

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

The
Middle Length
Discourses
of the
Buddha



A Translation of the
Majjhima Nikāya



Translated from the Pāli

ORIGINAL TRANSLATION
by

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31 *Cūlagosinga Sutta*

The Shorter Discourse in Gosinga

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Nādikā in the Brick House.

2. Now on that occasion the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Nandiya, and the venerable Kimbila were living at the Park of the Gosinga Sāla-tree Wood.³⁵⁴

3. Then, when it was evening, the Blessed One rose from meditation and went to the Park of the Gosinga Sāla-tree Wood. The park keeper saw the Blessed One coming in the distance and told him: “Do not enter this park, recluse. There are three clansmen here seeking their own good. Do not disturb them.”

4. The venerable Anuruddha heard the park keeper speaking to the Blessed One and told him: “Friend park keeper, do not keep the Blessed One out. It is our Teacher, the Blessed One, who has come.” Then the venerable Anuruddha went to the venerable Nandiya and the venerable Kimbila and said: “Come out, venerable sirs, come out! Our Teacher, [206] the Blessed One, has come.”

5. Then all three went to meet the Blessed One. One took his bowl and outer robe, one prepared a seat, and one set out water for washing the feet. The Blessed One sat down on the seat made ready and washed his feet. Then those three venerable ones paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down at one side. When they were seated, the Blessed One said to them: “I hope you are all keeping well, Anuruddha, I hope you are all comfortable, I hope you are not having any trouble getting almsfood.”

“We are keeping well, Blessed One, we are comfortable, and we are not having any trouble getting almsfood.”

6. “I hope, Anuruddha, that you are all living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.”

“Surely, venerable sir, we are living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.”

“But, Anuruddha, how do you live thus?”

7. “Venerable sir, as to that, I think thus: ‘It is a gain for me, it is a great gain for me, that I am living with such companions in the holy life.’ I maintain bodily acts of loving-kindness towards those venerable ones both openly and privately; I maintain verbal acts of loving-kindness towards them both openly and privately; I maintain mental acts of loving-kindness towards them both openly and privately.³⁵⁵ I consider: ‘Why should I not [207] set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do?’ Then I set aside what I wish to do and do what these venerable ones wish to do. We are different in body, venerable sir, but one in mind.”

The venerable Nandiya and the venerable Kimbila each spoke likewise, adding: “That is how, venerable sir, we are living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, blending like milk and water, viewing each other with kindly eyes.”

8. “Good, good, Anuruddha. I hope that you all abide diligent, ardent, and resolute.”

“Surely, venerable sir, we abide diligent, ardent, and resolute.”

“But, Anuruddha, how do you abide thus?”

9. “Venerable sir, as to that, whichever of us returns first from the village with almsfood prepares the seats, sets out the water for drinking and for washing, and puts the refuse bucket in its place. Whichever of us returns last eats any food left over, if he wishes; otherwise he throws it away where there is no greenery or drops it into water where there is no life. He puts away the seats and the water for drinking and for washing. He puts away the refuse bucket after washing it and he sweeps out the refectory. Whoever notices that the pots of water for drinking, washing, or the latrine are low or empty takes care of them. If they are too heavy for him, he calls someone else by a signal of the hand and they move it by joining hands, but because of this we do not break out into speech. But every five days we sit together all night discussing the Dhamma. That is how we abide diligent, ardent, and resolute.”

10. “Good, good, Anuruddha. But while you abide thus diligent, ardent, and resolute, have you attained any superhuman

state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable abiding?"

"Why not, venerable sir? Here, venerable sir, whenever we want, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, we enter upon and abide in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. Venerable sir, this is a superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable abiding, which we have attained while abiding diligent, ardent, and resolute."

11–13. "Good, good, Anuruddha. But is there any other superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable abiding, which you have attained by surmounting that abiding, [208] by making that abiding subside?"

"Why not, venerable sir? Here, venerable sir, whenever we want, with the stilling of applied and sustained thought, we enter upon and abide in the second jhāna...With the fading away as well of rapture...we enter upon and abide in the third jhāna...With the abandoning of pleasure and pain...we enter upon and abide in the fourth jhāna...Venerable sir, this is another superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable abiding, which we have attained by surmounting the preceding abiding, by making that abiding subside."

14. "Good, good, Anuruddha. But is there any other superhuman state...which you have attained by surmounting that abiding, by making that abiding subside?"

"Why not, venerable sir? Here, venerable sir, whenever we want, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite,' [209] we enter upon and abide in the base of infinite space. Venerable sir, this is another superhuman state...which we have attained by surmounting the preceding abiding, by making that abiding subside."

15–17. "Good, good, Anuruddha. But is there any other superhuman state...which you have attained by surmounting that abiding, by making that abiding subside?"

"Why not, venerable sir? Here, venerable sir, whenever we want, by completely surmounting the base of infinite space,

aware that ‘consciousness is infinite,’ we enter upon and abide in the base of infinite consciousness...By completely surmounting the base of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing,’ we enter upon and abide in the base of nothingness...By completely surmounting the base of nothingness, we enter upon and abide in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Venerable sir, this is another superhuman state...which we have attained by surmounting the preceding abiding, by making that abiding subside.”

18. “Good, good Anuruddha. But is there any other superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable abiding, which you have attained by surmounting that abiding, by making that abiding subside?”

“Why not, venerable sir? Here, venerable sir, whenever we want, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, we enter upon and abide in the cessation of perception and feeling. And our taints are destroyed by our seeing with wisdom. Venerable sir, this is another superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable abiding, which we have attained by surmounting the preceding abiding, by making that abiding subside. And, venerable sir, we do not see any other comfortable abiding higher or more sublime than this one.”

“Good, good Anuruddha. There is no other comfortable abiding higher or more sublime than that one.”

19. Then, when the Blessed One had instructed, urged, roused, and gladdened the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Nandiya, and the venerable Kimbila with a talk on the Dhamma, he rose from his seat and departed.

20. After they had accompanied the Blessed One a little way and turned back again, the venerable [210] Nandiya and the venerable Kimbila asked the venerable Anuruddha: “Have we ever reported to the venerable Anuruddha that we have obtained those abidings and attainments that the venerable Anuruddha, in the Blessed One’s presence, ascribed to us up to the destruction of the taints?”

“The venerable ones have never reported to me that they have obtained those abidings and attainments. Yet by encompassing the venerable ones’ minds with my own mind, I know that they have obtained those abidings and attainments. And deities have

also reported to me: 'These venerable ones have obtained those abidings and attainments.' Then I declared it when directly questioned by the Blessed One."

21. Then the spirit Digha Parajana³⁵⁶ went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to the Blessed One, he stood at one side and said: "It is a gain for the Vajjians, venerable sir, a great gain for the Vajjian people that the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened, dwells among them and these three clansmen, the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Nandiya, and the venerable Kimbila!" On hearing the exclamation of the spirit Digha Parajana, the earth gods exclaimed: "It is a gain for the Vajjians, a great gain for the Vajjian people that the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened, dwells among them and these three clansmen, the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Nandiya, and the venerable Kimbila!" On hearing the exclamation of the earth gods, the gods of the heaven of the Four Great Kings...the gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three...the Yāma gods...the gods of the Tusita heaven...the gods who delight in creating...the gods who wield power over others' creations...the gods of Brahmā's retinue exclaimed: "It is a gain for the Vajjians, a great gain for the Vajjian people that the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened, dwells among them and these three clansmen, the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Nandiya, and the venerable Kimbila!" Thus at that instant, at that moment, those venerable ones were known as far as the Brahma-world.

22. [The Blessed One said:] "So it is, Digha, so it is! And if the clan from which those three clansmen went forth from the home life into homelessness should remember them with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of that clan for a long time. And if the retinue of the clan from which those three clansmen went forth [211]...the village from which they went forth...the town from which they went forth...the city from which they went forth...the country from which those three clansmen went forth from the home life into homelessness should remember them with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of that country for a long time. If all nobles should remember those three clansmen with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of the nobles for a long time. If all brahmins...all merchants...all workers

should remember those three clansmen with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of the workers for a long time. If the world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its princes and its people, should remember those three clansmen with confident heart, that would lead to the welfare and happiness of the world for a long time. See, Digha, how those three clansmen are practising for the welfare and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The spirit Digha Parajana was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.