

Exploring the Ancient Path in the Buddha's Own Words

Lesson 2.1.13

Arakasuttam

Make the Best Use of this Short Life



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Arakasuttam	Make the Best Use of this Short Life
“Bhūtapubbaṃ, bhikkhave, arako nāma sathā ahosi titthakaro kāmesu vītarāgo. Arakassa kho pana, bhikkhave, satthuno anekāni sāvakasatāni ahesuṃ. Arako sathā sāvakānaṃ evaṃ dhammaṃ deseti—	“Long ago, O’ Bhikkhus, there lived a teacher by the name of Araka, a founder of a sect who was freed of all craving after sensual pleasures. This teacher Araka, Bhikkhus, had many hundreds of disciples. And this teacher Araka taught the Dhamma to his disciples in the following way:
appakaṃ, brāhmaṇa, jīvitam manussānaṃ parittam lahukaṃ bahudukkham bahupāyasaṃ mantāyaṃ boddhabbam, kattabbam kusalam, caritabbam brahmacariyaṃ, natthi jātassa amaraṇaṃ.	‘Short, O’ Brāhmins, is this human life, it is of no significance, trifling, full of suffering and troublesome. You should get enlightened by mantras, you should perform wholesome actions, you should lead the holy life, for those born beings there is no escaping death!
Seyyathāpi, brāhmaṇa, tiṇagge ussāvabindu sūriye uggacchante khippamyeva paṭivigacchati, na ciraṭṭhitikaṃ hoti; evamevaṃ kho, brāhmaṇa, ussāvabindūpamaṃ jīvitam manussānaṃ parittam lahukaṃ bahudukkham bahupāyasaṃ mantāyaṃ boddhabbam, kattabbam kusalam, caritabbam brahmacariyaṃ, natthi jātassa amaraṇaṃ.....”ti.	Just as, Brāhmins, a drop of dew on the top of a blade of grass dries up immediately when the sun rises and does not last long, in the same way like in this simile of the drop of dew, O’ Brāhmins, is this human life short, is it of no significance, trifling, full of suffering and troublesome. You should get enlightened by mantras, you should perform wholesome actions, you should lead the holy life, for those born beings there is no escaping death!’
... .. “Tena kho pana, bhikkhave, samayena manussānaṃ satthivassasahassāni āyuppamaṇaṃ ahosi, pañcavassasatikā kumārīkā alaṃpateyyā ahosi. Tena kho pana, bhikkhave, samayena manussānaṃ chaḷeva ābādhā ahesuṃ— sītaṃ, uṇhaṃ, jighacchā, pipāsā, uccāro, passāvo. “At that period of time, O’ Bhikkhus, the lifespan of a human being was sixty thousand years and girls were marriageable at the age of five hundred. And during that period of time, Bhikkhus, mankind had but to witness six kinds of diseases: cold, heat, hunger, thirst, urine and faeces.
So hi nāma, bhikkhave, arako sathā evaṃ dīghāyukesu manussesu evaṃ ciraṭṭhitikesu evaṃ appābādhesu sāvakānaṃ evaṃ dhammaṃ desessati— ‘appakaṃ, brāhmaṇa, jīvitam manussānaṃ parittam lahukaṃ bahudukkham bahupāyasaṃ mantāyaṃ boddhabbam, kattabbam kusalam, caritabbam	In spite of such a long duration of the lifespan, such longevity and such few diseases this teacher Araka taught the Dhamma to his disciples in the following way: “Short, O’ Brāhmins, is this human life, it is of no significance, trifling, full of suffering and troublesome. You should get enlightened by mantras,

brahmacariyaṃ, natthi jātassa amaraṇaṃ”’ti.	you should perform wholesome actions, you should lead the holy life, for those born beings there is no escaping death!”
“Etarahi taṃ, bhikkhave, sammā vadamāno vadeyya— ‘appaḥkaṃ jīvaṃ manussānaṃ parittaṃ lahuḥkaṃ bahudukkhaṃ bahupāyāsaṃ mantāyaṃ boddhabbaṃ, kattaḥkaṃ kusalaṃ, caritaḥkaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, natthi jātassa amaraṇaṃ’ti. Etarahi, bhikkhave, yo ciraṃ jīvati so vassasataṃ appaṃ vā bhiyyo.	Today, O’ Bhikkhus, a man would really speak truthfully, if he was to say: ‘Short, O’ Brāhmins, is this human life, it is of no significance, trifling, full of suffering and troublesome. You should get enlightened by mantras, you should perform wholesome actions, you should lead the holy life, for those born beings there is no escaping death!’ Because one who lives today, lives the period of one hundred years or just a bit more.
Vassasataṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, jīvanto tīṇiyeva utusatāni jīvati— utusataṃ hemantānaṃ, utusataṃ gimhānaṃ, utusataṃ vassānaṃ.	During this life of a hundred years, O’ Bhikkhus, he passes through three hundred seasons: a hundred seasons of winter, a hundred seasons of summer and a hundred seasons of rain.....
..... Yaṃ, bhikkhave, satthārā karaṇīyaṃ sāvakaṇaṃ hitesinā anukampakena anukampaṃ upādāya; kataṃ vo taṃ mayā etāni, bhikkhave, rukkhamūlāni etāni suññāgārāni. Jhāyatha, bhikkhave, mā pamādattha; mā pacchā vippaṭṭisārino ahuvattha. Ayaṃ vo amhākaṃ anusāsanī”’ti O’ Bhikkhus, whatever a teacher for his disciples can do, for their benefit, out of compassion, that has been done by me for you. Bhikkhus, there are the roots of the trees, there are these empty spaces. Meditate, O’ Bhikkhus, don’t be negligent so there is no cause for you to regret later on. This, O’ Bhikkhus, is my advice for you!”