

# Ekottarika Āgama

## 17.1. Ānāpānasmṛti

Translated from Taishō Tripiṭaka volume 2, number 125

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was in Śrāvastī, at the Jeta Grove, at Anāthapiṇḍada's park. At that time, the Bhagavān put on his robe, picked up his bowl, and departed with Rāhula to enter the city walls of Śrāvastī. Then the Bhagavān turned to his right and said to Rāhula, "You should now contemplate the impermanence of form." Facing him, Rāhula replied, "Thusly, Bhagavān, form is impermanent." The Bhagavān told Rāhula, "Sensation, conception, synthesis, and discrimination are all impermanent." Facing him, Rāhula replied, "Thusly, Bhagavān, sensation, conception, synthesis, and discrimination are all impermanent."

At this time, Venerable Rāhula thought, "For what reasons, today, on the path to the city walls, has the Bhagavān faced me and admonished me in this manner? I will return now, as I ought not enter the city walls of Śrāvastī to beg for food." Then Venerable Rāhula promptly returned along the road to the Jeta Grove Monastery. Arriving there with his robe and bowl, he stopped below a tree. Correcting his body and correcting his intention, he sat cross-legged, focusing his energy single-mindedly. He was mindful of the impermanence of form, and mindful of the impermanence of sensation, conception, synthesis, and discrimination.

At this time, the Bhagavān had finished begging for food within the city walls of Śrāvastī. After eating, he returned to the Jeta Grove Monastery and walked about, eventually arriving at the place where Rāhula was. There he addressed Rāhula, saying, "You should cultivate the method of Ānāpānasmṛti. Cultivating this method, every notion of worry and sorrow that you have will come to an end. You are still cultivating incorrectly with impurity, and your desires have not yet ended. Rāhula, you should now cultivate a mind of kindness, and all anger will come to an end. Rāhula, you should now cultivate a mind of compassion, and all cruelty will come to an end. Rāhula, you should now cultivate a mind of contentment, and all jealousy will come to an end. Rāhula, you should now cultivate a mind of equality, and all pride will come to an end."

At this time, the Bhagavān faced Rāhula and spoke a gāthā:

Not arousing attachment to appearances,  
And always in accordance with the Dharma:  
The one who is wise in a way such as this,  
Has a name that is renowned everywhere.  
By holding aloft the torch of wisdom,  
The great darkness of ignorance breaks apart.  
The devas and nāgas pay their respects,  
Giving praise to the venerable master.

At this time, the bhikṣu Rāhula replied to the Bhagavān with a gāthā:

I will not arouse attachment to appearances,  
And will always be in accord with the Dharma.  
One who is wise in a way such as this,  
Is still capable of honoring the master.

At this time, after the Bhagavān had given this teaching, he left and returned to his abode of stillness. Then Venerable Rāhula thought, “How can one practice Ānāpānasmṛti to eliminate every notion of worry and sorrow?” At this time, Rāhula promptly left his seat and arose, to go to the place where the Bhagavān was. When he had arrived, he bowed his head at the feet of the Bhagavān, and then sat to one side. After sitting, in a moment of purity, he addressed the Bhagavān, saying: “How can one practice Ānāpānasmṛti, to eliminate every notion of worry and sorrow? How can one obtain the great fruit, and taste the sweet nectar?” The Bhagavān addressed Rāhula, saying: “Excellent, excellent, Rāhula! You are thus able to ‘roar the lion’s roar’ before the Tathāgata by asking, ‘How can one cultivate the practice of Ānāpānasmṛti, to eliminate every notion of worry and sorrow? How can one obtain the great fruit, and taste the sweet nectar of immortality?’ Now Rāhula, listen carefully. Listen carefully and consider well, because I will explain it to you.” Facing him, Venerable Rāhula replied, “Thusly, Bhagavān,” and waited for the Bhagavān’s instruction.

The Bhagavān told him, “Rāhula, suppose there is a bhikṣu who is happy being alone in quietude. In a secluded place, he corrects his body, corrects his intention, and sits cross-legged. Without any other thoughts, he fastens his mind on the tip of his nose. [1] When there is a long breath out, he is also aware of the long breath. [2] When there is a long breath in, he is also aware of the long breath. [3] When there is a short breath out, he is also aware of the short breath. [4] When there is a short breath in, he is also aware of the short breath. [5] When there is a cold breath out, he is also aware of the cold breath. [6] When there is a cold breath in, he is also aware of the cold breath. [7] When there is a warm breath out, he is also aware

of the warm breath. [8] When there is a warm breath in, he is also aware of the warm breath. [9] He completely contemplates the in-breaths and out-breaths of the body, aware of them all. [10] When there is breathing, he also is aware of its presence. [11] When there is no breathing, he is also aware of its absence. [12] If there is an out-breath conditioned by the mind, he is aware that the out-breath was conditioned by the mind. [13] If there is an in-breath conditioned by the mind, he is aware that the in-breath was conditioned by the mind. Thusly, Rāhula, one is able to cultivate the practice of Ānāpānasmṛti, to eliminate every notion of worry and sorrow, obtain the great fruit, and taste the sweet nectar of immortality.”

After the Bhagavān had finished imparting this subtle teaching to Rāhula, then Rāhula promptly arose from his seat and bowed at the feet of the Buddha. Circumambulating him three times, he then departed. Arriving in the Andha Garden, he stopped at the foot of a tree. He corrected his body, corrected his intention, and sat cross-legged. Without any other thoughts, he fastened his mind on the tip of his nose. [1] When there was a long breath out, he was also aware of the long breath. [2] When there was a long breath in, he was also aware of the long breath. [3] When there was a short breath out, he was also aware of the short breath. [4] When there was a short breath in, he was also aware of the short breath. [5] When there was a cold breath out, he was also aware of the cold breath. [6] When there was a cold breath in, he was also aware of the cold breath. [7] When there was a warm breath out, he was also aware of the warm breath. [8] When there was a warm breath in, he was also aware of the warm breath. [9] He completely contemplated the in-breaths and out-breaths of the body, and was aware of them all. [10] When there was breathing, he was aware of its presence. [11] When there was no breathing, he was aware of its absence. [12] If there was an out-breath conditioned by the mind, he was aware that it came from the mind. [13] If there was an in-breath conditioned by the mind, he was aware that it came from the mind.

At this time, Rāhula cultivated thusly, and a mind of desires was set free, not returning to the multitude of evils. [1] Contemplating with this mindfulness, he maintained the joy and bliss of roaming in the First Dhyāna, in which there is vitarka and vicāra. [2] When vitarka and vicāra came to a rest, he experienced inner bliss and single-pointedness of mind. Without initial and sustained application of the mind, with only bliss born from samādhi, he roamed in the Second Dhyāna. [3] Observing awareness, he experienced the physical pleasure that the Noble Ones constantly experience with equanimity, the complete satisfaction and mindfulness of roaming in the Third Dhyāna. [4] When both pain and pleasure were eliminated, there were no more worries and vexations. Without pain and pleasure, only completely pure and perfect mindfulness, he roamed in the Fourth Dhyāna.

From this samādhi, his mind was completely pure, without the dust of defilements, and his physical body was supple and soft. He was aware of places from the past, and remembered what he had previously done. He recalled previous lives over incalculable eons. He was aware of one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, even hundreds of thousands of lives. He recalled the passing of eons as well as the destruction of eons, countless successions of eons and their destructions — hundreds of millions of incalculable eons. He recalled his previous births, that he had various names, was born into certain families, ate such and such food, experienced such and such suffering and happiness. He knew whether his lives were long or short, and that he died in such and such a place, and he was reborn in such and such a place.

From this samādhi, his mind was completely pure, without fetters, and his mind was able to know about the origins of sentient beings. Moreover, by means of the complete purity and clarity of the Divine Eye, he saw the birth and death of sentient beings, their good forms and evil forms, good destinies and evil destinies, and understood that in reality they actually come from good or bad actions. If there were sentient beings who practiced evil in body, speech, and mind, who insulted the Noble Ones, practicing and holding false views, then at the end of their lives when their bodies were broken apart, they would enter into the hells. However, if there were sentient beings who practice virtue in body, speech, and mind, who do not insult the Noble Ones, and who practice and hold correct views, then at the end of their lives when their bodies are broken apart, they would go to live in the heavens above. This is called the complete purity and clarity of the Divine Eye, with which one sees the birth and death of sentient beings, their good forms and evil forms, good destinies and evil destinies, and understands that in reality they actually come from good or bad actions.

Moreover, he practiced the contemplation of suffering, and was aware of both the ending of suffering and the origin of suffering, truly aware of them as such. By means of developing this mindfulness, his mind attained liberation from the outflows of desires, and his mind attained liberation from the outflows of ignorance. After attaining these liberations, he naturally attained the liberation of wisdom, and birth and death then came to an end. Brahmacharya had been established, what was to be done, had been done, and there was no more coming back into existence — thus was his true awareness. It was at this time that Venerable Rāhula became an arhat.

At this time, after Venerable Rāhula had become an arhat, he arose from his seat, arranged his robes, and went to the place of the Bhagavān. Bowing his head at the feet of the Bhagavān, he then moved to one side. He addressed the Bhagavān,

saying, “That which was sought has been attained: the cessation of all outflows.” At that time, the Bhagavān told all the bhikṣus, “Of those who have attained arhatship, there is none equal to Rāhula. In regard to the cessation of outflows, it is the bhikṣu Rāhula who is foremost. In regard to those who maintain the precepts, it is again the bhikṣu Rāhula who is foremost. In this manner, all tathāgatas of the past, those of Anuttarā Samyaksambodhi, also had this bhikṣu Rāhula. Wishing to be called the Son of the Buddha, this bhikṣu Rāhula closely followed the life of the Buddha to the highest Dharma.” At that time, the Bhagavān told all the bhikṣus, “Amongst my śrāvakas, the foremost student in maintaining the precepts is truly the bhikṣu Rāhula.” Then the Bhagavān spoke this gāthā:

By utilizing the precepts of the Dharma,  
The various faculties are all accomplished.  
Progressing until they are all attained,  
The causes of all afflictions come to an end.

At this time, all the bhikṣus heard what the Buddha had said, and blissfully practiced in accordance.