SN 47.13 — Cunda Sutta: About Cunda

English translation by Nyanaponika Thera.

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Text

Once the Blessed One was dwelling at Savatthi, in Anathapindika's park. At that time the Venerable Sariputta was at Nalaka village in the Magadha country, and was sick, suffering, gravely ill. The Novice Cunda was his attendant.

And the Venerable Sariputta passed away finally through that very illness. Then the Novice Cunda took the almsbowl and robes of the Venerable Sariputta and went to Savatthi, to the Jeta Grove, Anathapindika's park. There he betook himself to the Venerable Ananda and, having saluted him, seated himself at one side. Thus seated, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda saying: "Venerable sir, the Venerable Sariputta has had his final passing away. These are his bowl and robes."

"On this matter, Cunda, we ought to see the Blessed One. Let us go, friend Cunda, and meet the Master. Having met him, we shall acquaint the Blessed One with that fact."

"Yes, Venerable sir," said the Novice Cunda.

They went to see the Blessed One, and having arrived there and saluted the Master, they seated themselves at one side. Then the Venerable Ananda addressed the Blessed One:

"O Lord, the Novice Cunda has told me this: 'The Venerable Sariputta has had his final passing away. These are his bowl and robes.' Then, O Lord, my own body became weak as a creeper; everything around became dim and things were no longer clear to me, when I heard about the final passing away of the Venerable Sariputta."

"How is this, Ananda? When Sariputta had his final passing away, did he take from you your portion of virtue, or your portion of concentration, or your portion of the knowledge and vision of deliverance?"

"Not so, Lord. When the Venerable Sariputta had his final passing away he did not take my portion of virtue... concentration... wisdom... deliverance, or my portion of the knowledge and vision of deliverance. But O Lord, the Venerable Sariputta has been to me a mentor, teacher, and instructor, one who rouses, inspires and gladdens, untiring in preaching Dhamma, a helper of his fellow monks. And we remember how vitalizing, enjoyable and helpful his Dhamma instruction was."

"Have I not taught you aforetime, Ananda, that it is the nature of all things near and dear to us that we must suffer separation from them, and be severed from them? Of that which is born, come to being, put together, and so is subject to dissolution, how should it be said that it should not depart? That, indeed, is not possible. It is, Ananda, as though from a mighty hardwood tree a large branch should break off, so has Sariputta now had his final passing away from this great and sound community of bhikkhus. Indeed, Ananda, of that which is born, come to being, put together, and so is subject to dissolution, how should it be said that it should not depart? This, indeed, is not possible.

"Therefore, Ananda, be ye an island unto yourself, a refuge unto yourself, seeking no external refuge; with the Teaching as your island, the Teaching your refuge, seeking no other refuge."

See also: DN 16, SN 47.14.