula, is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit.

"When mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued in this way, even one's final in-breaths & out-breaths are known as they cease, not unknown."[6]

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Rahula delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Notes

1.

According to the Commentary, Ven. Rahula was 18 years old when this discourse took place.

2.

Bhavana.

3.

The preceding passage in braces is missing from the editions on which both The Middle Length Sayings and The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha are based.

4.

For notes on these sixteen steps, see MN 118.

5.

Literally, "fading."

6.

I.e., one dies fully alert.

See also: MN 28; MN 61; MN 140; MN 147.