

MN 111: Anupada Sutta

Progression

Translated by Suddhāso Bhikkhu

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatti, at Jeta's Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" "Auspicious sir," those monks replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this:

"Monks, Sāriputta is wise. Monks, Sāriputta has great wisdom. Monks, Sāriputta has broad wisdom. Monks, Sāriputta has joyous¹ wisdom. Monks, Sāriputta has quick wisdom. Monks, Sāriputta has sharp wisdom. Monks, Sāriputta has penetrating wisdom. Monks, every half-month, Sāriputta insightfully sees progressive² phenomena. Monks, this is Sāriputta's insightful vision³ of progressive phenomena in that case:

"Here, monks, secluded from sensuality, secluded from unwholesome phenomena, Sāriputta attains and remains in the first *jhāna*, which has thought and consideration, and has rapture and pleasure produced by seclusion. The phenomena which are present in the first *jhāna* - thought, consideration, rapture, pleasure, mental one-pointedness, [sense-]contact, feeling, recognition, volition, mentality, interest, resolve, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention⁴ - are progressively identified by him. These phenomena are known by him as they arise, as they persist, and as they disappear. He understands in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands, 'There is an escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is [a further escape].⁵

"Again, monks, with the calming of thought and consideration, and with internal composure⁶ and mental focus⁷, Sāriputta attains and remains in the second *jhāna*, which is free of thought and free of consideration, and has rapture and pleasure born from concentration. The [phenomena] which are present in the second *jhāna* - internal composure, rapture, pleasure, mental one-pointedness, [sense-]contact, feeling, recognition, volition, mentality, interest, resolve, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - are progressively identified by him. These phenomena are known by him as

1 *Hāsa*. An alternate reading of this is *hāsu*, which may mean "clever."

2 *Anupada*. Lit. "along the track." There is some debate about how this term, which appears nowhere else in the Suttas, is to be translated. The Bodhi/Ñānamoli rendering "one by one" is doubtful.

3 *Vipassanā*. Translated here as "insightful vision," to match its verbal usage in the prior sentence. This clearly indicates that one can practice Vipassanā while in *jhāna*.

4 *Vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, cittekaggatā, phassa, vedanā, saññā, cetanā, citta, chanda, adhimokkha, vīriya, sati, upekkhā, manasikāra*. The first five are the standard factors of first *jhāna*, which appear throughout the suttas. The subsequent factors are mental factors which are also present, but which are not usually identified as "*jhāna* factors."

5 *Tabbahulīkāra atthitvevassa hoti*. Lit. "Doing that much, [the thought] 'It exists' occurs to him." The intent of this final sentence is somewhat obscure.

6 *Sampasādana*. This relatively broad term can mean clarity, purity, peacefulness, happiness, etc.

7 *Ekodi-bhāva*. This could also be translated "unification."

they arise, as they persist, and as they disappear. He understands in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands, 'There is an escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is [a further escape].

“Again, monks, with the fading away of rapture, Sāriputta remains equanimous, mindful, and clearly comprehending, and experiences pleasure with the body; he attains and remains in the third *jhāna*, which the noble ones describe as 'Equanimous, mindful, and dwelling happily.' The [phenomena] which are present in the third *jhāna* - pleasure, mindfulness, clear comprehension, mental one-pointedness, [sense-]contact, feeling, recognition, volition, mentality, interest, resolve, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - are progressively identified by him. These phenomena are known by him as they arise, as they persist, and as they disappear. He understands in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands, 'There is an escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is [a further escape].

“Again, monks, with the abandoning of pleasure, the abandoning of pain, and the prior disappearance of elation and depression, Sāriputta attains and remains in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither pain nor pleasure, and has purity due to mindfulness and equanimity⁸. The [phenomena] which are present in the fourth *jhāna* - equanimity, neutral⁹ feeling, composure, mental non-ideation, purity due to mindfulness, mental one-pointedness, [sense-]contact, feeling, recognition, volition, mentality, interest, resolve, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - are progressively identified by him. These phenomena are known by him as they arise, as they persist, and as they disappear. He understands in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands, 'There is an escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is [a further escape].

“Again, monks, by completely surpassing perceptions of physical form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance¹⁰, and by non-attention to perceptions of diversity, [perceiving that] 'Space is infinite,' Sāriputta attains and remains in the extent¹¹ of infinite space. The [phenomena] which are present in the extent of infinite space - the perception of infinite space, mental one-pointedness, [sense-]contact, feeling, recognition,

8 *Upekkhā-sati-pārisuddhiṃ*. This compound word allows for multiple interpretations, and thus has been rendered in various ways by various translators.. It may be simply a list - “equanimity, mindfulness, and purity.”

9 *Adukkham-asukham*. Lit. “not-painful-not-pleasant.”

10 *Paṭigha*. This often particularly means “mental resistance” - repugnance, repulsion, etc.

11 *Āyatana*. Lit. “extending” or “stretching.” Often translated “base” or “sphere,” neither of which quite capture the intended meaning. “Plane” or “dimension” are closer, but still fall short.

volition, mentality, interest, resolve, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention – are progressively identified by him. These phenomena are known by him as they arise, as they persist, and as they disappear. He understands in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands, 'There is an escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is [a further escape].

“Again, monks, by completely surpassing the extent of infinite space, [perceiving that] 'Consciousness is infinite,' Sāriputta attains and remains in the extent of infinite consciousness. The [phenomena] which are present in the extent of infinite consciousness – the perception of infinite consciousness, mental one-pointedness, [sense-]contact, feeling, recognition, volition, mentality, interest, resolve, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention – are progressively identified by him. These phenomena are known by him as they arise, as they persist, and as they disappear. He understands in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands, 'There is an escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is [a further escape].

“Again, monks, by completely surpassing the extent of infinite consciousness, [perceiving that] 'There is nothing,' Sāriputta attains and remains in the extent of nothingness. The [phenomena] which are present in the extent of nothingness – the perception of nothingness, mental one-pointedness, [sense-]contact, feeling, recognition, volition, mentality, interest, resolve, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention – are progressively identified by him. These phenomena are known by him as they arise, as they persist, and as they disappear. He understands in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands, 'There is an escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is [a further escape].

“Again, monks, by completely surpassing the extent of nothingness, Sāriputta attains and remains in the extent of neither perception nor non-perception. He mindfully emerges from that attainment.¹² After mindfully emerging from that attainment, he regards those phenomena which have passed, ceased, and changed in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands,

¹² Note that the meditator is incapable of examining phenomena while immersed in the attainment of the extent of neither perception nor non-perception. Unlike the first seven attainments, this mindstate is too subtle to allow mental investigation.

'There is an escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is [a further escape].

“Again, monks, by completely surpassing the extent of neither perception nor non-perception, Sāriputta attains and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling¹³. After seeing them with wisdom, the taints are completely eliminated¹⁴. He mindfully emerges from that attainment.¹⁵ After mindfully emerging from that attainment, he regards those phenomena which have passed, ceased, and changed in this way: 'It seems that these phenomena were not present, then they manifested; then after being present, they vanished again.' In regard to those phenomena, he remains unattracted, unrepelled, independent, unattached, released, unbound, with an unrestricted mind. He understands, 'There is no escape beyond this.' Practicing that frequently, he knows that there is not [a further escape].

“Monks, about whom one who is speaking rightly might say 'He has attained mastery and perfection in noble conduct, he has attained mastery and perfection in noble concentration, he has attained mastery and perfection in noble wisdom, he has attained mastery and perfection in noble liberation,' it is about Sāriputta that one who is speaking rightly might say, 'He has attained mastery and perfection in noble conduct... concentration... wisdom... liberation.'

“Monks, about whom who is speaking rightly might say 'He is the Blessed One's legitimate son, born from his mouth, born from the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, heir to the Dhamma rather than heir to material things,' it is about Sāriputta that one who is speaking rightly might say, 'He is the Blessed One's legitimate son... heir to the Dhamma rather than heir to material things.' Monks, Sāriputta rightly continues the rolling of the unsurpassed wheel of Dhamma which was set in motion by the Tathāgata.”

This is what the Blessed One said. Satisfied, those monks delighted in the Blessed One's speech.

13 This attainment is only accessible to a meditator who has completely severed sensual desire and aversion, and thus is either a non-returner or an Arahant.

14 This is equal to attaining full enlightenment.

15 Note that this attainment is also too subtle to allow investigation until after one has emerged.