

Anaṇa Sutta

Anaṇa Sutta The Discourse on Debtlessness | A 4.62/2:69 f

Theme: The true benefits of worldly happiness

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003; rev 2010

Introduction

The title of the Sutta is simple enough: *anaṇa*,¹ meaning “without debt, independent.” The opposite is *sāṇa* = *sa* + *ṇa* [*ina*], meaning “with debt, indebted” (M 3:127,7), probably on account of vowel assimilation.² The World Tipiṭaka, following the Burmese Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā edition, gives the title as *Ānanya Sutta*. The word *ānanya* (Skt *ānṛṇya*) means “release or freedom from debt or obligation” (DP).

The message of the Anaṇa Sutta is that true wealth is not something you have, but what you really are, your *being*. You cannot *have* happiness; you can only *be* happy. And you cannot be happy *alone*, but be happy *for* others: this is a networking of positive beings truly happy with one another. The Anaṇa Sutta speaks of **the four joys of wealth**, thus:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| (1) the joy of ownership | the joy of having | (the result of diligence), |
| (2) the joy of enjoying | the joy of being | (the result of watchfulness), |
| (3) the joy of debtlessness | the joy of giving | (the result of balanced livelihood), and |
| (4) the joy of blamelessness | the joy to come | (spiritual friendship and spirituality). |
- (A 4.62/2:69-71) = SD 2.2

The four bases of worldly welfare of **the Dīgha,jānu Sutta** (A 8.54) are here collated with the four worldly joys of a householder (*gihi,sukha*), and related to spiritual welfare, as described in **the Anaṇa Sutta** (A 4.62), thus:

<u>Dīgha,jānu Sutta (A 8.54)</u>	<u>Anaṇa Sutta (A 4.62)</u>	<u>Spiritual welfare</u>
(1) The accomplishment of diligence	The joy of ownership	Faith
(2) The accomplishment of watchfulness	The joy of enjoyment	Moral virtue
(3) Spiritual friendship	The joy of blamelessness	Wisdom
(4) Balanced livelihood	The joy of debtlessness	Charity

(A 8.54/4:281-285 = SD 5.10; A 4.62/2:69 f = SD 2.2)

Details of their relationships are discussed in the Introduction to **the Sigāl’ovāda Sutta** (D 31).³

— — —

The Discourse on Debtlessness

A 4.62/2:69 f

[69]

1 Then the householder Anātha,piṇḍika went up to the Blessed One, saluted him, and sat down at one side. As he was sitting thus at one side, the Blessed One said this to Anāthapiṇḍika:

2 “Householder, there are these **four kinds of joy** [happiness] to be won from time to time, as the occasion arises, by a lay person who enjoys sense-pleasures.⁴

¹ Be Se often written as *anaṇa* (mfh) (Skt *anṛṇa*), resolved as *na* + *ina*, “debt” (Amg *id*, Skt *ṛṇa*; also *ṇa*).

² See V Trenckner, “Critical and philological notes to the first chapter (Bāhirakathā) of the Milinda-pañha,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1908:129; also W Geiger, *A Pāli Grammar* (tr B Ghosh; rev K R Norman), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 §12.4

³ D 31/3:180-193 = SD 4.1 Intro (2).

What are the four?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) The joy of ownership | (<i>atthi,sukha</i>); |
| (2) The joy of enjoying his wealth | (<i>bhoga,sukha</i>); |
| (3) The joy of debtlessness | (<i>anana,sukha</i>); |
| (4) The joy of blamelessness | (<i>anavajja,sukha</i>). |

3 (1) And what, householder, is **the joy of ownership**?

Here, householder, a noble youth [a son of family]⁵ has wealth gained by work and zeal, gathered by the strength of arm, earned by the sweat of the brow, justly obtained in a lawful way. At the thought, ‘Wealth is mine gained by work and zeal, gathered by the strength of arm, earned by the sweat of the brow, justly obtained in a lawful way,’ he attains pleasure, he attains happiness.

This, householder, is the joy of ownership.

4 (2) And what, householder, is **the joy of enjoying his wealth**?

Here, householder, a noble youth has wealth thus gained, both enjoys his wealth and does meritorious deeds. At the thought, ‘By means of wealth thus gained, I both enjoy my wealth and do meritorious deeds,’ he attains pleasure, he attains happiness.

This, householder, is the joy of enjoyment.

5 (3) And what, householder, is **the joy of debtlessness**?

Here, householder, a noble youth owes no debt, great or small, to anyone. At the thought, ‘I owe no debt, great or small, to anyone,’ he attains pleasure, he attains happiness.

This, householder, is the joy of debtlessness.

6 (4) And what, householder, is **the joy of blamelessness**?

Here, householder, a noble disciple is endowed with blameless actions of body, blameless actions of speech, blameless actions of mind. At the thought, [70] ‘I am endowed with blameless actions of body, blameless actions of speech, blameless actions of mind,’ he attains pleasure, he attains happiness.

This, householder, is the joy of blamelessness.

7 These, householder, are the four kinds of joy to be won from time to time, when the occasion arises, by a lay person who enjoys sense-pleasures.

*Ānanya,sukham ṇatvāna*⁶
*atho atthi,sukham sare*⁷
*bhuñjam bhogaṃ macco*⁸
tato paññā vipassati

Enjoying [knowing] the joy of debtlessness,
and the joy of possession, too,
enjoying his wealth, a mortal
thereby sees with wisdom.

Vipassamāno jānāti
ubho bhoge sumedhaso
anavajja,sukhass’etaṃ
kalam nāgghati solasin ti

While seeing with wisdom,
the wise knows both shares of his wealth,
of the joy of blamelessness,⁹
they are not worth a sixteenth part.¹⁰

— evaṃ —

101208

⁴ *Cattārimāni gahapati sukhāni adhigamanīyāni gihinā kāma,bhoginā kālena kalam samayena samayaṃ upā-dāya*. On “a layperson who enjoys sense-pleasures,” see **Mahā Vaccha,gotta S** (M 73.13d+f/1:493) = SD 27.4 & SD 21.9 Intro (3).

⁵ “A noble youth,” *kula,putta*, sometimes “the son of a good or noble family, young noble youth” (V 1:15; D 1:93; M 1:85, 192; A 2:249; Kvu 268); cf (German) Haussohn.

⁶ Be WT so; Ce *aṇṇa,sukham katvā*; Ee *anaṇa,sukham katvāna*; Se *anaṇaṃ sukham tvāna*.

⁷ Be WT *atho atthi,sukham paraṃ*; Ee Se *atho atthi,sukham sare*.

⁸ Se *bhujam bhogaṃ sukham macco*.

⁹ These 2 lines should be reversed, and read: “They are not worth a sixteenth [an iota] | of the joy of blamelessness.”

¹⁰ Comy: The wise one divides the types of happiness into two parts: the first three comprises one part; the happiness of blamelessness is a part of its own. Then he sees with wisdom and knows that the former three types of happiness combined are not worth a sixteenth part [ie a tiny fraction] of the happiness of blamelessness. (AA 3:101)