

# Advice to a Dying Man

*Anathapindikovada Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 143)*

On one occasion the householder Anathapindika was afflicted, suffering, and gravely ill.

The venerable Sariputta dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went to the residence of Anathapindika with Ananda as his attendant.

Having gone there, he sat down on a seat made ready and said to Anathapindika: "I hope you are getting well, I hope you are comfortable. I hope your painful feelings are subsiding and not increasing."

I will not cling to	the eye the ear the nose the tongue the body the mind	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	the eye the ear the nose the tongue the body the mind
I will not cling to	forms sounds smells tastes touches mind-objects	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	forms sounds smells tastes touches mind-objects
I will not cling to	eye-consciousness ear-consciousness nose-consciousness tongue-consciousness body-consciousness mind-consciousness	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	eye-consciousness ear-consciousness nose-consciousness tongue-consciousness body-consciousness mind-consciousness
I will not cling to	eye-contact ear-contact nose-contact tongue-contact body-contact mind-contact	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	eye-contact ear-contact nose-contact tongue-contact body-contact mind-contact
I will not cling to	feeling born of eye-contact feeling born of ear-contact feeling born of nose-contact feeling born of tongue-contact feeling born of body-contact feeling born of mind-contact	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	feeling born of eye-contact feeling born of ear-contact feeling born of nose-contact feeling born of tongue-contact feeling born of body-contact feeling born of mind-contact

“Venerable Sariputta, I am not getting well, I am not comfortable. My painful feelings are increasing, not subsiding.

Just as if a strong man were splitting my head open with a sharp sword, so too, violent winds cut through my head.

Just as if a strong man were tightening a tough leather strap around my head as a headband, so too, there are violent pains in my head.

Just as if a skilled butcher or his apprentice were to carve up

an ox’s belly with a sharp butcher’s knife, so too, violent winds are carving up my belly.

Just as if two strong men were to seize a weaker man by both arms and roast him over a pit of hot coals, so too, there is a violent burning in my body.

I am not getting well, I am not comfortable. My painful feelings are increasing, not subsiding.”

“Then, householder, [said Sariputta,] you should train thus:

I will not cling to	the earth element the water element the fire element the air element	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	the earth element the water element the fire element the air element
I will not cling to	material form feeling perception formations consciousness	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	material form feeling perception formations consciousness
I will not cling to	the sphere of infinite space the sphere of infinite consciousness the sphere of nothingness the sphere of neither-perception- nor-non-perception	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	the sphere of infinite space the sphere of infinite consciousness the sphere of nothingness the sphere of neither-perception- nor-non-perception
I will not cling to	this world the world beyond	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	this world the world beyond
I will not cling to	what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought after and examined by the mind	and my consciousness will not be dependent on	what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought after and examined by the mind

When this was said, Anathapindika wept and shed tears.

Then Ananda asked him: “Are you foundering, householder, are you sinking?”

“I am not foundering, Ananda, I am not sinking. But although I have long waited upon the Teacher and bhikkhus worthy of esteem, never before have I heard such a talk on the Dhamma.”

“Such talk on the Dhamma is not given to lay people clothed in white, but only to those who have gone forth.”

“Well, then, Sariputta, let such talk on the Dhamma be given to lay people clothed in white.

There are people with little dust in their eyes who are wasting away through not hearing such talk on the Dhamma. There will be those who will understand.”

Then, after giving Anathapindika this advice, Sariputta and Ananda rose from their seats and departed.

Soon after they had left, the householder Anathapindika died and reappeared in the Tusita heaven.