

Subjects for Contemplation

"There are these five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained. Which five?

- "'I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.' This is the first fact that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.
- "'I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness.' ...
- "'I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death.' ...
- "'I will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me.' ...
- "'I am the owner of my actions (*kamma*), heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.' ...

"These are the five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained.

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect... that 'I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging'? There are beings who are intoxicated with a [typical] youth's intoxication with youth. Because of that intoxication with youth, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body... in speech... and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that youth's intoxication with youth will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker...

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect... that 'I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness'? There are beings who are intoxicated with a [typical] healthy person's intoxication with health. Because of that intoxication with health, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body... in speech... and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that healthy person's intoxication with health will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker...

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect... that 'I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death'? There are beings who are intoxicated with a [typical] living person's intoxication with life. Because of that intoxication with life, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body... in speech... and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that living person's intoxication with life will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker...

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect... that 'I will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me'? There are beings who feel desire and passion for the things they find dear and appealing. Because of that passion, they conduct themselves in a bad way in body... in speech... and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that desire and passion for the things they find dear and appealing will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker...

"Now, based on what line of reasoning should one often reflect... that 'I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir'? There are beings who conduct themselves in a bad way in body... in speech... and in mind. But when they often reflect on that fact, that bad conduct in body, speech, and mind will either be entirely abandoned or grow weaker...

"Now, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'I am not the only one subject to aging, who has not gone beyond aging. To the extent that there are beings — past and future, passing away and re-arising — all beings are subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.' When he/she often reflects on this, the [factors of the] path take birth. He/she sticks with that path, develops it, cultivates it. As he/she sticks with that path, develops it and cultivates it, the fetters are abandoned, the obsessions destroyed.

"Further, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'I am not the only one subject to illness, who has not gone beyond illness.'... 'I am not the only one subject to death, who has not gone beyond death.'... 'I am not the only one who will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me.'...

"A disciple of the noble ones considers this: 'I am not the only one who is owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator; who — whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir. To the extent that there are beings — past and future, passing away and re-arising — all beings are the owner of their actions, heir to their actions, born of their actions, related through their actions, and have their actions as their arbitrator. Whatever they do, for good or for evil, to that will they fall heir.' When he/she often reflects on this, the [factors of the] path take birth. He/she sticks with that path, develops it, cultivates it. As he/she sticks with that path, develops it and cultivates it, the fetters are abandoned, the obsessions destroyed."

Subject to birth, subject to aging,
subject to death,
run-of-the-mill people
are repelled by those who suffer
from that to which they are subject.
And if I were to be repelled
by beings subject to these things,
it would not be fitting for me,
living as they do.

As I maintained this attitude —
knowing the Dhamma
without paraphernalia —
I overcame all intoxication
with health, youth, and life
as one who sees
renunciation as rest.

For me, energy arose,
unbinding was clearly seen.
There's now no way
I could partake of sensual pleasures.
Having followed the holy life,
I will not return.

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