

AN 5.57: Abhiṅha-paccavekkhitabba-ṭhāna Sutta

Things to Frequently Contemplate

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

“Monks, there are five things that should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic. What five?”

“‘I am subject to decay; I am not exempt from decay.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“‘I am subject to sickness; I am not exempt from sickness.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“‘I am subject to dieing; I am not exempt from dieing.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“‘Everything that is beloved and pleasing will change and be separated from me.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“‘I am the owner of my karma, the recipient of my karma, born from my karma, bound to my karma, inseparable from my karma. Any action that I do - whether it is good or evil - I will receive its result.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, for what benefit should ‘I am subject to decay; I am not exempt from decay’ be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who are intoxicated with youth. Because of that intoxication, they engage in physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that intoxication with youth is either completely abandoned or diminished. Monks, it is for this benefit that ‘I am subject to decay; I am not exempt from decay’ should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, for what benefit should ‘I am subject to sickness; I am not exempt from sickness’ be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who are intoxicated with health. Because of that intoxication, they engage in physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that intoxication with health is either completely abandoned or diminished. Monks, it is for this benefit that ‘I am subject to sickness; I am not exempt from sickness’ should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, for what benefit should ‘I am subject to dieing; I am not exempt from dieing’ be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who are intoxicated with life. Because of that intoxication, they engage in physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. When they

frequently contemplate this, that intoxication with life is either completely abandoned or diminished. Monks, it is for this benefit that 'I am subject to dieing; I am not exempt from dieing' should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

"Monks, for what benefit should 'Everything that is beloved and pleasing will change and be separated from me' be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who have interest and passion for things that are beloved and pleasing. Because of that passion, they engage in physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that interest and passion for things that are beloved and pleasing is either completely abandoned or diminished. Monks, it is for this benefit that 'Everything that is beloved and pleasing will change and be separated from me' should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

"Monks, for what benefit should 'I am the owner of my karma, the recipient of my karma, born from my karma, bound to my karma, inseparable from my karma. Any action that I do - whether it is good or evil - I will receive its result' be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who have committed physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, or mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that misconduct is either completely abandoned or diminished. Monks, it is for this benefit that 'I am the owner of my karma, the recipient of my karma, born from my karma, bound to my karma, inseparable from my karma. Any action that I do - whether it is good or evil - I will receive its result' should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

"Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'It is not just me that is subject to decay and not exempt from decay. All beings that come and go, die and reappear, are subject to decay and are not exempt from decay.' When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

"Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'It is not just me that is subject to sickness and not exempt from sickness. All beings that come and go, die and reappear, are subject to sickness and are not exempt from sickness.' When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

"Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'It is not just me that is subject to dieing and not exempt from dieing. All beings that come and go, die and reappear, are subject to dieing and are not exempt from dieing.' When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

“Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘It is not just what is beloved and pleasing to me that changes and is separated from me. What is beloved and pleasing to all beings that come and go, die and reappear, changes and is separated from them.’ When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

“Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘It is not just me that is the owner of my karma, the recipient of my karma, born from my karma, bound to my karma, inseparable from my karma, and that receives the result of any action I do - whether it is good or evil. All beings that come and go, die and reappear, are the owners of their karma, the recipients of their karma, born from their karma, bound to their karma, inseparable from their karma, and receive the results of any actions that they do - whether those actions are good or evil.’ When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

“Subject to sickness, subject to decay, and subject to dieing;
This is the nature of beings, which ordinary people despise.
If I despise that, and the beings who have that nature,
It would not be appropriate, as I am just the same.
Considering this, I knew the state free of acquisition,
I knew intoxication with health, youth, and life.
I overcame all intoxication, and saw the safety of renunciation.
I made an effort, and saw Nibbāna.
Now it is not possible for me to indulge in sensuality.
I will not return - I have completed the spiritual life.”