# AN 3.72 — Ājīvaka Sutta (The Naked Ascetics)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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## Text

72. Ājīvaka Sutta (The Naked Ascetics) At one time, the Venerable Ānanda was living at the Ghosita Monastery in Kosambi. Then, a certain householder who was a disciple of the Ājīvaka naked ascetics' sect, went and approached the Venerable Ānanda, and after paying homage to him, sat down to one side and said to the Venerable Ānanda:

"Venerable sir, how is The Dhamma well declared in the world? Who are those that are following the right method? And who are those considered to be truly 'Well-gone,' and genuinely deserving of the designation of 'Fortunate Ones'?"

"Householder, I will cross-question you on this and you may reply as it pleases you."

"Yes, Venerable Sir."

"Householder, there indeed is The Dhamma for the abandoning of greed, for the abandoning of hatred, and for the abandoning of delusion.

"But, householder, would you be able to recognize such a Dhamma as genuinely good, taught for the purpose of renouncing and thus abandoning greed, hatred, and delusion, and therefore see it as a teaching that is well-declared, or not? How do you understand it?"

"Bhante, I would consider and understand The Dhamma you just mentioned to be genuinely good, as it is taught for the purpose of renouncing and thus abandoning greed, hatred, and delusion. Therefore, I would recognize and see it as a teaching that is indeed well-declared."

Then, the Venerable Ānanda continued instructing:

"Householder, would you be able to recognize those engaged in the practice of renouncing and abandoning greed, hatred, and delusion, as those who are truly following the correct method, or not? How do you see or understand it?"

"Bhante, I would see and recognize all those engaged in the practice of renouncing and thereby abandoning greed, hatred, and delusion, as those who are following the correct

method, indeed."

"Householder, those who have renounced greed, having pulled it out with its roots, have turned it into a dead palm tree stump, so that it would not rise again. They have renounced hatred, and pulled it out with its roots, turning it into a dead palm tree stump, so that it would not rise again. And similarly, by renouncing delusion, they have pulled it out from its very roots, making it like a dead palm tree stump, so that it can never rise again. Now, householder, in looking upon such beings, would you then see or recognize those individuals as being 'Well-gone' and genuinely deserving of the designation of 'Fortunate Ones,' or not? How would you consider or understand it?"

"Bhante, in looking upon all those beings who have indeed renounced greed, having pulled it out with its roots and made it like a dead palm tree stump, so that it would not rise again; who have renounced hatred and pulled it out with its roots, turning it into a dead palm tree stump, so that it would not rise again; and similarly, by renouncing delusion, those who have pulled it out from its very roots, making it like a dead palm tree stump, so that it can never rise again, I would see and recognize these individuals as 'Well-gone' and genuinely deserving of the designation of 'Fortunate Ones' in this world!"

And the Venerable Ānanda added, by saying:

"Well, there you go, householder! For, you have just now declared it yourself, by saying:

"Bhante, in looking upon all those beings who have indeed renounced greed, having pulled it out with its roots and made it like a dead palm tree stump, so that it would not rise again; who have renounced hatred and pulled it out with its roots, turning it into a dead palm tree stump, so that it would not rise again; and similarly, by renouncing delusion, those who have pulled it out from its very roots, making it like a dead palm tree stump, so that it can never rise again, I would see and recognize these individuals as 'Well-gone' and genuinely deserving of the designation of 'Fortunate Ones' in this world!"

"Bhante, it is simply wonderful and also delightfully surprising to see, that neither one's own Dhamma was praised in your response, nor another's Dhamma was disparaged or debased. But rather, The Dhamma, with its bare bones meaning, was given in the right setting, wherein the most essential teaching within it was clearly carried across and conveyed, while leaving oneself out!

"Truly, Bhante, The Dhamma that you teach is for the renouncing and abandoning of greed, for the renouncing and abandoning of hatred, and for the renouncing and abandoning of delusion; hence it most certainly is 'Well Declared!'

"You are following the method for the renouncing and abandonment of greed; for the renouncing and abandoning of hatred; and for the renouncing and abandoning of delusion; and therefore, you are following the correct and right method. Your greed is abandoned, Bhante, pulled out with its roots, made like a dead palm tree stump, so that it would not rise again. Your hatred is abandoned, Bhante, pulled out with its roots, and

made like a dead palm tree stump, so that it cannot rise again. And the delusion in you is abandoned, Bhante, having been pulled out with its roots, and made like a dead palm tree stump, so that it would not rise again. This is why I see and recognize you, Bhante, as one who is truly 'Well-gone' and genuinely deserving of the designation of 'Fortunate Ones' in this world!

"It is excellent, Venerable sir! It is truly magnificent, Bhante!

"The Venerable Ānanda has made The Dhamma clear to me in many ways, as though he turned upright what had been turned upside-down, revealing what was hidden, having shown the correct path to someone who was lost, just like holding up a lamp in the dark for all those with eyesight to see.

"Bhante Ānanda, I go to The Blessed One for refuge, and to The Dhamma, and to The Saṅgha of Bhikkhus. From this day forward, may the Venerable Ānanda remember me as a lay disciple who has taken refuge in The Triple Gem, until the end of life itself."