

Paṭhama Aññatara Bhikkhu Sutta

The First Discourse on a Certain Monk

S 22.35/3:34-36

Theme: We are what we know

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006, 2009

Introduction

There are two Aññatara Bhikkhu Suttas (S 22.35+36), both of which deal with the same topics, namely, latent tendencies (*anusaya*).¹ Both suttas open with a certain unnamed monk asking the Buddha for a teaching so that he could go into solitary retreat. The Annatara Bhikkhu Sutta 1 (S 22.35) records the Buddha as giving this teaching to the monk:

Bhikkhu, one is reckoned by whatever lies latent in one.
One is not reckoned by what does not lie latent in one.

*Yaṃ kho, bhikkhu, anuseti, tena saṅkham gacchati;
yaṃ nānuseti, na tena saṅkham gacchatī ti.*

(S 22.35.4/3:35) = SD 31.4

The monk then exclaims that he fully understands it, and explains it in detail in terms of each of the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness). The Buddha applauds him. He goes into retreat and in due course becomes an arhat. (S 22.35/3:35 f = SD 31.4)

The Sutta commentary explains that if we have a latent tendency towards form by way of sensual lust, etc, then we are described in terms of that latent tendency as being lustful, hated or deluded. But when that latent tendency is absent, one is not reckoned so. (SA 3:265). Bodhi adds an interesting note in this connection:

Additionally, we might suppose that, one is reckoned not only by way of the defilements, but even more prominently by way of the aggregate with which one principally identifies. One who inclines to form is reckoned as a “physical” person, who inclines to feeling a “hedonist,” one who inclines to perception an “aesthete” (or fact-gatherer?), one who inclines to volition a “man of action,” one who inclines to consciousness a thinker, etc. (S:B 1053 n47)

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¹ For a more detailed study, see *Anusaya* = SD 31.3.

The First Discourse on a Certain Monk

S 22.35/3:34-36

Originating in Sāvattḥī.

A certain monk asks for a teaching

1 In a monastery-park...near Sāvattḥī. [35]

Then a certain monk approached the Blessed One. Having saluted the Blessed One, he sat down at one side.

Seated thus at one side, the monk said this to the Blessed One:

3 “It is good for me, bhante! Let the Blessed One teach the Dharma in brief, so that having heard the Dharma from the Blessed One, I might dwell alone, aloof, diligent, exertive, and resolute.”²

The teaching on latent tendencies in brief

4 “Bhikshu, one is reckoned by whatever lies latent in one. One is not reckoned by what does not lie latent in one.”³

“Understood, Blessed One! Understood, Sugata [Well-gone One]!”

5 “So, bhikshu, how do you understand in detail the meaning of what is stated in brief?”

The teaching on latent tendencies in detail

6 “Bhante,

if one has a latent tendency regarding form,

then one is reckoned by it;

if one has a latent tendency regarding feeling,

then one is reckoned by it;

if one has a latent tendency regarding perception,

then one is reckoned by it;

if one has a latent tendency regarding formations,

then one is reckoned by them;

if one has a latent tendency regarding consciousness,

then one is reckoned by it.

7a Bhante,

if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding form,

then one is *not* reckoned by it;

if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding feeling,

then one is *not* reckoned by it;

if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding perception,

then one is *not* reckoned by it;

if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding formations,

then one is *not* reckoned by them;

if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding consciousness,

then one is *not* reckoned by it.

7b In this way, bhante, have I understood in detail the meaning of what has been spoken in brief by the Blessed One.”

The Buddha’s approval

8a “Sadhu, sadhu, bhikshu! It is good that you, bhikshu, have understood in detail the meaning of what has been spoken in brief by me!

8b Bhikshu,

if one has a latent tendency regarding form,

then one is reckoned by it;

if one has a latent tendency regarding feeling,

then one is reckoned by it;

² *Eko vūpakaṭṭho appamatto ātāpino pahit’atto vihareyyam*. This is stock: V 2:258; M 1:177; A 2:258, 3:218; U 24. The first word, “alone” (*eka*) refers to bodily aloneness and physical solitude; “aloof” (*vūpakaṭṭha*) is mental solitude; often this word alone refers to a practitioner’s effort to rid the mind of sensual thoughts (M 36/1:246f = 85/2:93); “exertive” (*ātāpī*) is putting forth both physical and effort; “resolute” (*pahit’atta*), “mentally resolute” by absence of longing regarding the body or life itself (MA 1:180). Also as *ekā vūpakaṭṭhā appamattā ātāpino pahit’attā vihareyya* (V 2:258; A 3:218 (Ke Se *ekeka...*), 4:280). Sometimes the initial *eka* is omitted in the pericope.

³ *Yam kho, bhikkhu, anuseti, tena saṅkham gacchati; yam nānuseti, na tena saṅkham gacchatī ti*. ***

if one has a latent tendency regarding perception,
 if one has a latent tendency regarding formations,
 if one has a latent tendency regarding consciousness,
 8c Bhikshu,

then one is reckoned by it;
 then one is reckoned by them;
 then one is reckoned by it.

if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding form,
 if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding feeling,
 if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding perception,
 if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding formations,
 if one does *not* have a latent tendency regarding consciousness,

then one is *not* reckoned by it;
 then one is *not* reckoned by it;
 then one is *not* reckoned by it;
 then one is *not* reckoned by them;
 then one is *not* reckoned by it.

8d In this way, bhikshu, have you understood in detail the meaning of what has been spoken in brief by me.”

The monk awakens

9 Then, the monk, having joyfully approved of the Buddha’s word, [36] rose from his seat, saluted the Blessed One, and keeping the Blessed One to his right, departed.

10 ⁴Then, dwelling alone, aloof, diligent, exertive, and resolute, that monk, having right here and now realized it for himself through direct knowledge, dwelt in that supreme goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family⁵ rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

He directly knew:⁶ “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done what had to be done, there is no more of this state of being.”

11 And that certain monk became one of the arhats.

— evarṃ —

091109; 091203; 091217

⁴ This whole section is stock: for refs, see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.56b/1:203) n = SD 7.14.

⁵ *Kula,puttā* are of 2 kinds: those who are born so (*jāti kula,putta*), and those who are so by conduct (*ācāra kula,putta*). Either the second (which is all inclusive) is meant (DA 2:363), or both is meant (MA 1:180).

⁶ He knows all this by “review knowledge” (*paccavekkhaṇa,ñāṇa*). “Birth is destroyed” (*khīṇā jāti*) ie, he knows if he had not fully cultivated the path, that one, four, or five of the aggregates would arise (ie he would be reborn, respectively, as a non-conscious being, or a formless being, or a form being, or a sense-world being); “the holy life has been lived” (*vusitāṃ brahma,carīyam*): the 7 learners (*sekha*) and the good worldly are said to “be living the holy life,” but he has *lived* it because he has destroyed his influxes; “done what had to be done” (*katam karaṇīyam*): he has understood the noble truths in all their 16 aspects, ie, their full understanding, abandonment, realization, and cultivation by the four paths; “there is no more for this state of being” (*nāparam itthattāya*): he does not have to complete his understanding of the truths any more, and beyond the present aggregates, there are none, for they are like fire without fuel (DA 1:225 in detail; MA 1:180 f in brief). For a full tr of Comy and Sub-comy here, see Bodhi (tr), *The Discourse on the Fruits of Reclusership*, 1989: 165-168.