Pahankanuwa Sermon #44

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.142)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

(Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Self-Enlightened One)

Pali Stanza:

Idaṃ hi taṃ Jetavanaṃ, isisaṅghanisevitaṃ;

Āvutthaṃ dhammarājena, pītisañjananaṃ mama.

Kammaṃ vijjā ca dhammo ca, sīlaṃ jīvitamuttamaṃ;

Etena maccā sujjhanti, na gottena dhanena vā.

Tasmā hi paṇḍito poso, sampassaṃ atthamattano;

Yoniso vicine dhammaṃ, evaṃ tattha visujjhati.

Sāriputtova paññāya, sīlena upasamena ca;

Yo hi pāragato bhikkhu, etāva paramo siyā.

From:

Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya

Dear Listeners,

Among the circle of lay disciples of the Buddha, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is a noble person who attained the foremost (*etadagga*) position. He is a person so worthy as to be like the letter "A" in the list of lay disciples during the time of the Buddha. The verses we have chosen today as our theme are those uttered by this householder Anāthapiṇḍika, who, after passing away and being reborn in the Tusita heaven, returned at midnight to Jetavana monastery to see the Blessed One.

These verses are found in the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikāya. That sutta describes the last moments of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika. The sermon he heard in his final moments is his near-death sermon, his final sermon.

This event is shown in this manner. In that sutta, while the Blessed One was residing at Jetavana monastery, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika became gravely ill and diseased. He told his servant to go and pay homage to the Blessed One: "Go and bow down at the feet of the Blessed One on my behalf, saying that the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is gravely ill." Next, he asked him to go to Venerable Sāriputta as well, pay homage in his name, and say, "Out of compassion, please come to the home of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika."

When that man went and delivered the message to Venerable Sāriputta, Venerable Sāriputta took Venerable Ānanda as his attendant monk and came to the mansion of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika. Having arrived, in accordance with the usual manner of inquiring after one's health, as is frequently seen in the sutta discourses, Venerable Sāriputta asked the householder Anāthapiṇḍika: "Householder, are your painful sensations (*vedanā*) abating? Are you in a tolerable condition? Can you get by?" and so on.

The householder Anāthapiṇḍika described the severity of his illness: "Venerable Sāriputta, my painful sensations (*vedanā*) are not abating, they are increasing. They are getting worse and worse. My condition is not tolerable, nor can I get by. There is a state of severe pain," thus expressing the painful (*dukkha*) nature of his sensations (*vedanā*). "Just as if a strong man were splitting my head with a sharp sword, such is the extreme pain in my head. Just as if a strong man were binding my head with a leather strap, such are the painful wind-sensations in my head. Next, just as a skilled butcher would slash my belly with a sharp carving knife, such is the painful sensation (*vedanā*) I feel. Then, just as if two strong men were to grab a weak man by his two arms and roast him over a pit of hot coals, such is the burning sensation (*vedanā*) in my body," he expressed in this manner.

To this, Venerable Sāriputta did not administer a physical medicine, but a medicine of the Dhamma. "In that case, householder, you should train yourself in this way," and Venerable Sāriputta presented the Dhamma-medicine in this manner: "In that case, householder, you should apply your mind to the Dhamma in this way: 'I will not grasp (*upādāna*) the eye.' To say 'I will not grasp (*upādāna*)' means 'I will not tightly hold onto the eye with craving (*taṇhā*).' 'My consciousness (*viññāṇa*) will not be dependent on the eye.' That training means one does not hold onto the eye through grasping (*upādāna*), and my consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—my mind—will not hold onto and be dependent on the eye. One should train oneself in that way."

Next, as you all know, regarding these six internal sense-spheres—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind—Venerable Sāriputta spoke about each of them one by one: "Householder, do not seize the ear through grasping (*upādāna*). Train yourself thus: 'I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) dependent on the ear.' Moving on in this way, he also spoke about the mind: 'I will not hold onto the mind through grasping (*upādāna*). I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) dependent on the mind.' Having spoken in this manner about the six internal sense-spheres, he spoke likewise

about the objects of the external sense-spheres: 'I will not grasp (*upādāna*) form. My consciousness (*viññāṇa*) will not be dependent on form. I will not grasp (*upādāna*) sound. My consciousness (*viññāṇa*) will not be dependent on sound.' He asked him to train in this way."

Finally, he spoke of the objects that come to the mind, which in the Dhamma are shown by the name *dhammā*. *Dhammā* means things, thoughts that come to the mind. "I will not firmly grasp the objects that come to the mind. I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) dependent on the objects that come to the mind." Having spoken in this way about the internal and external sense-spheres, Venerable Sāriputta next showed how one should train.

"I will not grasp (*upādāna*) eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*). My mind will not be dependent on eye-consciousness." In the very same way, he spoke about the six kinds of consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—ear-consciousness (*sota-viññāṇa*), nose-consciousness (*ghāṇa-viññāṇa*), tongue-consciousness (*jivhā-viññāṇa*), body-consciousness (*kāya-viññāṇa*), and mind-consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*). Next, after speaking about consciousness (*viññāṇa*), comes contact (*phassa*). He spoke about that contact (*phassa*) too: "I will not firmly grasp eye-contact (*cakkhu-samphassa*). I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) dependent on eye-contact (*cakkhu-samphassa*). I will not grasp eye-contact. I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) relying on eye-contact." Just as he spoke about eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*), next he does not hold onto eye-contact (*cakkhu-samphassa*). In that way, just as with contact (*phassa*), he speaks about the feeling (*vedanā*) born of that contact (*phassa*): "I will not seize through grasping (*upādāna*) the feeling (*vedanā*) born of eye-contact. I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) dependent on the feeling (*vedanā*) born of eye-contact."

Continuing in this manner, finally: "I will not grasp the feeling (*vedanā*) born of mind-contact (*mano-samphassa*)—the contact (*phassa*) that arises when thoughts strike the mind. I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) dependent on that feeling (*vedanā*)." Thus, having spoken by way of the six sense-spheres (*saḷāyatana*), he does not stop there. This is the medicine that Venerable Sāriputta gave to the householder Anāthapiṇḍika, who had complained of having so much painful sensation (*vedanā*).

Next, he declared how one should train, step by step, regarding the six elements (*dhātu*) mentioned in the Dhamma—perhaps some of you have not even heard of them—earth (*paṭhavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), air (*vāyo*), space (*ākāsa*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). Many have heard of four elements, but in certain places the Blessed One declares that what is called "person" or "individual" is just these six elements. Which six elements? Earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). It is these six elements that we designate as a person. Venerable Sāriputta spoke about those six elements in the same manner: "I will not seize the earth element through grasping (*upādāna*). I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*)

dependent on the earth element. I will not seize the water element through grasping (*upādāna*). I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) dependent on the water element." Having spoken in this way, he spoke about the earth, water, fire, air, and space elements: "I will not grasp (*upādāna*) the space element. My consciousness (*viññāṇa*) will not be dependent on the space element." Then, finally, which is difficult to understand: "I will not seize the consciousness element (*viññāṇa-dhātu*) through grasping (*upādāna*). I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) dependent on the consciousness element." This is the moment of death, and this is spoken as a way to prepare for death. The word is used there to remove grasping (*upādāna*) even in regard to the six elements. It has the meaning of "dependent on." The two words, grasping (*upādāna*) and reliance/dependence (*nissaya*), are two very important words in this Dhamma. We will explain them in due course.

Next, he spoke in the same way about the aggregates (*khandha*). "I will not grasp form. My mind, my consciousness (*viññāṇa*), will not be dependent on the aggregate of form subject to grasping (*rūpupādānakkhandha*)." Likewise, regarding the five aggregates subject to grasping (*pañcupādānakkhandha*)—form, feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), Preparations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—Venerable Sāriputta taught a very deep meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) on how to develop a state that is free from grasping (*anupādāna*) and free from dependence (*anissita*).

He did not stop there. Next, he spoke about the formless absorptions (*arūpa-jhāna*): "I will not hold onto the formless absorption called the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*) through grasping (*upādāna*). My mind..." and likewise, "I will not take the formless states of the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*) and the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*) through grasping (*upādāna*)." Finally, whatever there is that one can hold onto with the mind, Venerable Sāriputta brought all of it in and gave the final medicine: "I will not hold onto this world. My consciousness (*viññāṇa*) will not be dependent on this world. I will not hold onto the next world through grasping (*upādāna*). My mind will not be dependent on the next world." Therefore, there is neither this world nor the next.

Next, he declared, using the Pali words: *diṭṭha, suta, muta, viññāta*. These Pali words exist in the Dhamma to condense the objects perceived through the six sense-spheres (*saḷāyatana*) into four. Sometimes, *diṭṭha* means the seen, *suta* means the heard, *muta* means what is sensed by the nose, tongue, and body—taking those three as one—and *viññāta* means thoughts in the mind. Thus: the seen, heard, sensed, cognized (*diṭṭha, suta, muta, viññāta*); and not only that, "what is attained, sought after, and pondered over by the mind" (*pattaṃ pariyesitaṃ anuvacaritaṃ manasā*). Whatever objects can be grasped by the mind, "I will not hold onto any of them through grasping (*upādāna*). I will not have a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) that makes any of those things its object." This points directly to Nibbāna. Neither this world nor the next. The advice Venerable Sāriputta is giving here is: do not take any of those

thoughts that come to the mind through grasping (*upādāna*) at this moment of death, and do not maintain a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) that relies on them. To put it briefly, this is like the potent medicine (*sinduram*) that some physicians give at critical moments; Venerable Sāriputta is giving the deepest Dhamma here.

When this discourse was finished, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika began to weep. He began to shed tears. Venerable Ānanda thought he was weeping out of fear of death. "Why, householder, are you sinking down?"—there is a word used there, "sinking down"—"Are you holding back at the moment of death, and is that why you are weeping?" Then, he replied: "No, no, Venerable Sir, I have associated with the Teacher and the Sangha, who help develop the mind, for so long. Yet, I have never heard a Dhamma discourse like this before." When he expressed this, Venerable Sāriputta explained the reason why such discourses are not usually taught: "Householder, such discourses are not clear to laypeople who wear white garments. That is to say, when we look at the life lived by white-clad laypeople, we do not think of delivering such discourses to them. We think of delivering this kind of discourse to the monastics, who are dedicated solely to this."

When Venerable Sāriputta said that, the householder made a special invitation. He made an invitation on behalf of laypeople, just like the Brahma's invitation (*Brahmā-ārādhanā*). What was that invitation? "In that case, Venerable Sāriputta, let such Dhamma discourses be made clear to laypeople as well! There may be laypeople among the devout laity who have little dust of defilements in their eyes. If they do not get to hear such Dhamma discourses, they will decline." Thus, he made an invitation. He made a final request of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika: to preach such deep discourses to laypeople from now on.

Then, Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Ānanda departed. Not long after they left, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika passed away and was reborn in the Tusita heaven. Having been reborn, that very night, he came to see the Blessed One. Now, as you devout people have often heard in protective chanting (*paritta*) discourses, it is first mentioned that a deity came to Jetavana monastery, stood there, and spoke to the Blessed One in this way. Now, who is this that comes? It is the young deva Anāthapiṇḍika. Having arrived with such a radiant light and paid homage to the Buddha, he uttered those verses, which we have preached to you devout people at this time as our theme.

Now let us look at their meaning. *Idaṃ hi taṃ Jetavanaṃ isisaṅghani sevitaṃ āvutthaṃ dhammarājena pītisañjananaṃ mama*. This Jetavana, *isisaṅghani sevitaṃ*—meaning this Jetavana frequented by the community of sages—*āvutthaṃ dhammarājena*—inhabited by the King of Dhamma, the Blessed One—*pītisañjananaṃ mama*—inspires joy in me.

Having declared that, next he says: *Kammaṃ vijjā ca dhammo ca sīlaṃ jīvitamuttamaṃ etena maccā sujjhanti na gottena dhanena vā*. Here, "action" (*kamma*) is to be understood as wholesome action (*kusala-kamma*). Since it is

expressed very briefly in this verse, various meanings can emerge. We should understand it as wholesome action (*kusala-kamma*). *Vijjā* means understanding, knowledge, which includes right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). And *dhamma*... knowledge and Dhamma... *sīlaṃ jīvitamuttamaṃ*: a life led in accordance with virtue (*sīla*)—these are the supreme things. *Etena maccā sujjhanti*: by these, mortals are purified. *Na gottena dhanena vā*: not by lineage, nor by wealth.

Tasmā hi paṇḍito poso sampassaṃ atthamattano: therefore, the wise man, seeing his own good, *yoniso vicine dhammaṃ*: investigates the Dhamma with wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). *Yoniso vicine dhammaṃ* relates to the investigation of states (*dhamma-vicaya*), meaning that he scrutinizes and investigates Dhamma with wisdom. This is precisely what Venerable Sāriputta expressed concerning the Dhamma in that final sermon. Thus, the young deva Anāthapiṇḍika says here that a person analyzes and investigates Dhamma-matters with wisdom. *Evaṃ tattha visujjhati*: in this way, one is purified.

Next is a praise of Venerable Sāriputta: *Sāriputtova paññāya sīlena upasamena ca yo hi pāragato bhikkhu etāva paramo siyā'ti*. If any monk goes to the further shore, Venerable Sāriputta is supreme in these qualities mentioned. It means one cannot go higher than that state. "Only Sāriputta, by wisdom, virtue (*sīla*), and peacefulness..." Venerable Sāriputta is supreme among those monks who have gone to the further shore in terms of wisdom, virtue, and peacefulness—this is what is declared by that verse. The Blessed One approved of it. Next, having uttered these verses, the young deva Anāthapiṇḍika paid homage to the Blessed One, circumambulated him, and disappeared.

The next morning, the Blessed One addressed the monks, saying, "Monks, last night a certain young deva"—he said "a certain"—"paid homage to me in this way, uttered these verses, and departed." Then Venerable Ānanda said, "Surely, that must have been the young deva Anāthapiṇḍika. Because the householder Anāthapiṇḍika had a very special devotion toward Venerable Sāriputta." The Blessed One confirmed that it was so. With that, the sutta discourse ends.

Now, when you devout people hear of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika, stories of giving (*dāna*) immediately come to mind. But now you can understand what kind of a person he was. The householder Anāthapiṇḍika was a great, noble person. Indeed, the concept among laypeople in this era, especially those living a lay life, is that they sometimes neglect insight (*vipassanā*) sermons and meditation. However, it is because of the invitation made by the householder Anāthapiṇḍika that we have these insight (*vipassanā*) sermons. If you devout people gain something from this sermon, it is fitting to share those merits with the young deva Anāthapiṇḍika in the Tusita heaven. We can understand why Venerable Sāriputta delivered such a deep discourse to the householder Anāthapiṇḍika at his final hour. If we bring to light a hidden aspect of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika's life, we can understand the reason why Venerable Sāriputta presented such a deep discourse.

You devout people have often heard how the householder Anāthapiṇḍika purchased this Jetavana monastery. When Prince Jeta declared, "I will not give it unless you cover it with gold coins (*kahāpaṇa*)," the householder Anāthapiṇḍika said, "In that case, it is bought." At that very moment, there were no second thoughts. You all know how he brought gold coins in carts, spread them out, and covered the entire ground of Jetavana monastery to purchase it. What a power of letting go must have existed within the householder Anāthapiṇḍika! Furthermore, he did not give Jetavana monastery his own name. In common parlance it came to be called *Anāthapiṇḍikassa* (Anāthapiṇḍika's park), but the name remains Jetavana. Prince Jeta, in the end, having witnessed his faith (*saddhā*), requested a portion of it back. But by that time, the ground of Jetavana monastery had already been covered with gold coins. That is one aspect.

In the same way, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika used to offer daily alms in his home to hundreds of monastics, with the Buddha at the head. In the end, he did not pursue his debtors or those from whom he was due income. Somehow, gradually, his wealth declined. Finally, on one occasion, the Blessed One asked the householder Anāthapiṇḍika: "How is it, householder, are alms still being given in your home?" "Yes, Venerable Sir, sour gruel broth and coarse broken rice. Sour gruel broth and coarse broken rice." Even when reduced to that level, he still gave alms. What a wonderful equanimity! What a wonderful generosity! What a power of letting go! Right there, the vision of non-self (*anattā*) is present within that; there is no such thing as "I" or "mine." He let go of everything for the sake of the Triple Gem—that very action.

In addition to that aspect, a certain account revealing the intellectual capacity of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is found in a sutta of the Upāli Vagga in the Book of Tens of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, if you wish to look it up. One day, at midday, this householder Anāthapiṇḍika set out to see the Blessed One. Having gone a short distance, he thought, "This is not a good time; the Blessed One is resting, and the monks are resting, engaged in meditation. I should go a bit later." Thinking, "I should go later," he went to a nearby monastery of other sectarians (*aññatitthika*). It is often mentioned there that, seeing from afar that a disciple of the Buddha was coming, those sectarians silenced their group. After the householder Anāthapiṇḍika went and exchanged pleasantries, one of those sectarians asked: "Householder, tell us, what is the view (*diṭṭhi*) of the ascetic Gotama?" Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika replied: "Venerable Sirs,"—he addressed them as "Venerable Sirs" since these sectarians were ascetics of a sort—"Venerable Sirs, I do not know all the views (*diṭṭhi*) of the Blessed One. I do not know them entirely." "Well, then, you do not know the view of the ascetic Gotama. Tell us, then, what is the view of the monks, the bhikkhus?" Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika said, "Venerable Sirs, I do not know the views of all the bhikkhus either." "Well, then, householder, you do not know the view of the ascetic Gotama, nor do you know the views of those bhikkhus. Tell us, then, what is your view?"

Thereupon, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika said: "It is not difficult for me to declare what my view (*diṭṭhi*) is. But first, please declare your own views." And he invited them to do so. Then, those wanderers (*paribbājaka*) declared their respective views one by one. These are frequently mentioned in the Dhamma as the ten undeclared points (*dasa avyākata vatthu*). They are presented as follows. One says: "This is my view: the world is eternal. Eternal means everlasting. Only this is true, everything else is false; that is my view." Next, a second one says: "My view is that the world is not eternal. That is my view, and everything else is false." In this manner: the world is finite; the world is infinite; the soul (*atta*) and the body are the same; the soul is one thing and the body is another. I am stating briefly what is contained in these ten points. The next four are: the Tathāgata—the person who has attained the supreme state in a dispensation—exists after death; another says "my view is that he does not exist after death"; another says "he both exists and does not exist after death"; and the last one says "he neither exists nor does not exist after death." These views (*diṭṭhi*), which are frequently mentioned in the Dhamma, were often presented to the Blessed One as well. Here, those who held these views expressed them.

Thereupon, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika said: "You have presented your views (*diṭṭhi*). Whichever of you said, 'The world is eternal; only this is true, everything else is false,' that view (*diṭṭhi*) has arisen from your own unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*)—wrong reflection. Or, it is a view formed by listening to someone else—heard from others (*paratoghosa*). Every single one of them is impermanent (*anicca*), conditioned (*saṅkhata*), mentally concocted—volitional (*cetayita*). It is merely a concept concocted by the mind, dependently co-arisen (*paṭiccasamuppanna*). All of them are impermanent (*anicca*). You are holding onto such a view (*diṭṭhi*) which is impermanent (*anicca*) and constructed. You are holding onto something that is painful (*dukkha*)." In this manner, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika rejected the views (*diṭṭhi*) of all ten of them, showing that every single one is conditioned (*saṅkhata*), impermanent (*anicca*), dependently co-arisen (*paṭiccasamuppanna*), and painful (*dukkha*).

When he had spoken thus, those wanderers (*paribbājaka*) said: "In that case, householder, tell us: what is your view (*diṭṭhi*)?" Then came the householder Anāthapiṇḍika's turn. The householder Anāthapiṇḍika declared: "Whatever there is in the world that has arisen from causes and conditions, volitional (*cetayita*), conditioned (*saṅkhata*)—by conditioned (*saṅkhata*) is meant whatever is prepared by Preparations (*saṅkhāra*)—all of that is impermanent (*anicca*). All of that is painful (*dukkha*). I see all of that as non-self (*anattā*). I do not hold onto any of it as 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self' (*etaṃ mama, eso hamasmi, eso me attā*). I do not hold onto even one of these as 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'."

When he said that, they said, "Well then, householder, is this your view? Is what you just said your view?" He clarified a bit further: "That is not my view either. I have realized through right wisdom (*sammā-paññā*) that everything—everything that is conditioned (*saṅkhata*), everything that is dependently co-arisen

(*paṭiccasamuppanna*)—is impermanent (*anicca*), subject to passing away. I have realized this. And I have experienced an even higher liberation, an escape, which is Nibbāna." This means he was answering as a stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*), established in right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), not in the aforementioned wrong views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*); he was established in right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). After he gave that answer, it is mentioned there that those wanderers were left speechless. In that state, looking down, they remained completely silent and quiet, accepting their defeat.

The householder Anāthapiṇḍika then departed and reported this event to the Blessed One, saying: "The wanderers asked me such questions, and I answered in this way." Then the Blessed One declared: "Sadhu, sadhu, very well, householder! Those foolish men (*mogha-purisa*) should be refuted in this manner from time to time," and he praised the householder. After the householder paid homage and departed, the Blessed One addressed the monks, saying: "Monks, even a monk of a hundred years' standing since his higher ordination (*upasampadā*)—that is, a monk of a hundred Rains retreats—should answer those sectarians in the very same way the householder Anāthapiṇḍika answered." What a feat! At that moment, the Blessed One described the householder Anāthapiṇḍika—whom we usually regard merely as a generous donor—as someone who could present the Dhamma in such a Dhamma-conforming way as to silence those wanderers, showing a skill equal to that of a monk of a hundred years in the Dispensation.

We can understand that although the householder Anāthapiṇḍika had only attained the state of stream-entry (*sotāpanna*), his vision of non-self (*anattā*)—as expressed here also: "This is mine, this I am, this is my self" (*etaṃ mama, eso hamasmi, eso me attā*) is not my vision. My vision—meaning the insight (*vipassanā*) understanding referred to here—what the ordinary world takes as self, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika saw as non-self (*anattā*). It is in perfect alignment with that very vision of non-self (*anattā*) that Venerable Sāriputta presented this final sermon. Because when a person is about to die, what do they hold onto? It is precisely these things. In the words of the Blessed One:

Chasu loko samuppanno, chasu kubbati santhavaṃ,

channaṃ eva upādāya, chasu loko vihaññati.

"In the six (sense-spheres) the world has arisen; in the six it makes familiarity; grasping (*upādāna*) these six indeed, in the six the world is vexed."

The six sense-spheres (*saḷāyatana*) are shown on various occasions. It is the method of relinquishing grasping (*upādāna*) in regard to this that Venerable Sāriputta reminded the householder Anāthapiṇḍika of in his final moments. In the Dhamma, there are two words used to describe Nibbāna: *anissito anupādāno*. *Nissita* means leaning on something, being dependent on or relying on something. *Upādāna* means grasping or holding onto. The place freed from these two is called Nibbāna: *anissito anupādāno*. It is for this very purpose that the mind was prepared in Venerable

Sāriputta's sermon. Look: "I will not seize the eye through grasping (*upādāna*). My mind will not proceed being dependent on the eye." There is that word *nissita*. This is a deep aspect of insight (*vipassanā*) revolving around these two words, grasping (*upādāna*) and dependence (*nissaya*). It is this very portion that the ordinary world seizes and holds onto in the final moments. It is this holding on that creates another state of becoming (*bhava*). As you devout people have heard: "With grasping (*upādāna*) as condition, becoming (*bhava*); with becoming (*bhava*) as condition, birth (*jāti*)"—as shown in dependent co-arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Due to holding onto, existence/becoming (*bhava*) arises. Due to that existence, birth (*jāti*) occurs; and where birth (*jāti*) has arisen, there is decay and death (*jarāmaraṇa*) and all the rest. Therefore, if one holds onto something with the mind at the moment of death, one takes birth (*jāti*) according to that object.

Not only ordinary objects, but Venerable Sāriputta also showed extremely subtle objects, even in the formless worlds. "Do not hold onto any of those. Do not hold onto this world, and do not hold onto the next world," he said at last. What this indicates is that he said not to direct the mind to anything other than Nibbāna. When we say Nibbāna, we can understand it in that very sense. Venerable Sāriputta's instruction was: at the very least, do not hold onto the thoughts that come to the mind, or anything that the mind has searched out and seized, through grasping (*upādāna*); do not take them as a reliance (*nissaya*).

From this we can understand that in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* too—as those who have studied that sutta must have seen—at the end of each section there is a portion related to insight (*vipassanā*) meditation, called *satipaṭṭhāna*. That too ends with the words reliance (*nissaya*) and grasping (*upādāna*): *anissito ca viharati na ca kiñci loke upādiyati*—he dwells independent, and does not grasp (*upādāna*) anything in the world. He does not lean on anything, he does not rely on anything, and he does not hold onto anything in the world. Thus, even for the devout person practicing *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation, the Blessed One has shown what the purpose of practicing *satipaṭṭhāna* is. That too is stated in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* itself. As you devout people know, in developing *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation, there are four objects: body, feeling (*vedanā*), mind, and Dhamma—*dhamma* meaning the objects that come to the mind. The householder Anāthapiṇḍika complained through a state of severe pain (*vedanā*): "I have such severe painful sensations." Yet, Venerable Sāriputta did not give him a painkiller. It was not a painkiller as the ordinary world thinks. It is the way to conquer painful sensation (*vedanā*) through that very nectar of Nibbāna. It is within grasping (*upādāna*) that this painful sensation (*vedanā*) holds sway.

That is why in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* too it is said: *Atthi kāyo'ti vā panassa sati hoti, yāvadeva ñāṇamattāya patissatimattāya*. Even to the devout person developing mindfulness of the body (*kāyānupassanā*) in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, what does the Blessed One say in the end? To think "there is a body" is not for any other purpose, but merely *ñāṇamattāya*—for the sake of developing one's

knowledge—and *patissatimattāya*—for the sake of developing one's mindfulness. In the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, it is mentioned, "I go forward, I go backward," in this manner. It mentions "I" in reference to one's body, but in the end, it says that to think "there is a body" is merely for the sake of developing one's knowledge and mindfulness. Finally, it says: *anissito ca viharati na ca kiñci loke upādiyati*. He does not hold onto even that. He does not take even that through grasping (*upādāna*). The same applies to feeling (*vedanā*) and other factors. The Blessed One has shown not to firmly seize any of those objects. That very point is shown in this discourse of Venerable Sāriputta.

Especially at the approach of death, if we consider the state of affairs in the world today, this is the final sermon of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika. Every Buddhist devout person thinks deeply about their final moment. No matter what they have been doing, some think that if they can bring in a few monks at the last moment and somehow compose their mind at that time, everything will be fine. But in this perilous era, what we must think of is that indeed we must remain with a near-death mind at all times. Now, some of you devout people, well-dressed, might be traveling in a vehicle for a wedding or some important journey. Suddenly, a loud crashing sound is heard. When consciousness returns, you are in a hospital—it is the time to hear the near-death sermon. In such a situation, this sermon preached by Venerable Sāriputta to the householder Anāthapiṇḍika can be of help, for at that moment there is no opportunity to bring in the Sangha. That is what needs to be said. If we grasp (*upādāna*) something at the moment of death, and if our kamma aligns with it, our birth (*jāti*) occurs accordingly.

Now, there may be some devout people who take the life of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika to some extent as an exemplar, or try to emulate him by making large financial donations. However, in making those donations, sometimes the purpose might be different. Sometimes, they perform large acts of giving (*dāna*) and meritorious deeds expecting positions, titles, and status. But at the final moment, they cannot compose their mind. Unable to compose their mind, in the end, they might be born right in their own homes, coming to the front door as a dog. Or they might go under the cupboard as a frog or a rat-snake. That is precisely because of grasping (*upādāna*). Because of that holding onto. What is needed there is to free the mind. At the moment of death, one must free the mind from grasping (*upādāna*). The mind that is in a place of reliance (*nissaya*)—relying on things—must be broken away from it. That is what is required.

When we say that in this insight (*vipassanā*) sermon, at the moment of death, everything else is let go—in the end, that letting go is not a physical letting go. We hold onto things with the mind. Having seen that holding onto with the mind through wisdom, seeing their impermanent (*anicca*) nature and non-self (*anattā*) nature, the Blessed One highlights what causes this holding onto. Venerable Sāriputta also spoke about eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*). He spoke about the contact (*phassa*) arising because of that consciousness (*viññāṇa*). He spoke about

the feeling (*vedanā*) arising because of contact (*phassa*). Looking at the mind in that way—these are the places of attachment. That is what is called wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). Even in that verse, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika declared: *yoniso vicine dhammaṃ evaṃ tattha visujjhati*. One must investigate wisely with wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). Or else, by directing the mind to the place where they arise.

The Blessed One shows perception (*saññā*) as a mirage. All perceptions (*saññā*) taken from the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind—the Blessed One shows them all as a mirage. If it is a mirage, why be deceived by it? If so, one must consider that internally: this eye, and because of form, this arising consciousness (*viññāṇa*), and the contact (*phassa*) arising therefrom—if one holds onto these, for the one who holds onto them at that moment, these are not external things. One can understand that these are generated by oneself. In that way, one goes on being born again and again in becoming (*bhava*) according to the objects taken by the mind. That is what is mentioned in the Dhamma.

Regarding these, Nibbāna is mentioned as *appaṭiṭṭhaṃ, appavattaṃ, anārammaṇaṃ*—the supportless, non-occurring, objectless state, where no object at all is taken. This is a state where no object of the next world or anything else is taken. The object that is taken is what emerges as a new birth (*jāti*). This is mentioned in the Dhamma itself:

Yañca ceteti yañca pakappeti yañca anuseti, ārammaṇametaṃ hoti viññāṇassa ṭhitiyā. Ārammaṇe sati patiṭṭhā viññāṇassa hoti.

"If one wills (*ceteti*), if one plans (*pakappeti*), or if one has a lingering underlying tendency (*anusaya*) toward something, that becomes an object for the stationing of consciousness (*viññāṇa*). When there is an object, there is a support for consciousness (*viññāṇa*)."

At the moment of death, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) goes and lands somewhere along that object. That becomes a support (*patiṭṭhā*) for consciousness (*viññāṇa*). Therefore, the state where consciousness (*viññāṇa*) does not obtain a support is called *appaṭiṭṭhaṃ*. It is a term for Nibbāna. The mind does not establish itself on any object; it does not take an object. Because it does not take an object, there is no establishing. Because there is no establishing, there is no continuation (*pavatta*). That is why the words *appaṭiṭṭhaṃ, appavattaṃ, anārammaṇaṃ* are mentioned.

The same is said in another way through the Three Characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*). As you devout people may have heard, when the perception of impermanence (*anicca-saññā*) is developed to the end—we use something in front of us to help develop the perception of impermanence (*anicca-saññā*). But as we go deeper, in the end, the sign (*nimitta*) disappears. We begin to develop the perception of impermanence (*anicca-saññā*) based on some sign (*nimitta*). But in the end, the final result is that one arrives at a state of not taking a sign (*animitta*). Likewise, the Blessed One has

declared that whatever is impermanent (*anicca*) is painful (*dukkha*). For the one who has developed that perception to the highest degree, after the desire for perception (*saññā*) is gone, the mind's *paṇidhi*—meaning aspirations—disappears. That is why *appaṇihita* (the desireless) is also a name for Nibbāna; there is no aspiration, no desire. No desire at all. Next, for the one who has deeply developed the vision of non-self (*anattā*), in the end, it is realized as empty (*suñña*)—this is empty, a vacant thing. There is nothing to be taken here. Empty of any essence (*sāra*), a vacant thing, nothing to be taken. It is according to what is held by the mind as having essence (*sāra*) that one takes birth (*jāti*) again and again. Nibbāna is described by these three, as you devout people may have heard: *animitta, appaṇihita, suññata* (the signless, the desireless, the empty).

Now, what helps bring one to that state is the relinquishing of grasping (*upādāna*) which causes further birth (*jāti*). To relinquish grasping (*upādāna*), one must thin out craving (*taṇhā*). In the life of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika, there was a power to let go of that craving (*taṇhā*) very instantly. Moreover, because his mind was developed according to that Dhamma-knowledge, although he was reborn due to not having attained the other paths and fruits (*magga-phala*) in his final moments, it must have been a help to him. We too must think about our own lives, whether lay or ordained. If we do not understand the depth of this Dhamma at some point, and if we do not conduct our thoughts accordingly, we will have to wander further and further in saṃsāra. Some people, having no place to ordain, unable to break free, come seeking us with a great desire to ordain at least in the mind. For such people, even while staying in their own homes, managing to save themselves somehow, in a friendly manner—since often various complications can arise in lay life because of this—discussing it wisely, mindfully, and amicably, those who try to arouse their fear of saṃsāra through the Dhamma and make use of it, they are not afraid of this kind of sermon. This insight (*vipassanā*) sermon, because some day we must put an end to this repeated birth (*jāti*) in saṃsāra. Even if we stay together, where will we end up being born? No matter how much we pray. Therefore, staying together is not what is important. In this rare opportunity, having encountered the Buddha's Dispensation, having had the opportunity to hear the Dhamma, if one makes an effort, as the householder Anāthapiṇḍika said, there might be those among the devout laity who can understand the deep Dhamma and practice accordingly. It is because they would otherwise decline by not hearing the Dhamma that the householder made an invitation like the Brahmā's invitation on behalf of lay disciples.

Therefore, you devout people should consider it in this way. As a preparation for that, even if one does not go far into the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, nowadays many laypeople think of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* as something to be recited at a funeral house. Thus, the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* has been relegated to the same fate as the pumpkin in the old story at funeral houses. That is not the case; there is something much deeper here. Why is the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* recalled at funeral houses? Because at that moment of grief (*saṃvega*), one can gain true understanding, even if

one usually lives in a daily self-created world. However, many people think it is just something to be chanted. Or, even some educated people think of this *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* as something inauspicious, to be said only at funeral houses. Yet, whether lay or ordained, it is this *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* that we must bring close to our lives. Laypeople of old during the Buddha's time, like Isidatta, declared to the Blessed One himself: "Whenever we directed our minds to *satipaṭṭhāna*, we felt a great sense of relief even while living the lay life."

Therefore, you too must reflect: this saṃsāra is terrifying, and these dangers can arise to someone through grasping (*upādāna*). Sometimes, even if one has lived as a generous donor, if those weaknesses exist and one has been holding onto these with the mind, one cannot tell what the final thought at the last moment will be. If one has developed various attachments, whether out of affection for the people one associated with in one's home, or due to one's wealth and belongings, accordingly, one might be born not only in the realm of departed spirits (*peta*) or as an animal, but sometimes even as a demon (*yakkha*) or a monster (*rakkhasa*) to guard them. If we have understood the value of this precious human life, that is why the householder Anāthapiṇḍika said: *etena maccā sujjhanti na gottena dhanena vā*—by this are mortals purified, not by lineage or by wealth. It is by living in accordance with what was mentioned—action (*kamma*), Dhamma, and knowledge (*vijjā*). *Vijjā* means understanding. *Yoniso vicine dhammaṃ* refers to the investigation of states (*dhamma-vicaya*).

Wise devout people, having reviewed your lives in this manner: even if everyone else leaves us at the moment of death, in the end, what we have to let go of is this very body with its perception (*saññā*) and mind. That is where we must direct our attention, not to external things. That is what is meant by the six sense-spheres (*saḷāyatana*). The Blessed One declared that the world exists within the six internal sense-spheres and the six external sense-spheres. And within that world lies the secret to Nibbāna. If we hold onto that world in that manner, the mind takes birth (*jāti*) in some place according to that holding onto. There, a state of becoming (*bhava*) is prepared. "With grasping (*upādāna*) as condition, becoming (*bhava*); with the cessation of grasping (*anupādā*), Parinibbāna." Becoming (*bhava*) arises due to grasping (*upādāna*). The cessation of becoming (*bhava-nirodha*) occurs in non-grasping (*anupādāna*)—in letting go. The devout person who practices this moment by moment is gradually able to free the mind. The Blessed One has given hints as to how that freeing is possible: the impermanent (*anicca*) nature of all these things. If something is impermanent (*anicca*), one has to keep maintaining and repairing it. That is a painful (*dukkha*) thing. Within that itself lies the fact that it cannot be kept under one's control. That is what is meant by the vision of non-self (*anattā*)—it cannot be kept under one's control.

The Blessed One often asks many people, sometimes even brahmins—he asks because it is such an obvious fact—"What do you think, brahmin, is form permanent or impermanent (*anicca*)?" "Impermanent (*anicca*)," comes the reply. "If something

is impermanent (*anicca*), is it easeful or painful (*dukkha*)?" "Painful (*dukkha*)," they declare. If it is impermanent (*anicca*), subject to change (*vipariṇāma*) and alterity (*aññathābhāva*), if everything is of a nature to become otherwise, and if it cannot be kept under one's control, is it fit to regard it as "This is mine, this I am, this is my self" (*etaṃ mama, eso hamasmi, eso me attā*)? He questions the person themselves. He leaves it to the inquirer himself to reflect whether it is fit to take it as "This is mine, this I am, this is my self"—to take it by way of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and view (*diṭṭhi*).

In that very way we must reflect. The Blessed One has declared that even this body is not one's own. That is why it cannot be kept under one's control. The same applies to the others. Because not even one of these—feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), Preparations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—can be kept under one's control, and because they are impermanent (*anicca*), devoid of any essence, core, or substance, the Blessed One has given the similes that you devout people have heard: form is like a lump of foam; feeling (*vedanā*) is like a water bubble; perception (*saññā*) is like a mirage; Preparations (*saṅkhāra*) are like a heap of banana plantain trunks—a banana trunk; and finally, when speaking of consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—and here, Venerable Sāriputta constantly referred to consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—he declared that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is an illusion. There is a nature in this consciousness (*viññāṇa*) to show what is not there as if it exists. What, then, does one hold onto? In accordance with the Dhamma, one holds onto it as an object. That is what the practitioner of insight (*vipassanā*) takes as Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*). What is held onto is Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*). And the Blessed One declares that Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*) is merely a shadow cast on consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

A small illustrative story somewhat relevant to this is found not in ancient Buddhist literature, but in ancient Greek literature. There was a certain Greek youth named Narcissus. This Greek youth Narcissus was very handsome, but he had never seen his own face. He had never looked into a mirror. One day, he went into the forest and bent down over a pond to wash his face. For the first time, he saw his own face, and was deceived, thinking it was a water-nymph. A goddess living in the water. Confused by love, he tried to embrace her. The moment he put his hands in, the water rippled. He looked again and again, but failed. He returned the next day, and the day after that. He could not embrace the water-nymph. In the end, out of grief of separation, or rather due to his inability to grasp her, he wasted away and died right there, and the flower that grew in that spot was called "Narcissus." This is a Greek myth. But within this story lies the tale of being deceived by one's own reflection. If we speak in Dhamma terms, it is self-love (*ātma-sneha*). That is precisely what the Blessed One has highlighted. There is a verse in the *Magga Vagga* of the *Dhammapada*:

Ucchinda sinehamattano, kumudaṃ sāradikaṃ va pāṇinā,

santimaggameva brūhaya, nibbānaṃ sugatena desitaṃ.

The Blessed One also gives a similar simile. A simile of a flower: pluck out your self-love (*ātma-sneha*)—affection for oneself—just as one would pluck an autumn lily (*kumuda*) with one's hand. "Pluck out affection for oneself… cultivate the very path of peace, Nibbāna, as taught by the Well-Gone One (*Sugata*)," which is the Noble Eightfold Path.

Thus, what this simile indicates to us is that it is the attachment to Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*) that we are asked to let go of. This is not annihilationism (*uccheda-vāda*). Many people think that this talk of the cessation of becoming (*bhava-nirodha*) and Nibbāna in the Dhamma—even what we write and say—might appear to some as annihilationism. However, the Blessed One showed only one side of the illusion of consciousness (*viññāṇa-māyā*). What is cast as a shadow by the illusion of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is shown in the Dhamma as Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*). It is form in name only; looked at from the other side, it is the appearance of form. It is neither a real name nor a real form. It is not a name, nor is it a form. Form in name only, the appearance of form—that is what is called Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*). "Name" (*nāma*) refers to mental factors: feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*), and attention (*manasikāra*). "Form" (*rūpa*) refers to the great primary elements (*mahābhūta*), which cannot be understood in their true nature or identified individually, but are the perception of form derived from earth, water, fire, and air. That is what is called Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*).

It is within this reflection of Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*) that anything the world holds onto entirely exists. Only Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*). Feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*), attention (*manasikāra*), and on the other hand, the perception of form derived from the four elements. It is through that very understanding that the practitioner of insight (*vipassanā*) gradually goes forward, with the help of the Three Characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*) introduced by the Blessed One—impermanent (*anicca*), painful (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*)—and by understanding the perverted perceptions (*vipallāsa*) existing in the world regarding all these things: seeing the impermanent (*anicca*) as permanent, the painful (*dukkha*) as pleasant, the non-self (*anattā*) as self, and the foul as beautiful. If one understands the true nature of that perverted vision and treads the path of insight (*vipassanā*) with the help of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, even while living a lay life, among the white-clad laypeople, there can be those who attain Dhamma-realization.

Therefore, let us make use of this opportunity. Indeed, you devout people should share merits with the young deva Anāthapiṇḍika. It is our wish that this sermon preached for so long, in the manner described, may be of assistance to you devout people at some moment—even if we wish it not to be so—in a sudden crisis, or when gaining consciousness in a hospital.

Making as much use as possible of this insight-oriented Dhamma sermon heard by you devout people so far, we wish that you may gain the strength and power to

realize the noble deathless Nibbāna in this very life through the penetration of the paths and fruits (*magga-phala*) of Stream-entry (*sotāpanna*), Once-returning (*sakadāgāmi*), Non-returning (*anāgāmi*), and Arahantship. At the same time, we wish that whatever living beings there are from Avīci to Akaniṭṭha in this universe, including the young deva Anāthapiṇḍika, who are able to rejoice in the merits of such a Dhamma sermon and Dhamma hearing, may, by rejoicing therein, find peace in the supreme deathless Nibbāna through the Bodhi of their aspiration. Let us share merits by reciting these verses:

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi……*"