

Anuruddha Sutta, Characteristics of an Admirable Wife

by Blue Lotus

Although Buddha encouraged men to pursue happiness in monastic life, he also understood that the lifestyle is not suitable for many men. For this reason, Buddha taught his lay disciples the path to happiness in family life as well. In Anuruddha Sutta, Buddha described the characteristics of a wife who contributes to the welfare and happiness of herself and her family.

This post is purely just a translation of a Buddhist sutta in English. I will refer to this sutta from another article I will write about with my own commentary.

Anuruddha Sutta, Characteristics of an Admirable Wife

At one time, the Blessed One was staying at Ghositārāma near Kosambi. Around the same time, Venerable Anuruddha went to a lodging to rest. Then, several Manapakayika angels visited Venerable Anuruddha at the lodging. They paid respect to him and stood at one side. The angels said,

“Venerable Anuruddha, we are the angels known as Manapakayika. We have the freedom and power for three things. First, whatever external appearance we desire, we can obtain the appearance immediately. Second, whatever voice we desire, we can obtain that voice immediately. Third, whatever happiness we desire, we can obtain that happiness immediately.”

“Venerable Anuruddha, we are the Manapakayika angels. We have the freedom and power in those three qualities.”

Venerable Anuruddha then said,

“May these angels have green bodies, wear green outfits with green ornaments.”

He repeated the same for different colors such as yellow, red, and white.

The angels understood Venerable Anuruddha’s intention. They turned themselves white, wore white outfits with white ornaments. One of the angels then started to sing. One danced. One clapped. The music was well performed similarly to the level of skilled musicians with the five elements of music. The sound of the angels was beautiful, intoxicating, and entertaining. The sound of the angels’ ornaments was beautiful in the same ways.

Then, Venerable Anuruddha looked down at the ground. The angels, seeing the monk’s disinterest in their performance, left the monk alone from there.

Later in the evening, Venerable Anuruddha visited the Blessed One at his place, paid respect and sat at one side. He said,

“If I may have the opportunity [to ask a question], while I was staying in a lodging to rest, several Manapakayika angels visited me, paid respect and stood on one side.”

[Venerable Anuruddha continued to describe the event that happened earlier.]

Then Anuruddha asked,

“What qualities must women have in order for them to become friends with Manapakayika angels when these women die?”

The Blessed One said,

“Anuruddha, the women who have the eight qualities, when they die, will become friends with Manapakayika angels. What are these eight qualities?”

“Anuruddha, a woman whose mother and father want the best for her, looking for support, help, and care, are given to a man who becomes her husband.[1] For her husband, she must wake up before him, go to bed after him, be of service to him, conduct herself to please him and speak words that are loving to him.”

“[2] She must honor people her husband honors. These people include husband’s mother, father or monks. She welcomes these people with seat and water when they visit.”

“[3] She is a skillful and diligent worker who helps her husband in his domestic works such as sewing wool or cotton. She is diligent and helps her husband’s with her skills.”

“[4] Of her husband’s slaves, servants or workers, she knows whose work has been done or yet to be done.”

“[5] She knows the health condition of these people. She knows whether the sick people are getting better or worse. She distributes foods and consumable goods to these people as necessary.”

“[6] Of things her husband earned such as money, rice, silver, or gold, she guards them safe. She is not a gambler, thief, or drinker. She does not waste money.”

“[7] She is a person who holds Buddha, Teaching of Buddha (Dhamma) and Monastic Disciple of Buddha (Sangha) as her foundation. She is a person with virtues who abstains from killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, lying and drinking intoxicating drinks that are the source of carelessness.”

“[8] She is a giver who is free of the impurity that is stinginess. At home, she lets go of her self-importance. With hands that are generous, happy to sacrifice, she is the person to ask from. She delights in giving.”

“Anuruddha, women with these eight qualities, when they die, will become friends of Manapakayika.”

“A wise woman does not despise her husband
Who diligently and constantly supports her,
Granting her every wish.”

“She does not displease her husband
With words of jealousy.
She honors the people her husband honors.”

“She is diligent,
supports her husband,
and conducts herself to please her husband.
She guards the money her husband earned.”

“The women who conduct themselves well,
for the contentment of their husbands in these ways,
will consequently become Manapakayika angels.”

Translation Note:

In the Buddhist text, there are several suttas known as Anuruddha Sutta. This particular one refers to characteristics of wives that become Manapakayika angels. It is called Anuruddha Sutta because Anuruddha was the monk who asked Buddha the question. Some Buddhist text specifically refers to this sutta as Anuruddha Manapakayika Sutta to make its title unique.

Anuruddha was a monk who developed the eyes that can see celestial beings from his meditation practice. He was able to see angels like Buddha and other prominent monks.

The Thai source I used to make this translation is from Tripitaka91.com

Although Buddha said there are eight characteristics, the Thai sutta actually listed a total of nine. So I combined the two very closely related characteristics into one at the number five.

When I almost finished translating this sutta, I found another similar sutta already translated. Uggaha Sutta. Readers can also read this as well.

Manapakayika angels probably belong to Nimmanarati heaven. In Buddhist 31 planes of existence, this is the second highest level of heaven. The angels there have the power to create objects of their desire. This fits the description of Manapakayika angels in this sutta.