

AN 7.43
Dutiya Niddasa Sutta
True Measure for Seniority – Part 2

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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I have personally heard this.

At one time, The Blessed One was living in Ghosita's monastery in Kosambi. Then, the Venerable Ānanda having put on his robes, and by taking his alms bowl and outer robe entered Kosambi for alms. Then it occurred to the Venerable Ānanda, *‘it is still too early to go for the alms round. What if I go to the monastery of the wandering ascetics of other sects.’*

So, the Venerable Ānanda entered the monastery of the wandering ascetics and having exchanged friendly greetings with the wandering ascetics of other sects, he sat to one side. Now, while those wandering ascetics of other sects were assembled there, the following conversation took place:

‘Friends, whoever leads the Holy Life by completing twelve years living it in its purity, is to be recognized as a senior Bhikkhu; one of distinction; someone who has “made the cut.”’

Witnessing this conversation taking place among the wandering ascetics of the other sects, the Venerable Ānanda neither was delighted by agreeing to it, nor showed any displeasure by rejecting it, instead, he simply got up from his seat and went away, thinking to himself: *‘I will find out the truth about this matter, from The Blessed One, Himself.’*

Later, the Venerable Ānanda, having wandered for alms in Kosambi, and after taking his meal, he returned to the monastery and went straight to The Blessed One, and having paid homage to the Blessed One, he sat to one side and reported to Him what had taken place earlier that day, while also adding:

“Bhante, is it correct or possible that within this Dhamma and Discipline of the Tathāgata, we may recognize a Bhikkhu as one of seniority; someone of true distinction, and who has “made the cut,” simply by counting the number of Vassas he has spent?”

“Ānanda, it is neither correct nor possible that within this Dhamma and Discipline of the Tathāgata, one may recognize a Bhikkhu as one of seniority; someone of true distinction, and who has “made the cut,” by simply counting the number of Vassas he has spent.

“Ānanda, having realized the truth in this statement myself with direct understanding, I now declare these seven attributes, whereby a Bhikkhu may be recognized as one of seniority; one of true distinction, and who has “made the cut.” And what are these seven?

“Here, Ānanda, the Bhikkhu possesses wise moral shame, wise moral consideration, he has carefully listened to the Dhamma and continues to do so, he is unrelenting/driven/energetic in his Training, he is mindful, and wise.

“Ānanda, when the Bhikkhu is endowed with these seven attributes, then he is declared to be living the purity of the Holy Life in its completeness. Therefore, such a Bhikkhu may be recognized as one of seniority; one of true distinction, and who has “made the cut,” even if he has not lived the Holy Life for twelve years, let alone thirty-six years, or even forty-eight years, for he indeed is to be called one of true distinction, a Senior Bhikkhu; the one who has “made the cut,” without any doubts.”

Sadhu

Sadhu

Sadhu