

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the venerable Ānanda was living at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary, not long after the Blessed One had attained to final Nibbāna.

2. Now on that occasion King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha, being suspicious of King Pajjota, was having Rājagaha fortified.

3. Then, when it was morning, the venerable Ānanda dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Rājagaha for alms. Then the venerable Ānanda thought: "It is still too early to wander for alms in Rājagaha. Suppose I went to the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna at his workplace."

4. So the venerable Ānanda went to the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna at his workplace. The brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna saw the venerable Ānanda coming in the distance and said to him: "Let Master Ānanda come! Welcome to Master Ānanda! It is long since Master Ānanda found an opportunity to come here. Let Master Ānanda be seated; this seat is ready." The venerable Ānanda sat down on the seat made ready. The brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna took a low seat, sat down at one side, and asked the venerable Ānanda:

5. "Master Ānanda, is there any single bhikkhu who possesses in each and every way all those qualities that were possessed by Master Gotama, accomplished and fully enlightened?"

"There is no single bhikkhu, brahmin, who possesses in each and every way all those qualities that were possessed by the Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened. For the Blessed One was the arouser of the unarisen path, the producer of the unproduced path, the declarer of the undeclared path; he was the knower of the path, the finder of the path, the one skilled in the path. But his disciples now abide following that path and become possessed of it afterwards."

6. But this discussion between the venerable Ānanda and the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna was interrupted; for then the brahmin Vassakāra, the chief minister of Magadha, while supervising the work at Rājagaha, went to the venerable Ānanda at the workplace of the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna. He exchanged greetings with the venerable Ānanda, and when this courteous and

amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and asked the venerable Ānanda: “For what discussion are you sitting together here now, Master Ānanda? And what was your discussion that was interrupted?”

“Brahmin, the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna asked me: ‘Master Ānanda, is there any single bhikkhu who possesses in each and every way all those qualities that were possessed by Master Gotama, accomplished and fully enlightened?’ I replied to the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna: ‘There is no single bhikkhu, brahmin, who possesses in each and every way all those qualities that were possessed by the Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened. For the Blessed One was the arouser of the unarisen path...But his disciples now abide following that path and become possessed of it afterwards.’ This was our discussion that was interrupted when you arrived.”

7. “Is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu who was appointed by Master Gotama thus: ‘He will be your refuge when I am gone,’ and whom you now have recourse to?”

“There is no single bhikkhu, brahmin, who was appointed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened, thus: ‘He will be your refuge when I am gone,’ and whom we now have recourse to.”

8. “But is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu who has been chosen by the Sangha and appointed by a number of elder bhikkhus thus: ‘He will be our refuge after the Blessed One has gone,’ and whom you now have recourse to?”

“There is no single bhikkhu, brahmin, who has been chosen by the Sangha and appointed by a number of elder bhikkhus thus: ‘He will be our refuge after the Blessed One has gone,’ and whom we now have recourse to.”

9. “But if you have no refuge, Master Ānanda, what is the cause for your concord?”

“We are not without a refuge, brahmin. We have a refuge; we have the Dhamma as our refuge.”

10. “But when you were asked: ‘Is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu who was appointed by Master Gotama thus: “He will be your refuge when I am gone,” and whom you now have recourse to?’ you answered: ‘There is no such single bhikkhu...whom we now have recourse to.’ When you were asked: ‘Is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu who has been chosen by the Sangha and appointed by a number of elder bhikkhus thus: “He will be our refuge after the Blessed One has gone,” and whom you now have recourse to?’ you answered: ‘There is no such single bhikkhu...whom we now have recourse to.’ When you were asked: ‘But if you have no refuge, Master Ānanda, what is the cause for your concord?’ you answered: ‘We are not without a refuge, brahmin. We have a refuge; we have the Dhamma as our refuge.’ Now how should the meaning of these statements be regarded, Master Ānanda?”

“Brahmin, the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened, has prescribed the course of training for bhikkhus and he has laid down the Pātimokkha. On the Uposatha day as many of us as live in dependence upon a single village district meet together in unison, and when we meet we ask one who knows the Pātimokkha to recite it. If a bhikkhu remembers an offence or a transgression while the Pātimokkha is being recited, we deal with him according to the Dhamma in the way we have been instructed. It is not the worthy ones who deal with us; it is the Dhamma that deals with us.”

11. “Is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu whom you now honor, respect, revere, and venerate, and on whom you live in dependence honoring and respecting him?”

“There is a single bhikkhu, brahmin, whom we now honor, respect, revere, and venerate, and on whom we live in dependence honoring and respecting him.”

12. “But when you were asked: ‘Is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu who was appointed by Master Gotama...?’ you answered “There is no such single bhikkhu...’ When you were asked: ‘Is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu who has been chosen by the Sangha...?’ you answered: ‘There is no such single bhikkhu...’ When you were asked: ‘Is there, Master Ānanda, any single bhikkhu whom you now honor, respect, revere, and venerate, and on whom you live in dependence honoring and respecting him?’ you answered: ‘There is such a single bhikkhu whom we now honor...and on whom we live in dependence honoring and respecting him.’ Now how should the meaning of these statements be regarded, Master Ānanda?”

13. “There are, brahmin, ten qualities inspiring confidence that have been declared by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. When these qualities are found in anyone among us, we honor, respect, revere, and venerate him, and live in dependence on him honoring and respecting him. What are the ten?

14. (1) “Here, brahmin, a bhikkhu is virtuous, he dwells restrained with the restraint of the Pātimokkha, he is perfect in conduct and resort, and seeing fear in the slightest faults, he trains himself by undertaking the training precepts.

15. (2) “He has learned much, remembers what he has learned, and consolidates what he has learned. Such teachings as are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, and which affirm a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure
□ such teachings as these he has learned much of, remembered, mastered verbally, investigated with the mind, and penetrated well by view.

16. (3) “He is content with his robes, almsfood, resting place, and medicinal requisites.

17. (4) “He obtains at will, without trouble of difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and provide a pleasant abiding here and now.

18. (5) “He wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; he appears and vanishes; he goes unhindered through a wall, through an enclosure, through a mountain as though through space; he dives in and out of the earth as though it were water; he walks on water without sinking as though it were earth; seated cross-legged, he travels in space like a bird; with his hand he touches and strokes the moon and sun so powerful and mighty; he wields bodily mastery even as far as the Brahma-world.

19. (6) “With the divine ear element, which is purified and surpasses the human, he hears both kinds of sounds, the divine and the human, those that are far as well as near.

20. (7) “He understands the minds of other beings, of other persons, having encompassed them

with his own mind. He understands a mind affected by lust as affected by lust and a mind unaffected by lust as unaffected by lust; he understands a mind affected by hate as affected by hate and a mind unaffected by hate as unaffected by hate; he understands a mind affected by delusion as affected by delusion and a mind unaffected by delusion as unaffected by delusion; he understands a contracted mind as contracted and a distracted mind as distracted; he understands an exalted mind as exalted and an unexalted mind as unexalted; he understands a surpassed mind as surpassed and an unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed; he understands a concentrated mind as concentrated and an unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated; he understands a liberated mind as liberated and an unliberated mind as unliberated.

21. (8) “He recollects his manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two births...(as *Sutta 51, §24*)...Thus with their aspects and particulars he recollects his manifold past lives.

22. (9) “With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings pass on according to their actions.

23. (10) “By realizing for himself with direct knowledge, he here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints.

“These, brahmin, are the ten qualities inspiring confidence that have been declared by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened. When these qualities are found in anyone among us, we honor, respect, revere, and venerate him, and live in dependence on him honoring and respecting him.”

24. When this was said, the brahmin Vassakāra, the minister of Magadha, said to General Upananda: “What do you think, general? When these worthy ones honor one who should be honored, respect one who should be respected, revere one who should be revered, and venerate one who should be venerated, surely they honor one who should be honored...and venerate one who should be venerated. For if these worthy ones did not honor, respect, revere, and venerate such a person, then whom could they honour, respect, revere, and venerate, and on whom could they live in dependence honoring and respecting?”

25. Then the brahmin Vassakāra, the minister of Magadha, said to the venerable Ānanda:
“Where is Master Ānanda living now?”

“Now I am living in the Bamboo Grove, brahmin.”

“I hope, Master Ānanda, that the Bamboo Grove is pleasant, quiet and undisturbed by voices, with an atmosphere of seclusion, remote from people, favorable for retreat.”

“Indeed, brahmin, that the Bamboo Grove is pleasant...favorable for retreat is because of such guardian protectors as yourself.”

“Indeed, Master Ānanda, that the Bamboo Grove is pleasant...favorable for retreat is because of the worthy ones who are meditators and cultivate meditation. The worthy ones are meditators and cultivate meditation. On one occasion, Master Ānanda, Master Gotama was living at Vesālī in the Hall with the Peaked Roof in the Great Wood. Then I went there and approached Master Gotama, and in many ways he gave a talk about meditation. Master Gotama was a meditator and cultivated meditation, and he praised every type of meditation.”

26. “The Blessed One, brahmin, did not praise every type of meditation, nor did he condemn every type of meditation. What kind of meditation did the Blessed One not praise? Here, brahmin, someone abides with his mind obsessed by sensual lust, a prey to sensual lust, and he does not understand as it actually is the escape from arisen sensual lust. While he harbors sensual lust within, he meditates, premeditates, out-meditates, and mismeditates. He abides with his mind obsessed by ill will, a prey to ill will...with his mind obsessed by sloth and torpor, a prey to sloth and torpor...with his mind obsessed by restlessness and remorse, a prey to restlessness and remorse...with his mind obsessed by doubt, a prey to doubt, and he does not understand as it actually is the escape from arisen doubt. While he harbors doubt within, he meditates, premeditates, out-meditates, and mismeditates. The Blessed One did not praise that kind of meditation.

27. “And what kind of meditation did the Blessed One praise? Here, brahmin, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhāna...With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna...With the fading away as well of rapture...he enters upon and abides in the

third jhāna...With the abandoning of pleasure and pain...he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna...The Blessed One praised that kind of meditation.”

28. “It seems, Master Ānanda, that Master Gotama censured that kind of meditation that should be censured and praised that kind of meditation that should be praised. And now, Master Ānanda, we depart. We are busy and have much to do.”

“You may go, brahmin, at your own convenience.”

Then the brahmin Vassakāra, the minister of Magadha, having delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Ānanda’s words, rose from his seat and departed.

29. Then, soon after he had left, the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna said to the venerable Ānanda: “Master Ānanda has not yet answered what we asked him.”

“Did we not tell you, brahmin: ‘There is no single bhikkhu, brahmin, who possesses in each and every way all those qualities that were possessed by the Blessed One, accomplished and fully enlightened. For the Blessed One was the arouser of the unarisen path, the producer of the unproduced path, the declarer of the undeclared path; he was the knower of the path, the finder of the path, the one skilled in the path. But his disciples now abide following that path and become possessed of it afterwards’?”

Majjhima Nikāya 108

Part Three— The Final Fifty Discourses (Uparipaṭṭi āsapāṭi)

The Division at Devadaha (Devadahavagga)

Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi

Contributed by Chris Burke