Thag 17.3 — Ānanda

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Verses of the Senior Monks 17.3

The Book of the Thirties

Chapter One

Ānanda

“The astute would not make friends

with the slanderous or the hateful,

with a miser or a gloater,

for it’s bad to consort with reprobates.

The astute would make friends

with the faithful and the pleasant,

the wise and the learned,

for it’s a blessing to consort with true persons.”

“See this fancy puppet,

a body built of sores,

diseased, obsessed over,

in which nothing lasts at all.

See this fancy puppet,

with its gems and earrings;

it is bones swathed in skin,

made pretty by its clothes.

Rouged feet

and powdered face

may be enough to beguile a fool,

but not a seeker of the far shore.
Hair in eight braids
and eyeshadow
may be enough to beguile a fool,
but not a seeker of the far shore.
A rotting body all adorned
like a freshly painted makeup box
may be enough to beguile a fool,
but not a seeker of the far shore."
"Gotama is learned, a brilliant speaker,
the attendant to the Buddha.
With burden put down, detached,
Gotama made his bed.
Defilements ended, detached,
he has got over clinging and become quenched.
He bears his final body,
having gone beyond birth and death."
"Gotama stands firm
on the path that leads to quenching,
where the teachings of the Buddha,
the Kinsman of the Sun, are grounded."
"82,000 from the Buddha,
and 2,000 more from the monks:
84,000 teachings I've learned,
and these are what I promulgate."
"A person of little learning
ages like an ox—
their flesh grows,
but not their wisdom.

A learned person who, on account of their learning,
looks down on someone of little learning,
strikes me as like
a blind man holding a lamp.
You should stay close to a learned person—
don't lose what you've learned.
It is the root of the spiritual life,
which is why you should memorize the teaching.
Knowing the sequence and meaning of the teaching,
expert in the definition of terms,
they make sure it is well memorized,
and then examine the meaning.
Accepting the teachings, they become enthusiastic;
making an attempt, they weigh up the teaching.
When it's time, they strive
serene inside themselves.
If you want to understand the teaching,
you should befriend that sort,
who are learned and have memorized the teachings,
wise disciples of the Buddha.
One who is learned and has memorized the teaching,
a keeper of the great seer's treasury,
is a visionary for the whole world,
learned and honorable.
Delighting in the teaching, enjoying the teaching,
contemplating the teaching,
a mendicant who recollects the teaching
doesn't fall away from the true teaching."
"When your body is pampered and heavy,

while your remaining time is running out,
greedy for physical pleasure,
how can you be comfortable as an ascetic?"
"I'm completely disorientated!
The teachings don't spring to mind!
With the passing of our good friend,
everything seems dark.
When your friend has passed away,
and your Teacher is past and gone,
there's no friend like
mindfulness of the body.
The old have passed away,
and I don't agree with the new.
Today I meditate alone
like a bird snug in its nest."
"Many visitors from abroad
have come to visit.
Don't block the audience,
let the congregation see me."
"Lots of visitors from abroad
have come to visit.
The teacher grants them the opportunity,
the Clear-eyed One doesn't turn them away."
"In the twenty five years that have passed
since I became a trainee,
no sensual perception has arisen in me:
behold the clear rightness of the teaching!
In the twenty-five years
since I became a trainee,

no malicious perception has arisen in me:

behold the clear rightness of the teaching!”

“For twenty-five years

I attended on the Buddha

with loving deeds,

like a shadow that never left.

For twenty-five years

I attended on the Buddha

with loving words,

like a shadow that never left.

For twenty-five years

I attended on the Buddha

with loving thoughts,

like a shadow that never left.

While the Buddha was walking mindfully,

I walked behind him.

As he taught the Dhamma,

knowledge arose in me.”

“I’m a trainee, who has more to do;

my heart’s desire is still unfulfilled.

Yet the Teacher, who was so compassionate to me,

has become fully extinguished.

Then there was terror!

Then they had goosebumps!

When the Buddha, endowed with all fine qualities,

was fully quenched.”

“Ānanda, who was learned and had memorized the teaching,

a keeper of the great seer’s treasury,

a visionary for the entire world,

has become fully quenched.
He was learned and had memorized the teaching,
a keeper of the great seer's treasury,
a visionary for the entire world,
in thick of night he dispelled the dark.
He is the seer who remembered the teachings,
and mastered their sequence, holding them firm.
The senior monk who memorized the teaching,
Ānanda was a mine of gems."
"I've served the Teacher
and fulfilled the Buddha's instructions.
The heavy burden is laid down,
now there'll be no more future lives."