SN 36.7 — Gelañña Sutta: At the Sick Room (1)

English translation by Nyanaponika Thera.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

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Text

Once the Blessed One dwelt at Vesali, in the Great Forest, at the Gabled House. In the evening, after the Blessed One had risen from his seclusion, he went to the sick room and sat down on a prepared seat. Being seated he addressed the monks as follows:

"O monks, mindfully and clearly comprehending should a monk spend his time! This is my injunction to you!

"And how, O monks, is a monk mindful? He dwells practicing body-contemplation on the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome covetousness and grief concerning the world. He dwells practicing feeling-contemplation on feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome covetousness and grief concerning the world. He dwells practicing mind-contemplation on the mind, having overcome covetousness and grief concerning the world. He dwells practicing mind-object-contemplation on mind-objects, having overcome covetousness and grief

concerning the world. So, monks, is a monk mindful.

"And how, O monks, is a monk clearly comprehending? He applies clear comprehension in going forward and going back; in looking straight on and in looking elsewhere; in bending and in stretching (his limbs); in wearing the robes and carrying the alms bowl; in eating, drinking, chewing and savoring; in obeying the calls of nature; in walking, standing sitting, falling asleep, waking, speaking and being silent — in all that he applies clear comprehension. So, monks, is a monk clearly comprehending.

"If a monk is thus mindful and clearly comprehending, ardent, earnest and resolute, and a pleasant feeling arises in him, he knows: 'Now a pleasant feeling has arisen in me. It is conditioned, not unconditioned. Conditioned by what? Even by this body it is conditioned.[1] And this body, indeed, is impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen. But if this pleasant feeling that has arisen, is conditioned by the body which is impermanent, compounded and dependently arisen; how could such a pleasant feeling be permanent?'

"In regard to both body and the pleasant feeling he dwells contemplating impermanence, dwells contemplating evanescence, dwells contemplating detachment, dwells contemplating cessation, dwells contemplating relinquishment. And in him who thus dwells, the underlying tendency to lust in regard to body and pleasant feeling vanishes.

"If a painful feeling arises in him, he knows: 'Now a painful feeling has arisen in me. It is conditioned, not unconditioned. Conditioned by what? Even by this body it is conditioned. And this body, indeed, is impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen. But if this painful feeling that has arisen is conditioned by the body which is impermanent, compounded and dependently arisen, how could such a painful feeling be permanent?'

"In regard to both the body and the painful feeling he dwells contemplating impermanence, dwells contemplating evanescence, dwells contemplating detachment, dwells contemplating cessation, dwells contemplating relinquishment. And in him who thus dwells, the underlying tendency to resistance in regard to the body and painful feeling vanishes.

"If a neutral feeling arises in him, he knows: 'Now a neutral feeling has arisen in me. It is conditioned, not unconditioned. Conditioned by what? Even by this body it is conditioned. And this body, indeed, is impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen. But if this neutral feeling that has arisen is conditioned by the body which is impermanent, compounded and dependently arisen, how could such a neutral feeling be permanent?'

"In regard to both the body and the neutral feeling he dwells contemplating impermanence, dwells contemplating evanescence, dwells contemplating detachment, dwells contemplating cessation, dwells contemplating relinquishment. And in him who thus dwells, the underlying tendency to ignorance in regard to body and neutral feeling vanishes.

"If he experiences a pleasant feeling, he knows it as impermanent; he knows, it is not clung to; he knows, it is not relished. If he experiences a painful feeling... a neutral feeling, he knows it as impermanent; he knows, it is not clung to; he knows, it is not relished.

"If he experiences a pleasant feeling, he feels it as one unfettered by it. If he experiences a painful feeling, he feels it as one unfettered by it. If he experiences a neutral feeling, he feels it as one unfettered by it.

"When having painful feelings endangering the body, he knows: 'I have a painful feeling endangering the body.' When having painful feelings endangering life he knows: 'I have a painful feeling endangering life.' And he knows: 'After the dissolution of the body, when life ends, all these feelings which are unrelished, will come to final rest, even here.'

"It is like a lamp that burns by strength of oil and wick, and if oil and wick come to an end, the flame is extinguished through lack of nourishment. Similarly this monk knows: 'After the dissolution of the body, when life ends, all these feelings which are unrelished will come to (final) rest, even here.'"

Note

1.

The term body may be taken here as referring to the first five of the six bases of sense-impression (phassayatana).